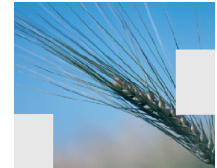


Mr Janez Potočnik
Commissioner for Science and Research
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium



Plants for the Future

Brussels, 30 April 2008

Dear Commissioner Potočnik,

Our European Technology Platform (ETP) 'Plants for the Future' is writing in view of the Orientation debate planned for May 7th regarding various aspects of biotechnology. We would like to follow up on our previous letter of December last year regarding the European approval procedure of GM crops.

As members to the ETP 'Plants for the Future', we are concerned about the continuous struggle of policy-makers with regard to further developments and practical access to this technology in the area of agriculture. This struggle has led to and is still resulting in negative impacts on Europe's innovation capacity, competitiveness and the research climate across the EU, with relocation of research activities outside Europe.

We particularly observe that Europe seems still hesitant in applying its own approval system for GMOs. Since 1998, no GMOs have been authorised for cultivation in Europe, despite positive risk assessments from the European Food Safety Authority EFSA. Europe is also lagging far behind the rest of the world as regards authorizations of GMOs for use in food and feed. Still, the mere dozen GMO events authorized for importation result in millions of tons of GMO soybean and maize imports every year while EU farmers are not given the choice of cultivating GMOs even though these have been recognized as safe.

Therefore, we ask for your support to ensure that the EU's well established risk assessment system for GMOs is upheld so that the existing approval system is allowed to operate properly as originally intended. We specifically ask you to prevent the further marginalisation of science and the discrediting of EFSA by allowing those GMOs that have received a positive safety evaluation to be imported, used and cultivated in Europe.

We strongly encourage the Commission together with the concerned policy makers to show political leadership by taking decisions which recognise the current and future importance of R&D in the plant sector for a competitive agricultural production and assurance of high quality food supply for Europe.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Karin Metzloff, coordinator of the ETP 'Plants for the Future', and the members of the Plant ETP Steering Committee: Marc Cornelissen, Bayer Cropscience, BioScience (BE); Jean-Claude Guillon, COGECA (Europe), Limagrain (FR); Karin Metzloff, European Plant Science Organisation (Europe); Marie-Christine Ribera, CopaCogeca (Europe); Ulrich Schurr, Institute Phytosphere Research, Research Center Jülich (DE); Garlich von Essen, European Seed Association (Europe), Marc van Haaren, Keygene (NL).