

European GMO-free Regions Network
Steering Committee

18th Oct. 2017 from 13:00h to 16:00h
at the Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU in Brussels

P r o t o c o l

Agenda:

13.00 h Welcome

- Dr. Beatrix Tappeser, State secretary at the Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the State Hesse
- Dr. Diana Hein, Head of the Division of Immission Control, Environment and Health, Genetic Engineering, Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

Institutional and technical networking

- Short review of the North-Rhine Westphalian presidency
- Next presidency

Introduction of State Secretary Dr. Beatrix Tappeser, Hesse

Commitment of the region Hesse for the presidency

- Decision of steering committee on future presidency

Passing on of the Presidency of the European GMO-Free Regions Network from North Rhine Westphalia to Hesse

- Position paper on GMOfree labelling – how to proceed? (presentation of the status quo by North-Rhine Westphalia, discussion)
- Update on member regions

News and Current developments

- Findings of unauthorized GM Petunia and actions to terminate the release (presentation by North-Rhine Westphalia)
- Judgement of the European Court of Justice Case C-111/16 Fidenato and Others of 13.09.2017 (presentation by Marche, tbc)

Future Working Program

- Any other business

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PARTICIPANTS:

Representatives of Member Regions:

GERMANY:

North Rhine-Westphalia: Dr. Diana Hein, Dr. Imke Krah-Jentgens, Jörg Schulte-Domhof,
Heide Bergschmidt

Hesse: State Secretary Dr. Beatrix Tappeser, Dr. Astrid Brandt, Barbara Ehrle-Manthey,
Ulrike Siebmann

Lower Saxony: Dr. Chrstiane Dohmen

ITALY:

Marche: Antonella Passarani

GREECE:

Eastern Macedonia – Thrace:
Dr.Theodoros A. Markopoulos

AUSTRIA:

Upper Austria: Dr. Gerald Lonauer

CROATIA:

Varazdin County: Andreja Lepen

SPAIN:

Basque Country: Luis Elizondo

Wales: Lisa Penny

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Welcome

State secretary at the Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the State Hessen, Beatrix Tappeser welcomes the participants.

Head of the Division of Immission Control, Environment and Health, Genetic Engineering, Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia Diana Hein presents the best regards from State Secretary Heinrich Bottermann. In addition she gives a brief overview on the changes in her regional government due to the latest elections. She notes that Vice-President Casini unfortunately cannot attend the meeting due to overlapping appointments. Finally she gives the best regards from former State Secretary Horst Becker, who was enjoying the cooperation in this network during the past three years.

Institutional and technical networking

Diana Hein gives a short review of the North-Rhine Westphalian presidency.

In 2014 an enlarged SC meeting took place on the opt-out proposal together with the European Commission and NGOs.

In 2015 on behalf of the 10th anniversary of the network a conference was hosted in Berlin. Over 400 participants from 60 countries around the world were brought together. Finally as a perspective for a way forward to a Europe without GMO the „Berlin Declaration“ was signed.

In 2016 a Workshop on GMO-free labelling took place in Brussels. Approximately 100 participants from regions and NGOs discussed with the European Commission about the different approaches on labelling of GMO-free products in the EU.

In addition during the North-Rhine Westphalian presidency the German Länder Hamburg und Bremen joined the network.

The Region Navarra (Spain) has expressed its interest in joining the network. At present the procedure is pending at national government level.

Ms Hein expresses her gratitude to the vice-presidencies of Marche and Upper Austria for their continuous and strong support.

Ms Passarani and Mr Lonauer give this gratitude back on behalf of their political level as well as on technical level. Marche expresses its strong will to support the new presidency likewise.

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Candidate for presidency

State secretary Tappeser gives a brief introduction on her vita. She is a biologist and studied plants and molecular biology at the University of Berlin. She also was appointed Scientific Advisor to the Enquete Commission of the Bundestag on the first Minority Report on GMO in 1987. Then she worked at the Öko-Institut in Freiburg for 16 years. In 2004 she joined at the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany and since January 2014 she is state secretary at the Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the State Hessen.

Handing over of the presidency of the European GMO-Free Regions Network from North Rhine-Westphalia to Hesse

Ms Hein asks the SC if there is disagreement in appointing Ms Tappeser new president of the European GMO-free regions Network. All agree tacitly. Therefore Ms Hein declares Ms Tappeser the new president of the European GMO-free regions Network per acclamation.

