



NGO letter: Objection to the authorisation of GM maize varieties – vote on 5 April

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

On 5 April 2017, you will vote on an objection to the use of 21 genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for food and feed in the EU. They are Syngenta's genetically modified (GM) maize Bt11 × 59122 × MIR604 × 1507 × GA21 and 20 GM maize varieties combining two, three or four of the Bt11, 59122, MIR604, 1507 and GA21 events.

There is a strong precedent for the European Parliament to oppose new GMO authorisations. The Parliament objection from [June 2016](#) concerned a GM maize variety and relevant sub-combinations similar to the GMOs you will vote on Wednesday.

Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, the organic food and farming movement (IFOAM EU), and Slow Food urge you to support this objection as well.

The 21 GM maize strains under consideration produce their own insecticides and tolerate being sprayed with the herbicides glufosinate and/or glyphosate, depending on the combination of GM events they contain. Glufosinate has been classified as toxic for reproduction (Category 1B) in the EU, while glyphosate has been assessed as a “probable carcinogen” by the WHO's cancer agency. Nevertheless, Monsanto, Syngenta and EU agencies dispute a cancer link.

Most of the GM maize varieties under consideration could expose consumers and farm animals to adverse health effects generated by the herbicides they have been sprayed with.

Worryingly, the [opinion from the European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#) shows that Syngenta failed to submit any data specific to all 20 sub-combinations. Despite this fact, EFSA delivered a favourable opinion. This could result in “**an uncontrolled risk for the health of human consumers in certain segments of the population**” because the opinion is “based on assumptions and indirect considerations,” according to one of the 17 EFSA experts who reviewed the application ([Appendix A – Minority opinion](#)).

Every new GMO authorised in the EU poses a threat to the organic and GMO-free farming and processing sectors. Their use would increase the risks of GMO-free products being contaminated and the costs associated with preventing contamination, which are largely borne by those producing GMO-free food and feed. This would jeopardize the development of the GMO-free sector, despite ever growing consumer demand for more sustainable and GMO-free food.

We therefore ask you to support the objection to the authorisation of GM maize Bt11 × 59122 × MIR604 × 1507 × GA21 and varieties combining two, three or four of the Bt11, 59122, MIR604, 1507 and GA21 events.

We remain at your disposal for any questions related to this recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Gall, IFOAM EU, Deputy Director

On behalf of Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace and Slow Food