СРБИЈА БЕЗ ГМО
GMO-free Serbia

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Serbia and GMOs

I The Government messages about GMOs
II The public attitude towards GMOs
III Can Serbia meet its agricultural needs without GMOs?

An upper middle income country located at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe - has unique policies regarding GMOs compared with the majority of the world’s countries.
The Government messages about GMOs
- legislation -

- **2001**: the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was the first to establish a regulatory system for controlling GMOs in Southeast Europe: a comprehensive GMO law (Official Gazette FRY No 21/2001), in accordance with EU directives 90/220 and 90/219. No contamination threshold was defined.

- **2003**: the Labeling threshold at 0,9%.

- **2009**: the Law on GMOs (Official Gazette No 41/2009) which strictly prohibits the production and commercialization as well as import of transgenic crops and products. It allows only laboratory work, research and field tests of biotech crops under state control. Consequently, there are no Serbian standards regarding the labeling of GMO foods - simply because they are forbidden! The Law does not consider as GMOs, agricultural plant products having less than 0,9% of GMO as well as seeds and reproductive material with less than 0,1% of GMO.
The Government messages about GMOs
- ambivalent attitude -

- An official candidate for membership in the EU, not a member of the WTO - the accession process that started officially in 2005 is well underway - Serbian officials prepared the new amended “Law on GMOs”, that is fully harmonized with the EU Directive 2001/18/EC;

- The government secured a substantial improvement of intellectual property right;

- The practice of ineffective destruction of GM illegal planting exists.

- Serbia ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002 and Cartagena in 2006;

- The government promoted organic soybean production by signing the Danube Soya Declaration in 2013;
The public attitude towards GMOs

- Extremely negative - more than 80% respondents rejected it due to possible adverse effects on human health, moral and ethical issues and distrust in companies that produce transgenic food.

- Well organized the resistance movement - a huge campaign, “Serbia without GMOs”, led by prominent individuals, NGOs and minor political parties, has been underway for several years.

- More than 80% of Serbian cities and municipalities (136 out of 169) have declared themselves GMO-free, by the signing of the “Declaration of Serbia without GMOs”.

- The first Declaration (author Mr. Miladin Sevarlic)-town Cacak designated its territories as GE-free
In 2013 Declaration was adopted by the
- Beekeeping Association of Serbia-
- The Serbian Society Hosts -
- Union of Agricultural Engineers and Technicians of Serbia -

- Minor political parties was involved in supporting movements in different ways (including text of Declaration by Greens of Serbia)-

- TWO PUBLIC LISTENING IN THE SERBIAN PARLIAMENT IN 2012 AND 2013 -

136 Serbian cities and municipalities designated their territories as GMO-free
II The public attitude towards GMOs

- In 2013 the “March against Monsanto” was organized for the first time in Serbia in three cities: Belgrade (movement Healthy country), Novi Sad (Serbian Center of Ecology) and Nis (Free Serbia).

- In 2016, the March was organized by the Beekeepers Association and portal Prviprvinaskali.com only in the city of Kragujevac.

- In 2018, the March was organized in seven cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Prijepolje, Paracin, Uzice and Nis.
Media coverage

- The number of public events and the level of media coverage on the transgenic technology issue have increased over time.

- **Miodrag Dimitrijevic**, Full Professor for Scientific Field of Genetics and Breeding - the first book about GMOs in Serbia named “Genetically modified organisms- questions and dilemmas” published in 2004 by Green Network of Vojvodina.

- **Tatjana Brankov**, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics - the book “Food of the Future or Bioterrorism” published in 2013 by Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia.

- **TV, Radio, newspapers, Conference, web - leading website** http://www.prviprinaskali.com/
  Editor Mr. Dejan Milosevic, journalist awarded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in 2015 for journalist work - series of articles about GMOs.
III Can Serbia meet its agricultural needs without GMOs?

- The agricultural sector in Serbia is an essential motor of growth in Serbia - in 2016, it accounted for 11.9% of the GDP and 19.4% of total exports, and employed 21% of the total labor force;

- The structure of the farm remains dual even after two agrarian reforms and post-socialist agricultural transformation: enterprises hold 17.8% of the utilized agricultural area, and possess 207.4 ha on average; whilst 82.2% of utilized agriculture area is owned by family farms of 4.5 ha on average;

- Serbia has all preconditions for the development of organic agriculture, primarily appropriate soil quality owing to the low use of costly chemical inputs during the war years;

- Serbia is self-sufficient in grain and soybean production, using locally-produced varieties;

- It is not only a net corn exporter, but also one of the top ten countries in the world in exporting corn. There is a high demand for Serbian corn in the world market due to its GMO-free status.

- A high demand for Serbian GMO-free soybeans. Serbia is the only country in Europe that is self-sufficient in the production and processing of soya. The area planted for non-GE soybeans in marketing year (MY) 2017/18 was 230,000 hectares, exports totaled 196,000 MT mostly to EU.
Challenges

- Serbia’s requirement of commercially certified seed corn is estimated between 20,000 and 24,000 MT annually, depending on seed varieties and the area planted.

- There are two large domestic players in the corn seed production business in Serbia: the Institute for Field and Vegetable Crops of Novi Sad (NS Hybrids) and the Maize Research Institute of Zemun Polje (ZP Hybrids). They are both semi-state owned institutes and they currently control 19 and 24 percent, respectively, of the corn seed market in Serbia.

- This represents a huge decline in market share due to competition from foreign corn seed varieties that began entering the Serbian market several years ago.

- The largest player in the corn seed market for the past few years is U.S. Du Pont Pioneer with 28 percent market share of the entire seed market. Remaining 29 percent of the market is shared by approximately 15 foreign companies that are present in the market (KWS, Limagrain, Syngenta, Monsanto, Dekalb, Agrimax, Maisdour etc). Grain farmer and trader organizations are not united on the issue, as there is both an import and export interest involved.

- In 2017 - Mr. Miladin Sevarlic, National delegate in the Serbian Parliament proposed the roof Declaration

- REFERENDUM on GMOs ???

- National Consumers Organization of Serbia (NOPS) - NOT INVOLVED IN CONSUMERS PROTECTION FROM GMOs
Thank you