

Trade deal with US: EU Commission is keeping the doors wide open

EU Commission wants to promote cooperation with Trump Administration on biotechnology

7 May 2020 / In a letter to Testbiotech, the EU Commission rejected the concerns regarding a new trade deal with the US. In this context, Testbiotech is warning that the approval process for genetically engineered plants will be accelerated and the standards for risk assessment lowered. According to the letter from the EU Commission, there are no plans to change the legal standards. However, “on the other hand, the EU and the US are engaged in regular dialogues on biotechnology policies in both parties, with a view to exchange information and foster cooperation in innovative biotechnology fields.”

Testbiotech does not consider this answer sufficient to allay concerns. From the perspective of the protection of human health and the environment, the position of the EU Commission raises substantial doubts. Even if legal standards are not lowered, there are already major problems with the proper implementation of the current regulation. For example, the results from RAGES research project show major gaps in current risk assessment. It is the political responsibility of the EU Commission to make sure the legal requirements are fully implemented. Instead, the EU Commission just keeps on reiterating that EFSA is doing a good job. This is also stated in their recent letter. However, these claims do not correspond with the facts.

Further, the EU Commission does not appear to be taking the initiative to lessen doubts about EU import approvals in specific cases. For example, in the case of a recent import approval for genetically engineered maize produced by Bayer (Monsanto), the EU Commission did not take any action to clarify the problems related to documents, which the Belgian authorities appear to have mislaid. The missing documents are important to find out whether approval of the maize was issued by circumventing legally binding standards. Even though EFSA has a complete copy of the dossier, the EU Commission did not request the EU food authority to clarify the facts.

There has also been very little response from the EU Commission regarding around 40 resolutions against further approvals for import adopted with huge majorities by the EU Parliament. The resolutions reflect considerable distrust of current standards of risk assessment.

Testbiotech is worried that instead the EU Commission is trying to promote cooperation with the US administration. Against this backdrop, Testbiotech now will send another letter to the EU Commission asking for clarification of the ongoing meetings with the US.

Contact:

Christoph Then, Tel. +49 151 54638040, info@testbiotech.org [1]

Further information: [The letter to the EU Commission](#) [2]

[The reply from the EU Commission](#) [3]

[Media report about the dossier that disappeared at the Belgium authorities \(Dutch\)](#) [4]

[Testbiotech reports about the GE maize approval for Bayer \(Monsanto\)](#) [5]

[The results of RAGES](#) [6]

[Testbiotech report on CETA](#) [7]

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[4] <https://www.apache.be/2020/05/05/fod-volksgezondheid-verliest-ggo-dossier-van-agroreus-monsanto>

[5] <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/news/dubious-import-approval-genetically-engineered-maize>

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