

Facts must trump fear

Written by EuropaBio on 17 April 2019 in Press Release
Press Release

EuropaBio responds to EU Parliament vote on food chain risk assessment.



“Science and fact must take precedence over fear and misinformation,” said Joanna Dupont-Inglis, Secretary General of EuropaBio, responding to the revision of the General Food Law adopted today by the European Parliament, which aims at improving the transparency and sustainability of EU food risk assessment. “We hope that the new rules will help to build much needed trust in our food chain, including in assessed products like GMOs,” she continued.

Europe already has one of the most rigorous and robust risk assessment procedures in the world, but the current system for GMOs is extremely lengthy and costly compared to similar assessments by other agencies both within Europe and abroad[1].

Joanna Dupont-Inglis welcomed efforts to improve transparency of regulatory data, provided that legitimate confidential business information remains protected. The establishment of pre-submission meetings should enable a clearer and more streamlined risk assessment process. But she also stressed the desire to see more transparency from EFSA and to boost risk communications: “It’s regrettable that greater transparency has not been proposed for all parties involved in risk assessment, including EFSA’s own rules of procedure. The focus should now finally be on delivering a sustainable and efficient risk assessment process and on informing the wider public about real versus perceived health risks, which means tackling scaremongering and misperceptions. For the system to

be trusted, it is crucial that science and facts are communicated properly. Consumers should be able to rest assured that their food is safe.”

EuropaBio believes that the EU must do a lot more to improve efficiency of the system and risk communications. Much can be learned from other parts of the world that employ a science-based approach to product assessments.

Concluding her statement, Joanna said: “The refusal of certain Member States and decision makers to support approvals of thoroughly risk assessed GM plants which are proven to be as safe as conventional plants enormously erodes trust in science and risk assessment. Likewise, any legislative requirements which are based on fear campaigns rather than on sound science further damage and undermine trust. On GMOs, this is the case with an obligation to conduct needless mandatory 90-Day animal feeding studies. The revised General Food Law now contains an explicit link to the EU’s own legislation to protect animals used for scientific purposes. The Commission should now swiftly abolish this wholly unnecessary mandatory requirement for GMOs.”

For more information, please visit the [EuropaBio website](#). [1]

Media contact

Christopher Gallasch, Communications Manager for Agricultural Biotechnology at EuropaBio

Email: c.gallasch@europabio.org [2] / Telephone: +32 2 739 11 85

About EuropaBio

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, promotes an innovative and dynamic European biotechnology industry. EuropaBio and its members are committed to the socially responsible use of biotechnology to improve quality of life, to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure diseases, to improve the quality and quantity of food and feedstuffs and to move towards a biobased and zero-waste economy. EuropaBio represents 75 corporate members and 17 national biotechnology associations and bioregions.

Read more about our work at www.europabio.org [3].

For additional information of relevance, please consult:

- [European Parliament press release](#) [4] from 17 April 2019
- [The EU Commission webpage](#) [5], including facts and further information
- [EU Parliament vote highlights need to build trust in risk assessment](#) [6]
- EuropaBio [Position Paper “Transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment process”, March 2018](#) [7]
- European Parliament press release: [Food safety: more transparency, better risk prevention](#) [8]
- EuropaBio [position paper](#) [7] on transparency and sustainability of EU risk assessment (also available in [Italian](#) [9], [Spanish](#) [10], [French](#) [11] and [German](#) [12])
- EuropaBio factsheet: [Mission Possible: Removing double standards in EU safety assessment](#). [13]
- EuropaBio factsheet: [Pricing Innovation Out of the EU](#) [14].

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[Bio-economy](#) [22]

[Science, technology and research](#) [23]

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