

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE REGIONS

VOICES FOR A GMO-FREE FUTURE

Ernest Reisinger

Lower Austria

Deputy Head, Dept. of Rural Development

The farmers in Lower Austria offer a variety of regional, high-quality products whose quality should not be threatened by genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Together with the European Regions in the Network, we want to make sure that our well-founded demands for protecting GMO-free production are met.

Pelivan Shatri

Berat (Albania)

Chairman of the Regional Council

The Regional Council of Berat is an institution that compiles and implements regional development policies. It has said “No” to GMOs. We are well-informed about policies developed against GMOs and have made other local authorities and institutions aware of these. We have also trained local officials and have cooperated with other non-governmental organizations saying “No” to GMOs.

Thus far there are no GMO plantings in our region and in the future we will work carefully to prevent GMO production in our region. We appreciate our international cooperation.

Richard Durham

Highlands of Scotland & Islands (UK)

Chair, Land & Environment Committee

We believe it is in our region’s interest to protect our products from GMOs, in order to continue producing Scotch whisky in the time-honoured way from pure highland barley. Scottish beef also is a quality product of our region and will not be as sought after by the European public if it is perceived to be contaminated by GMOs.

Colette Balland

Poitou Charentes (France)

Conseillère Régionale Vice présidente de la commission Agricole

In April 2004 the region Poitou Charentes took the initiative to become a region without GMOs, with support for organic agriculture. With its size of 1,64 thousand hectares, its environmental impact and its influence on the territories, regional agriculture plays an important role.

Sonja Fiala

Vienna (Austria)

Representative head of the municipal department 58 of the city of Vienna

Vienna calls itself an „environmental model city“. This means that Vienna acts as a role model in the field of environment in a broad sense including for example, the areas of air pollution prevention, water management, nature protection and of course efforts to keep agriculture GMO-free. Therefore it is logical for us to become a member in the European Network of GMO-free Regions.

Aspasia Melliou

Prefectural Authority of Drama-Kavala-Xanthi (Greece)

Director of Administrative Department

The Council of the Prefectural Authority of Drama-Kavala-Xanthi has declared our region GMO-free. In 2004 we became members of the European Network of GMO-free Regions, where we coordinate the working group “legal aspects of GMOs”.

Tomas Arce Bernardo

Asturias (Spain)

Director General of Agroalimentaire

Asturias wants to continue to be GMO-free because the territory is mostly mountainous and a large area is under some form of environmental protection. Agriculture and cattle farming produce quality products. We can't compete with production at the global market price but we can and do compete with our specialty products and the guarantee of healthy and safe food, obtained through environmentally respectful methods.

Claude Tremouille

Limousin (France)

Regional Counsellor of Agriculture

Limousin became a member of the network of GMO-free regions to enhance the image of quality in our region. The quality of our agriculture and our environment must be preserved so that Limousin remains a welcoming area where one can live well.

Martin Ascacibar

Euskadi (Spain)

Innovation and Technological Development Director

GMOs are incompatible with an agriculture based on quality. Regions establishing their production strategy should decide about the future of their agriculture. It is a real challenge to let consumers know about the difference between GMO and GMO-free products.

Vincenzo Cimino

Marche (Italy)

Director of the Agricultural Department

The Marche region declared itself GMO-free to protect and defend its regional highly qualified production methods – typically traditional and organic. The region Marche and its citizens see this as the way to preserve their own identity and the special features of the area, for the future of agricultural and multifunctional activities.

Eric Durand

Franche-Comté (France)

Regional Counsellor

With its extensive agriculture, the Franche-Comté has conserved a diversified landscape and a fairly well preserved environment. The region is known for its quality products (AOC labeled cheese, labeled sausages). It is important that no GMO contamination of crops or wild species takes place. Regional biodiversity must be protected from genetic pollution and healthy food guaranteed to our fellow citizens.

Gabriel Paun

Romania

Ecologist and Greenpeace campaigner

GMOs are out of control in our country - thanks to the US and Romanian government, to Monsanto and Pioneer. There is a strong need and will especially from organic farmers to set up GMO free zones. But how can they do it? Farmers don't even know whether their soybeans are genetically engineered or not. Conventional and organic crops are contaminated and not even the government has the means to test for GMOs in the harvest. There is only one solution: Greenpeace demands the Romanian Government to stop immediately planting of Roundup Ready Soya.

Mona Bras

Bretagne (France)

Regional Counsellor

The Regional Council of Bretagne voted to make our region GMO-free, from fields to plate. We are responding to the individual and collective needs for food security and quality products, which are the basis for public health and preservation of our model of agriculture: small farms on a human scale, respectful of the environment and landscape. The regions are the only alternative to an economic and cultural empire.

