
Chair of Management Board at EFSA quits because of conflict of interests

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Brussels

Upon request of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Diána Bánáti has resigned on 8 May as member and Chair of the Management Board with immediate effect. She has decided to take up a professional position at the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI).

According to Testbiotech informations she now will become the chair of ILSI Europe. Diána Bánáti was under criticism since September 2010 because she was Board Member of ILSI Europe. After leaving ILSI, she was re-elected as chair of EFSA's Management Board in October 2011. Now she is returning to ILSI Europe which is funded by food industry and agrochemical companies.

The move of Banati just was made public just one day before a decisive vote in European Parliament: Tomorrow the Parliament will take a vote on a report from its Committee on Budgetary Control not to discharge the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) budget for the year 2010. In the report from the Committee on Budgetary Control EFSA is criticized very harshly for conflicts of interest and revolving door cases. Notably, the report calls the links between EFSA and the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) a source of conflicts of interest. ILSI is funded by food industry and agrochemical companies. Links with ILSI are documented on the level of the Management Board as well as in the panels such as the one for genetically engineered plants, for food additives and for pesticides.

"Fundamental changes are needed at EFSA. The mechanisms for internal controls have been failing drastically. One reason for this is the composition of the Management Board which should control EFSA and safeguard its independence. So far, industry has too much influence on this board, its representatives should be excluded in future to give EFSA a real chance for a change," says Christoph Then for Testbiotech.

Currently the European Commission has nominated an ex-employee of Monsanto and chief lobbyist of EU food industry, Mella Frewen to become one of the new members of the Management Board. This proposal has been criticised by NGOs and the European Parliament alike. Now the governments of the Member States have to vote on it. Testbiotech is amongst those urging fundamental changes to EFSA's founding regulations, which are due for review later this year. Industry lobbyists should be banned from EFSA's management. Instead, there should be more representatives from consumer and also environmental organisations on the board.

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[Link to the case of Mella Frewen](#) [5]
[Link to ILSI briefing](#) [6]

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