

European Union: Directive on adventitious and technically unavoidable presence of GMOs in seed

With this brief special issue we would like update you about a forthcoming decision in the European Union on the proposed EU Directive on seed purity with regard to GMO.

In previous issues of the ECO-PB NEWSLETTER ON ORGANIC SEEDS AND PLANT BREEDING we informed you about the petition launched by the initiative **Save Our Seeds** of Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft on plans of EU Commission to regulate GMO presence in seeds. The SOS petition has been signed by over 70.000 citizens of the European Community and more than 300 organisations with a membership of over 25 million people in Europe.

With that petition many farmers, environmentalists etc. expressed their concern about such thresholds for they might lead to widespread contamination of GMOs in the whole agricultural production chain. In this case organic farmers and conventional farmers who don't want to grow GMO crops might be unable to control contamination at reasonable costs or might even lose the chance of producing free of GMO at all.

Recently, the Commission of the European Union has put forward a proposal of a Directive on the 'adventitious and technically unavoidable presence' of genetically modified organisms in seeds. The draft proposal will be discussed in the Standing Committee on Seeds on **22 September** and is supposed to be voted on in October this year.

According to the Directive a contamination of seeds with GMOs up to 0,3 and 0,7 percent would be allowed without labelling. The allowed percentage of contamination without labelling shall correspond to the species and shall be 0.3 % for rape, 0.5 % for maize, sugar beet and 0.7 % for Soya.

The proposal is part of the Commissions efforts to complete a regulatory framework, which would allow to waive the EU's present de facto moratorium on the approval of GMOs for commercial use in agriculture. A revised Directive on the deliberate release of GMOs has already been completed. Regulations on labelling and approval of genetically modified food and feed and tractability of GMOs have been adopted by the Council and the European Parliament this July.

For detailed and background information see the web side of [Save Our Seeds](#).

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