

New Guidance for securing EFSA independence

Testbiotech demands substantial improvements

19 June 2017 / Next Wednesday, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will make a decision on its new guidance for securing its independence. Testbiotech is demanding substantial improvements: EFSA should prioritise more independence specifically in regard to curbing the influence of the agrifood industries. In this respect, the EFSA position should be to give preference to the interests of the general public and, more particularly, the protection of health and the environment.

A report published recently by the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) shows that nearly half of EFSA's experts have a conflict of interest because of financial ties with relevant industries. The analysis is based on the official declaration of interests filed by the experts. The criteria used for this purpose are the funding of research carried out by the experts and their affiliations with organisations financed by industry.

"EFSA standards need substantial improvement in order to push back against the predominant influence of the agrifood sector," Christoph Then says for Testbiotech. "Currently, the industry very often sees science as a service to further their own interests. The authority, which was established to protect health and the environment, needs to rebalance the system."

Testbiotech has analysed the draft policy of EFSA and also filed a comment to the authority.

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