

EU close to approving New GE plants

EU Parliament strongly criticises current practice of risk assessment

2 December 2020 / Several new applications filed for the import of genetically engineered (GE) plants are about to be approved. Five new applications were filed by Bayer and Syngenta for maize and soybeans that are resistant to herbicides and/or produce insecticides. Some of these applications will be discussed tomorrow in a committee with experts from the EU Member States. If there is no qualified majority for or against an authorisation in this vote, the Commission may decide on the applications. It is expected that the Commission will then grant authorisations during the current calendar year.

The EU Parliament has adopted around a dozen resolutions during its current parliamentary term against the import approval of GE plants. These include resolutions adopted by the Environmental Committee of the EU parliament against the current imminent approvals. The EU Parliament will hold a vote very shortly in a plenary sitting. However, these votes are not binding for the EU Commission.

The EU Parliament has demanded higher risk assessment standards for the plants and a strengthening of the democratic decision-making process. Nonetheless, there has still been no investigation of even obviously apparent adverse health risks, such as the combinatorial effects of herbicide residues with Bt toxins produced in the plants. Such flaws have been exposed by Testbiotech as well as by the EU Parliament.

Testbiotech has analysed EFSA risk assessment for the past 10 years and continues to inform the EU Commission about gaps and flaws. This has so far not resulted in any major improvements. Trade interests appear to be overwhelmingly influential. However, Testbiotech is convinced that changes are inevitable in future, as shown in the outcome of the recent RAGES research project.

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Further information: [Recent EU Parliament resolutions](#) [2]
[The agenda for meeting of the experts from Member States](#) [3]
[The outcome of RAGES](#) [4]

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[3] https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/app-comm_gmfffer_20201203_agenda.pdf

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