

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3366/09
by Graham Watson (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: GM incident in South Somerset

Directive 2001/18/EC¹ on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms rightly requires Member States to observe the precautionary principle so as to protect human health and the environment.

In 2008, a new variety of oil seed rape was trialed within my constituency. Within the conventional seed which was trialed, GM seed of a type approved by the EU for food and animal feed, but not for cultivation, was mixed in with the conventional seed which was trialed. The UK authorities have decided not to monitor the local area for cross-pollution contamination in neighbouring areas or farms.

Is the Commission aware of this incident?

The UK Government has announced that the trial took place within the boundaries of South Somerset District Council's area. However Ministers have stated they do not believe it would be appropriate to disclose the precise location, in part because this would 'not be in the public interest'.

In light of the recent case before the ECJ (**Commune de Sausheim v Azelvandre (Case C-552/07)**; [2009] WLR (D) 64, ECJ) which clarifies that Member States cannot cover up the location of sites where genetically modified organisms have been released, will the Commission encourage the UK Government to observe this judgement with regard to this incident?

¹ OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.