

Chaos surrounds High-Level-Risk-Maize 1507

Testbiotech report shows substantial failures in work of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and in decision making of the EU Commission

Munich/ Brussels 11.12. 2013. According to a proposal of the EU Commission, genetically engineered maize 1507 will be approved for cultivation in the EU. The Member States of the EU are due to vote on maize 1507 within the next few weeks, and the European Parliament is currently preparing a resolution for next Tuesday. Maize 1507 is genetically engineered to produce a Bt toxin and was made resistant to the herbicide glufosinate. As a new report of Testbiotech shows, there is no doubt that maize 1507 poses a high level of risk to the environment. The content of insecticidal Bt proteins in the plants is much higher compared to other genetically engineered plants. The concentration of the toxin in the pollen of maize 1507 is about 350 times the Cry1Ab protein content expressed in maize MON 810 pollen. Furthermore, this maize produces a toxin (Cry1F) which was not sufficiently tested in regard to non-target organisms.

“The whole approval process for maize 1507 has been chaotic. At first the EU Commission was against the approval, now they are in favour. EFSA ignored relevant facts and published half a dozen opinions despite apparently not having enough data to reach conclusions. For example, EFSA identified a substantial gap in data on risks for protected European butterfly species. However, the authority did not request any further data,” says Christoph Then for Testbiotech. “There is still no peer reviewed publication on the effects of Cry1F pollen on any of the various protected European butterfly species.”

As the Testbiotech report proves, there were several errors and contradictions in the EFSA opinions. Further, it is evident that the proposal of the EU Commission does not even come close to endorsing the EFSA findings, which recommend collecting further data through targeted monitoring to obtain more information on the risks for protected butterflies and to establish precautionary measures for sensitive species in protected habitats. The draft decision of the EU Commission does not include any of these measures.

Testbiotech recommends that the proposal of the EU Commission be rejected.

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The Report of Testbiotech: www.testbiotech.org/node/981

The proposal of the EU Commission: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0758:FIN:EN:PDF>

Planned resolution of European Parliament: www.testbiotech.org/node/980