

WRITTEN QUESTION P-7065/08

by Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf (Verts/ALE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Role of the President of the Commission in procedures for authorisation of genetically modified organisms (GMO)

On 2 June 2008, Mr Barroso wrote to the Prime Ministers of Member States requesting that each country should nominate a so-called *sherpa* to represent the overall view of government in an informal discussion on the way in which existing EU legislation on GMOs should be implemented. Two meetings of this Sherpa Group have been held, in July and October 2008.

1. Why did the Commission President launch this 'informal' initiative rather than leaving GM authorisation with the responsible Commissioners Dimas and Vassiliou?
2. Why was the only written output of the meetings, the conclusions from the Chair – Mr Barroso's head of cabinet – not agreed by all participants?
3. The minutes of the last Sherpa meeting (October 2008) state that:
  - *There has been a '21% growth in GMO cultivation in 2007 which illustrated a growing interest in using GMO inside the EU'.* This figure of 21% was published by the European lobby association *Europabio*, which does clearly indicate that this figure was only obtained by dropping France from its analysis. If in fact the area under cultivation in all EU Member States is analysed for 2008 compared to 2007, it shows a drop in cultivation – as reported by the newspaper *European Voice*.

Why has this data been ignored in the Sherpa Chair's conclusions?

4. The European Parliament, representing the European citizens, should be informed about the future intentions of the Commission President concerning this politically sensitive issue. Are there any plans for future meeting dates of the Sherpa Group, or are any GMO discussions with Heads of Government envisaged?