



3rd European Conference ▪ Bruxelles ▪ 19.-20. April 2007

GMO Free Regions Biodiversity and Rural Development

Conference Secretariat
Foundation on Future Farming
Marienstr.19-20
D-10117 Berlin, Germany
phone +49 (0) 30 27590309
fax +49 (0) 30 27590312
info@gmo-free-regions.org
www.gmo-free-regions.org

For immediate release

GMO-free regions on the increase in Europe

Bruxelles 19th April 2007



300 representatives of GMO-free regions across Europe have gathered in the European Parliament in Brussels today for the 3rd International Conference on GMO-Free Regions, Biodiversity and Rural Development. The conference celebrates the growth in the GMO-free movement, with the number of GMO-free regions in Europe increasing from 174 to 236 over the past year and from around 3000 to over 4200 municipalities and communities. "The GMO-free movement in Europe is going from strength to strength. There are tens of thousands of farmers within the EU who have committed to exclude GMOs on their land. We expect more regions and farmers to follow suit," said Gerald Lonauer of the Network of GMO-free regional governments.

By standing up to the Commission, GMO-free regions have helped prevent an enforced spread in the use of GMOs in EU agriculture. National bans on the insect-killing Mon810, the only GM-maize still available and approved for commercial cultivation in the EU, have been supported by 2/3s of Member States in Council. "We welcome the announcement today by Bulgaria to ban Mon810 and are confident there will be more to come," said MEP Monica Frassoni, co-president of the Green Group, who hosts the conference in the Parliament.

"Despite numerous environmental alarm bells, agricultural biodiversity in Europe is seriously under threat, both from agricultural chemicals and the decline of seed pools, presided over by the seed industry. Declining biodiversity, over-specialisation and the over-exploitation of natural resources could destroy European agriculture if left unchecked," said Benedikt Haerlin of GENET and Foundation on Future Farming, who co-organised the conference.

The seed industry has worked tirelessly to try and prevent free seed exchange, farm-saved seeds and regional innovation and preservation to the detriment of European agriculture. Its efforts served in part to prevent European legislation to protect and promote regional and traditional as well as so-called 'amateur' seed varieties. "Eight years after the Council and the Parliament have adopted measures to support regional and farmers seed development, we expect the European Commission to finally implement these measures to prevent further declines in agricultural biodiversity in Europe," said Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, Vice President of the EP Agricultural Committee.

Contact in Brussels:

Benedikt Haerlin (GENET / FFF) +49 173 999 7 555 and Helmut Weixler (Greens) 0475 6713 40

More information: www.gmo-free-regions.org