

GMO-FREE EUROPEAN REGIONS NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE OF THE GMO-FREE EUROPEAN REGIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES' NETWORK ON THE SUBJECT OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN GMOs AND CONVENTIONAL AND ORGANIC FARMING

regarding the judgement of the Court of First Instance on the
Land Oberösterreich draft law
for the GMOs' regulation on its territory

solidarity to Land Oberösterreich's Government
support to the European traditional and quality agriculture
reliance on the regional government as interpreter of citizen's needs

Brussels, October 11th 2005

The *Network of the European Regions and Local Authorities on the subject of coexistence between GMOs and conventional and organic farming – GMO-free Regions* – since its birth in 2003, with the Brussels' Declaration, and further confirmation in 2005, with the adoption of the Charter of Florence, has always underlined that, on the coexistence matter, the need for maximum awareness and dialogue inside all the institution involved in the decision-making processes.

The judgement of the Court of First Instance (5 October 2005), that rejected the Upper Austria's action against the EC's Decision to reject the project of a regional act to ban the cultivation and breeding of GMOs for three years inside the Upper Austria's territory, is based on the formal respect of procedures (i.e. Art. 95 (5) of the Treaty) and leaves substantially unchanged the basic question of the problematic: it doesn't deal with the environmental, economical and scientific coexistence issues. Therefore, it cannot prevent the contamination of traditional and quality productions of the European Regions.

Few actors inside the institutional European panorama have the power in decision-making on the difficult theme of the European legal framework on GMOs: a key role is played by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), where it is not possible to reply to any opinion. In this way, the legitimisation of protection of interests and the safeguarding of territories' specificities and citizen's rights from single regional and local institutions is not recognised.

Instead, the *European Regions and Local Authorities' Network* once more confirms its will for dialogue and wide convergence to continue on the difficult path towards deepening technically and scientifically the coexistence and to share the new acquired knowledge.

The recent political and technical initiatives started by the Network, have demonstrated that it is possible to develop a dialogue with the EC's Institutions to open a useful comparison on the subject of coexistence and problematic at a regional level. We will continue to propose solutions that, in the better attitude of collaboration and verification, permit the Regions to make choices that really answer their own needs in the field of land management.

For this reason the European Regions and Local Authorities of the Network
Express their strongest solidarity to Land Oberösterreich

confirming their engagement so that, in an effective system of European subsidiary, the future of the European environment and agriculture can really depend on the conscious choices of regional Government, that are legitimised and are the careful interpreters of the citizen's expectations and the needs of the land.