

Focus 2012: Research policy and independent risk assessment - International conference held in Bremen, Germany in June 2012

Supported by the GEKKO foundation (<http://www.stiftung-gekko.de> [1]) and Charles Leopold Mayer (<http://www.fph.ch/?lang=fr> [2]), Testbiotech has launched a project on research policy and independent risk assessment. A main goal is the preparation of political demands for the German elections in 2013.

Testbiotech is calling for the systematic development of counter expertise in the fields of new, risky and high tech technologies, which is independent from the interests of industry. Further, we are also advocating a much higher participation by civil society organisations in planning and implementing research policies. In order to achieve these demands Testbiotech is currently co-operating with other civil society organisations to establish a common base and compile specific political demands.

The basis of the project was set with a written petition signed by 100 civil society organisations, sent to the European Commission, which demanded changes to the strategic framework of European research programmes: <http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/520> [3]

In March 2012, a jointly organised workshop by Testbiotech and NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union) was held in Berlin, with further support by BUND (FOE Germany), ENSSER (European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility), Fondation Sciences Citoyennes and the VDW (Federation of German Scientists).
(see: <http://www.nabu.de/themen/umweltpolitik/nachhaltigeentwicklung/14749.html> [4]).

The workshop resulted in an initial outline of our common demands, detailed in the document Occupy Innovation – for a change in research policy! which can be accessed here: <http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/652> [5]

As one of the advocates of independent risk assessments in biotechnology, Testbiotech is also sponsoring the international GMLS conference, which will take place in Bremen on 14. - 15. June this year. Some of the invited speakers are:

- Charles Benbrook, The Organic Center, Boulder CO, USA
- Rosa Binimelis, Center for Agro-food Economy and Development, CREDA-UPC-IRTA, Barcelona, Spain
- Andrés Eduardo Carrasco, Laboratorio Embriología Molecular, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Cynthia L. Sagers, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, USA
- Nicola Schoenenberger, InnovaBridge Foundation, Caslano, Switzerland
- András Székács, Central Food Science Research Institute, Budapest, Hungary

More information on this conference can be found at: <http://www.gmls.eu/> [6]

Testbiotech is also involved in funding various research projects undertaken by institutions and scientists, independently from industry, revealing current gaps within risk assessment and risk research programmes. The projects carried out so far, focussed on genetically engineered plants that produce a so called Bt-toxin (such as maize MON810):

- Measuring Bt content in genetically engineered plants: <http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/578> [7]
- Testing the impact of Bt toxin on human cells: <http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/620> [8]
- Reassessing data on health risks of genetically engineered eggplant:

<http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/446> [9]

The results of all these projects evidence that even after more than ten years of commercially growing these genetically engineered plants, the precise mode of action of the insecticide is still unknown, nor is it possible to accurately determine the content of the Bt toxin in these plants.

Source URL: <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/news/focus-2012-research-policy-and-independent-risk-assessment-international-conference-held-bremen>

Links

[1] <http://www.stiftung-gekko.de>

[2] <http://www.fph.ch/?lang=fr>

[3] <http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/520>

[4] <http://www.nabu.de/themen/umweltpolitik/nachhaltigeentwicklung/14749.html>

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