

Independent scientists set up international research project

The project focus: Risks of genetically engineered plants
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A new project dealing with the risks of genetically engineered plants was set up this week during a workshop in Zürich, Switzerland. The project is independent of the interests of the biotech industry. The experts from the public sector and civil society agree that current regulatory practise as applied in risk assessment of genetically engineered plants in Europe is not sufficient to safeguard the protection of health and the environment.

“Current regulatory practice for risk assessment in Europe is not sufficient to deal with the real dimensions of potential hazards associated with genetically engineered plants. It is no secret that these standards were strongly influenced by the biotech companies. We must have a more balanced system that gives much higher priority to the protection of the environment and consumers”, Christoph Then says for Testbiotech.

The European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER), the Critical Scientists Switzerland (CSS), GeneWatch UK and Testbiotech are the organisations coordinating the project. It involves more than a dozen experts from five European countries. The results will be published at a conference at the end of 2017. The consortium will not be carrying out experimental risk research itself, but will base its analysis on a wide range of scientific publications and databases. The project is funded by Stiftung Mercator Schweiz.

“The aim of the project is to improve the scientific knowledge and public understanding of the risks and potential hazards involved in introducing genetically engineered plants into agroecosystems and food production. We will make recommendations for future risk assessment and improved regulation of these crops,” Angelika Hilbeck says for ENSSER “And, of course, we will also be inviting EU and Swiss authorities and the EU Commission to discuss these matters with us.”

Funded by Stiftung Mercator Schweiz: <http://www.stiftung-mercator.ch/de/> [1]

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Further information: [RAGES project](#) [2]

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