

Brussels, 28 June 2011

694993

Dear Ms. Mazzoni,

Thank you for your letter of 26 April 2011.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is an independent Agency, therefore concerning your point on the impartiality of the members of the EFSA Management Board and the GMO panel of EFSA, I will refer to the Authority's reply (letter of 31 May 2011 – ref. DD/SG/rl (2011) – out 5785981).

However, I would like to reassure you of the importance that I attach to the independence of EFSA and that the Commission takes its governance responsibility vis-à-vis of the Regulatory Agencies seriously to ensure that high standards are implemented and that they are strengthened wherever possible. As you are aware the Court of Auditors is also involved in an audit on the independence of agencies. With regard to those agencies under my responsibility, an Inter-agencies task-force has been created with the objective of identifying best practices and possible future options for further improvement in managing Declarations of Interest and Conflicts of Interest and ensuring better coherence across Agencies.

I also take note of the fact that the Committee considers that the Greenpeace/Avaaz campaign should be submitted to the European Parliament as a petition and I would like to underline that it is up to the organisers of the campaign to decide whether to submit it as such. Furthermore, I would like to mention that, as I stated when I met a delegation from Greenpeace and Avaaz in December 2010, even though this campaign cannot be considered as a Citizens initiative, the Commission is committed to look seriously at the requests made through this text signed by over one million European citizens and inspired by the Lisbon Treaty. I contacted Greenpeace and Avaaz in April 2011 to detail the initiatives taken by the Commission to address their concerns, also inviting them to contribute actively to these activities.

Yours sincerely,



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