



5th Conference of the GMO-free European Regions' Network

17-18 May 2007, Turin

INPUT PAPER

Since 2003, when the Network was constituted, till today, the legislative framework and the technical-scientific knowledge about GMOs evolved considerably. Similarly, there has been a growth of sectors related to the agri-food production and to the natural resources sustainable management, like the organic farming, the quality certified productions, the biodiversity protection and the sustainable use of resources.

The 5th Conference of the Network has the **primary objective** to re-launch regional agriculture policies in the proximity of the CAP review, starting from the GMO-free as a strategy to qualify local and regional agricultures.

This target arises from the influence that choices about priorities in the future of the CAP operated at Community and National level will have on those operated at local and regional level.

The Conference will be an opportunity to exchange information and opinions to define new political agreements and fields of action on which the Network will orientate its future work and also to consolidate existing partnership and to create new ones.

Particular attention will be put on the following **themes**:

a) Coexistence between GMOs and organic and conventional farming systems

About this question, already widely debated at Communitarian level, a strong link between the sensitiveness of local communities and the market logics at the base of the development of GMOs in agriculture is missed. Therefore, on one hand the objective is to newly highlight the need of a protection for some productive areas which have nothing to gain from an introduction of GM-crops and, on the other one, to research a way to recognize GM-free zones in a manner that doesn't infringe the WTO agreements. Particular attention will be paid on the necessity to define contamination threshold in seed and organic products which are able to safeguard the agricultural productions and the reputation of quality farming practices.

b) GM-free production chains

Quality and transparency toward the consumer are two key issue to keep competitive the European agriculture inside the mutated international economic framework. In this optic, the development, the protection and the juridical acknowledgement of high value-added production chains are the requirement to safeguard European regional rural economies. The Network wants to contribute to this objective by organizing a specific Conference in Brussels on 4 and 5 December 2007 to facilitate the development of a GM-free soy trade for animal feeding. Such event will be a moment of debate and improvement of what has been already done.

c) Biodiversity and agriculture

Regions are always more sensitive and active to offer instruments to protect the biodiversity. By now this activity is recognized as central for the wellness of the planet and of the future generations. The agricultural biodiversity is integrant part of this project and the Network wants to promote every activity that contributes to the improvement of the target. The instauration of a cooperation between the Network and the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture will be of particular relief.

Network of the GMO-free European Regions

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Participants

Political and technical representatives from the 40 Network's partners will be present to the works of the Conference¹.

The Network is interested to involve in the debate other Institutional subjects from the European Institutions (Parliament, Commission, Committee of Regions) and not-Institutional subjects (COPA-COGECA, AREPO, IFOAM, NGOs, International Commission on Future of Food and Agriculture). For that scope the programme foresees some interventions by those subjects to gather important information and suggestions for the future activity of the regional Governments partner of the Network.

Information

Further information are provided in the network's website: www.gmofree-euregions.net

Notes

A simultaneous translation service is foreseen in the following languages: IT, EN, FR, ES, DE.

¹ **Austria:** Burgenland, Kärnten, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Niederösterreich, Wien
France: Aquitaine, Bourgogne, Bretagne, Centre, Haute Normandie, Ile-de-France, Limousin, Midi-Pyrénées, Poitou-Charentes, Nord Pas de Calais, Basse Normandie, Pays de la Loire, Franche-Comté, Rhône-Alpes
Greece: Drama-Kavala-Xanthi, ENAE (Union of Prefecture Authorities of Greece)
Italy: Abruzzo, Bolzano, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Marche, Molise, Piemonte, Sardegna, Toscana, Umbria
Spain: Euskadi, Principado de Asturias, Menorca
UK: Highlands & Islands, Wales