

PRESS RELEASE

## Organic farmers call for GMO bans

Brussels, 1 April 2015 – As the Directive granting Member States the right to ban GMO cultivation on their territory enters into force tomorrow, a new report from IFOAM EU provides an overview of existing national “coexistence” measures aimed at preventing contamination by GMOs.

Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager, said: “Our legal analysis shows that banning GMOs is the most effective way to prevent GMO contamination and to avoid extra costs for the food industry, public authorities and the organic sector. So-called “coexistence” measures are costly, difficult to design and implement and are not sufficient for the prevention of contamination. The organic food and farming sector therefore calls on all Member States to ban all GMO cultivation on their territories.”

The new IFOAM EU report shows that the Member States with the most developed legal “coexistence” measures have, in most cases, eventually chosen to ban GMO cultivation. On the other hand, measures are clearly insufficient or simply non-existent in many countries.

Alejandro Gill, IFOAM EU Policy Coordinator continued: “The Spanish example clearly shows that GMO cultivation threatens the viability of organic production for farmers in the territories where they are cultivated. It is highly regrettable that, in the case of a Member State refusing to ban GMO cultivation, the new Directive does not require Member States to put contamination prevention measures in place, nor to develop an effective liability regime to compensate victims of contamination.”

“Organic is one of the only growing food sectors in the EU and the development of organic should not be jeopardized with irresponsible EU authorisations for GMOs that will only harm European agriculture”, concluded Eric Gall, IFOAM EU Policy Manager. “Most Member States are against the authorisation of GMOs for cultivation in Europe and, since GMOs can travel across national boundaries, even farmers in Member States that enact bans are not entirely protected from contamination. Above all, the Commission cannot shift its responsibility as a risk manager to Member States forever. Therefore, the Commission must not use the Directive as an excuse to approve new GM crops at EU level, and must fulfil its promises to make the GMO authorisation procedure for cultivation and imports more democratic and to significantly improve the EU risk assessment.

### Background

In its new report *Preventing GMO contamination: An overview of national ‘coexistence’ measures in the EU*, IFOAM EU examines the measures designed by Member States to mitigate contamination, e.g. mandatory notification, training, isolation distances and liability systems.

### Relevant links

Directive: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2015:068:TOC>

*Preventing GMO contamination: An overview of national ‘coexistence’ measures in the EU*: [http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ifoameu\\_policy\\_gmos\\_dossier\\_201412.pdf](http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ifoameu_policy_gmos_dossier_201412.pdf)

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IFOAM EU represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.



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