



## To Members of the European Parliament

### Subject: Proposed motion to object the authorization of the GM maize 1507

13 January 2014

Next 16 January you will be asked to vote on a motion for resolution to object to the authorization of an insect-resistant genetically modified maize (1507).

As an European group of progressive farmer organizations we ask for your support to reject this motion and to keep the door open in the EU for science-based decisions and agricultural innovations.

During the course of its 12 year approval process the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) has concluded in seven distinct assessments that the cultivation and consumption of this maize is as safe as its non modified counterparts.

Your voice in the discussion will have an impact that goes far beyond the approval of a single product. Indeed, your decision should be framed in the broader context of the consequences for EU farming of shutting the door to a technology with highly beneficial potential. The possibility for farmers to cultivate GM varieties is currently very limited in the EU: only one crop is approved to be grown in the EU and its cultivation is prohibited in several Member States through legally questionable bans. This compares to hundreds of GM crops approved for cultivation globally. A freedom of choice for European farmers to select the crops they find best suited for their needs, including varieties produced through GM and other biotechnologies, is fundamental in making farming in the EU more sustainable, less dependent on the import of agricultural products and more competitive.

By 2050, farmers across the world will have to produce 70% more food and feed with fewer resources and with less adverse impacts on the environment. This will only be possible through the sustainable intensification of farming, which includes the selection of the best crop varieties. It is essential that EU farmers can access crop varieties that are less dependent on water, pesticides and fertilizers, that produce more per hectare, that require less mechanical soil treatment, that produce safe food and feed and that can withstand the effects of climate change. Developing such crop varieties cannot be done by conventional breeding alone. It requires the combination of all the best breeding technologies, including genetic modification. Approving more GM crops for EU cultivation will mean that European farmers have more tools available for competitive, resilient and sustainable production.

Over the years, the EU has changed from being a major food exporter to becoming the world's biggest importer of agricultural commodities. The EU outsources arable land amounting to an area nearly the size of Germany in other parts of the world to produce for its internal needs. Many EU imports of agricultural commodities are produced using GM technology including soybeans, maize and rapeseed imported to feed EU livestock, cotton for EU textiles. Bizarrely, despite the need for these GM crops for EU internal consumption, they are not approved for EU cultivation. This inconsistency needs to be overcome. An increase in the number of approvals for GM cultivation will enable European farmers to produce more of the EU's own requirement, and compete more effectively.

Global GM crop cultivation has increased from 1.7 million hectares in 1996 to 170.3 million hectares in 2012. There have been significant socio-economic and environmental benefits including yield gains, reductions in pesticide use, less mycotoxin contamination and substantial decreases in use of fossil fuels. The continued rejection of GM technology in the EU means a significant loss of income for European farmers. On the basis of the areas of transgenic maize, cotton, soybeans, rapeseed and sugar beet that



could potentially be grown in the EU if more GM crops were approved, it is estimated that farmers' income could increase to over €929 million/year. The overall consequence of a very limited access to GM crops has been the reduction in the competitiveness of European farmers on world markets.

In summary, approving GM crops to be cultivated in the EU gives its farmers:

- a wider choice of crops for more sustainable farming;
- the chance to produce more of the EU's own needs;
- the same technological tools as their global competitors.

In light of the improvements that access to GM crops can bring to EU farmers, the organizations of farmers listed below request your support in rejecting this motion. This will help to ensure that EU rules are applied as they were intended in supporting the approval for cultivation of all GM crops that EFSA's independent evaluations have shown to be as safe as their non-modified counterparts.

- AgroBiotechRom (Romania, [www.agrobiotechrom.ro](http://www.agrobiotechrom.ro))
- Asociación Agraria Jóvenes Agricultores (ASAJA, Spain, [www.asajanet.com](http://www.asajanet.com))
- Asociación Española de Productores de Vacuno de Carne (Asoprovac, Spain, [www.asoprovac.com](http://www.asoprovac.com))
- Association Française des Biotechnologies Végétales (AFBV, France, [www.biotechnologies-vegetales.com](http://www.biotechnologies-vegetales.com))
- Associazione Agricoltori FuturAgra (Italy, [www.futuragra.it](http://www.futuragra.it))
- InnoPlanta (Germany, [www.innoplanta.de](http://www.innoplanta.de))
- Agricoltori Federati (Italy, <http://agricoltorifederati.it>)
- Associação Portuguesa de Mobilização de Conservação do Solo (Aposolo, Portugal [www.aposolo.pt](http://www.aposolo.pt))
- Liga Asociațiilor Producătorilor Agricoli din România (LAPAR, Romania [www.lapar.org](http://www.lapar.org))
- National Farmers Union (NFU, UK, [www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com))
- Société des agriculteurs de France (SAF, France, [www.agriculteursdefrance.com](http://www.agriculteursdefrance.com))

