

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3933/08

by Angelika Niebler (PPE-DE), Markus Ferber (PPE-DE), Ingo Friedrich (PPE-DE), Albert Deß (PPE-DE), Gabriele Stauner (PPE-DE), Bernd Posselt (PPE-DE), Manfred Weber (PPE-DE), Anja Weisgerber (PPE-DE) and Alexander Radwan (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Regional autonomy in the genetic-engineering field

There are ever increasing misgivings among the public about the use of 'green' genetic engineering in agriculture. Because experience in this area has been gained over a relatively brief period, too little has been established, to date, as to possible long-term consequences. In many instances, however, there is a considerable time lag until the impact of human intervention in nature becomes noticeable. In the very regions where farming is on a small scale and there are sensitive and valuable areas of unspoilt nature, too many issues are unresolved at present as to the risks of cultivating genetically modified organisms.

Furthermore, many in agriculture regard the use of 'green' genetic engineering as a threat to their farming standards and, in the longer term, to their independence.

Accordingly, and given the situation in some Member States, the Commission is asked to answer the following questions:

1. Is it true that, under current EU law, it is not possible to adopt legally binding decisions enabling a local or regional authority, e.g. a district, to declare itself a genetic-engineering-free zone?
2. If it is not possible, under current EU law, for a local or regional authority to declare itself a genetic-engineering-free zone, are efforts being made within the Commission to amend EU law so that this is possible in future?
3. If a local or regional authority cannot declare itself a genetic-engineering-free zone in a legally binding fashion, is it possible for a local or regional authority to lay down a legally binding ban only cultivating genetically modified organisms within its boundaries for commercial purposes?
4. If a legally binding local or regional authority ban on cultivating genetically modified organisms is not possible, are efforts being made within the Commission to amend EU law so that this is possible in future?