

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party  
*for the South East of England*

Commissioner Mandelson  
DG Trade  
The European Commission  
200 Rue de la Loi  
B1049 Brussels  
Belgium.

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2008

Dear Commissioner,

Tomorrow, the Commission will be voting on an application to grow two new GM crops in the EU - a pesticide-producing maize plant and a potato that contains an antibiotic resistant gene. I am writing to urge you to oppose this proposal.

In common with people across Europe and residents of my South East of England constituency, I want our member states to be free from GMOs - be they sold in our shops or grown in our fields. More than 170 EU regions and 4,500 other zones have now declared themselves GMO-free, yet the Commission continues to authorise new GM varieties, and force countries to allow their cultivation. This is undemocratic and utterly unacceptable. It rides rough shod over the 70% of EU citizens who are opposed to GM crops and food stuffs. So, I call on you and your fellow Commissioners to put the wishes of Europeans above those of the agro-chemical industry by rejecting the request for permission to grow these new crops.

You will be aware of my longstanding objection to the use of GMOs, based on the precautionary principle. There are enormous difficulties involved in ensuring the coexistence of GMOs with other crops and there are recognised risks for the health of people, animals and the natural environment. Furthermore, patent rights on life greatly increase farmers' costs.

I also have specific concerns about the two varieties which will be considered tomorrow. Each produces its own pesticide, yet under current practices the crops will only have been tested for 90 days for health effects - as opposed to the 2 year testing requirement for standard pesticides. Additionally, the GM potato contains a gene that makes cells resistant to antibiotics. We have already seen some of the problems associated with the widespread use of antibiotics and resulting resistance. If this gene were to get released into the environment it could create serious problems in treating a range of diseases, such as tuberculosis.

The European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) has admitted that it lacks the methods for carrying out long term assessments of the health and environmental impacts of GMOs. It is also relying on incomplete data that is submitted by the agro-chemical industry. In the absence of adequate data, it would be deeply irresponsible of the Commission to give the go ahead to these new maize and potato varieties.

Every country and region has the right to completely prohibit the import, growing and sale of genetically modified organisms. I trust that you will use tomorrow's vote as an opportunity to send a clear message to the agro-chemical industry that biodiversity contributes much more to our nutritional safety than any gene technology for plants or animals, and that the best means of developing agriculture in Europe is through traditional and ecological food production.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.

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