Draft Position Paper on GMO-free Labelling of Food (version 02.12.2016)

Ms Tappeser hands over to Mr Schulte-Domhof. Issue of his presentation is the draft position paper on GMO-free labelling, version 02.12.2016 (Annex 3-1)

Mr Schulte-Domhof gives an overview on genesis and development of the draft position paper on GMO-free labelling for food. (presentation Annex 3-2)

The following results are to be pointed out:

- Control of „GMO-free“ feed is difficult in the food chain.
- There is a gap in Europe for enough „GMO-free“ feed.
- Maybe confusion for the consumers because of the quantity of existing labels.

Next steps and guiding questions:

- Clarify the status of the position paper.
- More activities of the EU-network in the field of GMO-free-labelling?
- Creating a common framework for GMO-free-labelling?

Ms Tappeser pointed out that a common framework would be worthwhile. She pointed out the question on defining „gmo-free“ e.g. of processed food and feed.

Mr Markopoulos emphasised the requirement of an EU-wide harmonised procedure on food labelling. He raised questions on who will certify a product, on a common understanding of „gmo-free“ and on the increasing number of the kinds of labeling in

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particular on agricultural products. However, he encouraged the network to achieve an EU-wide harmonised approach.

Mr Lonauer took into consideration that technical problems may occur anyway and to stay on the track for the request on a EU-harmonisation. He proposed a future cooperation with further umbrella organisations concerned by this issue e.g. IFOAM, AREPO, AREFLH.

Ms Tappeser summarised that the network should investigate a common ground on the definition and understanding of „GMO-free“. In addition the Vienna declaration (Annex 3-3) for Europe-wide harmonization of “GMO-free“ labeling (26.04.2016) and the COM Report GM-free food labelling schemes and assessment of the need for possible harmonisation (10/2013) (Annex 3-4 and 3-5)

Further steps: Amendments to the recent draft position paper will be send from SC-members to presidency. The following draft will be dispatched via the SC-members in their role as focal point to the member regions for approval.

Update on member regions

France; After the reorganisation of French regions the presidency will now contact the French regions to ask for their active involvement in the SC, their contact data and their respective representatives.

Spain; The Region Navarra has expressed its interest in joining the network. At present the procedure is pending at national government level. The presidency will check on the status quo.

UK; Wales is focused on Brexit issues. However, Wales would like to stay in the European GMO-free Regions network.

Greece; Both national and regional governments agree in gmo-free agriculture.

Croatia, No changes occurred.

Basque; Phase 1 application stopped by national government.

Italy; Marche vice-president Casini coordinated the Italian conference of regions and autonomous territories. A national decree will enter into force by the end of October 2017 in order to monitor compliance to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/321 of 3 March 2016 adjusting the geographical scope of the authorisation for cultivation of genetically modified maize MON 810.

Germany; The Directive (EU) 2015/412 amending Directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their territory still remains to be implemented into national law.

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Decisions at the European Court of Justice

Ms Passarani gives a brief overview on the case C-111-16 Fidenato et al against the Italy.

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?num=C-111/16>

Ms Bergschmidt points out the upcoming decision of the attorney-general on 20.12.2017 on French case on the definition of mutagenesis.

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?num=C-528/16>

News and Current developments

Ms Krah-Jentgens reports on the findings of unauthorized GM petunia and actions to terminate the release. (Annex 4)

Future Working Programme of Presidency

Ms Tappeser points out the upcoming tasks as follows:

1. New genetic engineering techniques
How to proceed with CRISPR, CIS Genesis etc.? Possible combination with a supportive moment for organic breeders. How can gmo-free agriculture and breeding be ensured against the background of the pending decision of the European Court of Justice on mutagenesis?
2. Pursuing the relevant cases at the European Court of Justice.
3. Proposal of the Netherlands to have (define?) exemptions from Annex I B of the Directive 2001/18/EC
4. Organisation of a Workshop envisaged in April/Mai 2018
5. Possible new members, e.g. Madeira.
6. Cooperation with others
7. Labelling and traceability
8. What is at stake at EU-level? At present 57 GMO are in EFSA-pipeline
9. What happens to the COM-proposal on revision of the comitology-procedure? (EP procedure-file [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil-mobile/fiche-procedure/2017/0035\(COD\)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil-mobile/fiche-procedure/2017/0035(COD)))
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10. Next SC meeting envisaged for February 2018.

16.00 h End of the meeting

Minutes:

Barbara Ehrle-Manthey, . Dr. Astrid Brandt, Ulrike Siebmann

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