

Brussels, 25 April 2016

Re: Vote on the McIntyre Report on 26 April

On 26 April 2016 you will vote on the COMAGRI report¹ concerning the 'Technological solutions to sustainable agriculture in the EU'. The organic food and farming sector (IFOAM EU) which represents 170 member organisations, including organic farmer organisations from most EU countries, urges you to vote against this report.

More specifically, the report includes 4 paragraphs, 11-14, that focus on plant breeding with non-conventional breeding techniques, which include new genetic engineering techniques under the term 'precision breeding', and calls the European Commission to deregulate these techniques and allow their use in agriculture.

The report's strong focus on plant protection in paragraphs 15-21 largely refers to actions that continue business as usual rather than trying to lower the agriculture sector's dependency on off-farm inputs through preventive and indirect measures internal to the agroecosystem. For instance, the improvement of agronomic practices such as the use of functional biodiversity are of particular importance but completely neglected.

As you can see in the attached paper, the organic sector is opposed to the use of new genetic engineering techniques in organic production. Innovation is needed in the organic sector, but it does not have to rely on untested technologies with no proven benefits and potential risks. The organic movement has identified research priorities in the plant breeding sector which have greater potential to improve tolerance and resistance against pests and diseases, as well as yields and productivity. Breeding based on broad genetic diversity contributes to more efficient use of natural resources and processes and improves resilience of crops and crop mixtures against pest and diseases.

According to IFOAM EU's position, there are no legal or technical reasons to bypass the GMO legislation and to allow plants and seeds created by these new genetic engineering techniques for release into the environment without even a risk assessment. It is also critical for organic producers that these techniques remain traceable and labelled so as to be able to ensure consumers that organic products remain free from GMOs. **The European organic food and farming sector therefore urges you to vote against this report that asks for deregulation of**

¹[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=&reference=2015/2225\(INI\)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=&reference=2015/2225(INI))

these techniques and their uncontrolled use in conventional and organic agriculture, and that fails to promote truly more holistic solutions for sustainable agriculture in Europe.

We trust that you will take into account the impact of this decision on the environment and on the food production sector, and that you will vote against this report.

We remain at your disposal for any questions related to this letter and our position paper.

Yours sincerely,



Eduardo Cuoco
IFOAM EU Director