Resolution on the draft Commission implementing decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MZHG0JG (SYN-ØØØJG-2), pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

2019/2830(RSP) - 10/10/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 436 votes to 208, with 16 abstentions, a resolution objecting on the draft Commission implementing decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MZHG0JG (SYN-ØØØJG2), pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The application for marketing authorisation was presented to the German national competent authorities on 1 September 2016, by Syngenta Crop Protection NV/SA on behalf of Syngenta Crop Protection AG.

Comments from Member States

Member States made many critical comments during the three-month consultation period following the publication of the favourable opinion of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted on 17 October 2018. The most critical comments relate to toxicological assessment, comparative analysis and environmental risk assessment. In addition, an independent study concludes that EFSA's risk assessment is not acceptable in its current form, as it does not properly assess toxicity, in particular with regard to the possible cumulative effects of the two transgenes, on the one hand, and complementary herbicides and their metabolites, on the other hand.

Complementary herbicides

MZHGG0JG maize has been made tolerant to glyphosate-based herbicides, as well as glufosinate-ammonium-based herbicides. Members noted that it has been shown that the cultivation of herbicide-tolerant GM crops results in a higher use of herbicides, due in large part to the emergence of herbicide-tolerant weeds. As a consequence, it has to be expected that maize MZHG0JG crops will be exposed to both higher and repeated doses of glyphosate and glufosinate, which will potentially lead to a higher quantity of residues in harvests. The approval of glufosinate for use in the Union expired on 31 July 2018. Questions concerning the carcinogenicity of glyphosate remain.

Undemocratic process

Members pointed out the Commission deplored the fact that, since the entry into force of the current GMO authorisation procedure, authorisation decisions have been adopted by the Commission without the support of the opinion of the Member States' committee and that the return of the dossier to the Commission for final decision, which is very much the exception for the procedure as a whole, has become the norm for decision-making on GM food and feed authorisations.

On the basis of these considerations, the Commission considered that the draft Commission implementing decision is not consistent with Union law which is to provide the basis for ensuring a high level of protection of human life and health, animal health and welfare, and environmental and consumer interests, in relation to GM food and feed, while ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market.

Parliament called on the Commission to:

- withdraw its draft implementing decision;

- suspend any implementing decision regarding applications for GMO authorisation until the authorisation procedure has been revised in such a way as to address the shortcomings of the current procedure, which has proven inadequate;

- withdraw proposals for GMO authorisations if no opinion is delivered by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, whether for cultivation or for food and feed uses;

- not authorise any herbicide-tolerant GM plants without a full assessment of the residues from spraying with complementary herbicides, their metabolites and commercial formulations, as applied in the countries of cultivation;

- fully integrate the risk assessment of the application of complementary herbicides and their residues into the risk assessment of herbicidetolerant GM plants, regardless of whether the GM plant concerned is to be cultivated in the Union or imported into the Union for food and feed uses;

- not authorise the import for food or feed uses of any GM plant which has been made tolerant to a herbicide that is not authorised for use in the Union, in this case glufosinate.

The Parliament reiterated its commitment to advancing work on the Commission proposal amending Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 (comitology). It called on the Council to move forward with its work on that Commission proposal as a matter of urgency.