Svetla Nikolova, PhD

Bulgaria
Chairperson, AGROLINK Association of organic farmers

AGROLINK and many environmental organisations in Bulgaria fight for a GMO free Bulgaria because we want to preserve the quality of our agriculture, our food, one of the most richest biodiversity in Europe, and the unique nature of the countryside. We want to be guaranteed the independence of the farmers and the sustainable development of the local economy. AGROLINK is an organic farmers association and we consider that priority should be on sustainable agriculture, a modern form of agriculture with a future for farmers, communities, consumers, biodiversity and environment. We want to be a part of GM free Europe.

Susanna Cenni

Tuscany (Italy)
Agricultural councillor

Tuscany has chosen a policy that supports quality in agriculture and agricultural development, as well as biodiversity. These are the basic elements of Tuscany's quality of life, environmental and social quality and the competitive ability of its production methods.

Mickaël Marie

Basse-Normandie (France)
Coordinator of the network « INPACT » Basse-Normandie, Project director "For a region without GMOs, an autonomous agriculture"

Lower Normandy decided by vote of the Regional Council to declare itself a GMO-free region. There is particular interest in GMO-free animal feed and fodder, as it is an important region for animal breeding. The region has asked the network "INPACT" (initiatives for citizen and territorial agriculture) to consider ways to reduce the vulnerability of regional breeding to GMO fodder.

Catherine Fourmond

Centre (France)
Regional Councillor

The patenting of life should be illegal, for example that of the Indian margousin and the Mexican yellow bean. The contamination of the environment by GMOs will mean the end of traditional small local farming.

Michaela Petz

Salzburg (Austria)
Director EU-Decision Office in Brussels

Being GMO-free means securing the high qualities of Salzburg's agriculture and food supplies. More than 90% of the city's residents oppose GMOs. Since October 2004, Salzburg has had its own GMO Precautionary Principle law.

Maria Grazia Mammuccini

Tuscany (Italy)

Director of the Department Rural Development

Tuscany is GMO-free to protect its agricultural producers who have invested in traditional and organic methods of production. And at the same time to protect customers, and follow the precautionary principle. This means defending the identity of one's own agriculture and food. GMO agriculture would destroy our farmers' knowledge about local products and take the pleasure out of local specialities.

We must stop GMOs and work for greater respect and support for biodiversity. The region of Tuscany, for example, has enacted a law to protect local varieties and their diversity.

Jacques Cochy

Pays de la Loire (France)

Regional Counsellor

Our region is GMO-free to protect the quality of our organic and labeled products, support the precautionary principle and meet customer expectations, to promote citizen debate, act with other regions (French and European) to make sure that regulations preserve free choice of agricultural systems, and to encourage international research and cooperation.

Wilfrid Sejeau

Bourgogne (France)

Regional Counsellor, doctorate in history

The Bourgogne region's identity is closely related to its quality products, especially wine and meat. Genetically modified agriculture represents a menace for our region. It has not proved its social or environmental usefulness.

Anny Poursinoff

Île de France (France)

Regional Counsellor

The île de France region hopes to develop an organic agriculture to feed its residents. This is incompatible with the authorization of GMO agriculture which does not respect the precautionary principle in terms of dispersion and health issues.

Daniele Govi

Emilia-Romagna (Italy)

Responsible of the areas Great Crops and Seeds, Department of agriculture

The region has an agricultural policy which is based on product quality, certification, distinctivity and development of production and territory.

We want to ensure that in the future the production of the region and the territory won't be contaminated by GMO and that citizens can maintain their right of choice for not consuming GMO, as well as the agricultural producers can choose not to grow and not to be contaminated by GMO.

Ernesta Maria Ranieri

Umbria (Italy)

Director of Agriculture

The region of Umbria is called „the green heart of Italy“ and it wants to protect its special cultural, agricultural and productive identity. This is the only way it can maintain and strengthen its special competitive capabilities.

Dr. Josef Stockinger

Upper Austria (Austria)

Minister for Agriculture (Stockinger), Minister for Environment

For our region it is a basic principle that we can decide on our own what will grow on our fields! We demand the right of self-determination for the regions.

Mollas Konstantinos

Drama Kavala Xanthi (Greece)

Member of the Regional Council, Leader of a party

Our local authority is a member of the European network of GMO-free regions since 2004. We believe that the network can play a significant role in the revision of the European Community's legislation. Our region will make an effort there.

Alain Fauconnier

Midi Pyrénées (France)

Vice President

Midi Pyrénées is the leading region of France when it comes to the number of products with the official symbol of quality, and the amount of acreage farmed organically. It is also a major region for seed production. For us biodiversity and the coexistence of different forms of agriculture are questions that cannot be ignored. The French government's lack of transparency on the problems with GMOs is provoking increasing conflict in Midi Pyrénées. Thus it is urgent that the aspects and implementation of coexistence be clarified, to respect the characteristics of the Midi Pyrénées region in its large expanses, diversity and quality.