

So, what about Greece..?

A quick glimpse on country's present state of gmo and biotech nexus

As most probably known, Greece has been one of the European member States having invoked a “safeguard clause”, upholding a restriction on GM cultivation. Together by the fact that all 54 country prefectures have been voluntarily declared gmo-free zones, polls showing most citizens rejecting GMOs and politicians seeming unwilling to bear the burden of unpopular decisions, Greece formally could be rated to the top of Europe's strictest countries regarding GMO prohibition..

However, the presence of GMO are always around the corner, especially after the recent EU developments. Huge quantities of animal feed have being for long imported, lacking strict state controls and seed loads have been traced to be GM-contaminated. Rumors of deliberated contamination is not strange as well. Most known case brought to court is the one of the General Confederation of Agrarian Unions vs Syngenta and Pioneer accused to have imported GM-contaminated corn seed.

As it matters farmer and consumers education, they appear to lack or posses incomplete and confused information regarding GMOs, rejecting them mostly for obscure nutritional reasons. A recent study on organic farmers had shown for instance that only few have been aware GM seeds are on the market in the EU and even fewer had

heard about herbicide-tolerant crops or knew about the horizontal gene transfer and other environmental impacts of GMOs.



“Green biotechnology” conference in Central Greece, with the auspices of European Federation of Biotechnology. January 2010



Εικ. 6.3 Μηχανικά γενετικά τροποποιημένες (α) και μη (β).

On the other hand, major component of the biotech engine are identified to be the representatives of the European Biotech-lobby (EuropaBio), Bionova Inc and its partners. Promoting and actively supporting biotechnological sector by organizing international biotech conferences, publishing magazines and books, bionova gradually built a network of leading external advisors and partners-f.i. university professors, biotech multinational executives and others. It has been already involved in the creation of agrofuels promoting platforms and biotechnology clusters in central and northern Greece.

Other cases of direct pro-GM propaganda, include the notorious high school's 3rd grade's biology book, with misleading information comparing transgenic and conventional crops, as well as a number of seminars that have been identified to be pro-GM, supported mostly by corporate-driven academics or institutes..

High-school biology book with pro-gmo propaganda