Resolution on the draft Commission implementing decision renewing the authorisation for the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 89034 (MON-89Ø34-3) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

2020/2895(RSP) - 17/12/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 490 votes to 184, with 22 abstentions a resolution objecting to the draft Commission implementing decision renewing the authorisation for the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 89034 (MON-89Ø34-3) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The application for renewal of the marketing authorisation was submitted by Monsanto Europe N.V., on behalf of Monsanto, USA, to the Commission on 3 August 2018. On 25 September 2019, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted a favourable opinion on the application.

Main concerns from Member States

Members pointed out that Member States have submitted many critical comments to the EFSA, including that:

- the latest annual monitoring reports do not mention that wild populations of teosintes plants able to cross with maize have recently been recorded in Europe (in France);

- the monitoring reports (2010 to 2018) have many deficiencies and are neither in line with Directive 2001 /18/EC and the corresponding guidelines nor with EFSA guidance on the post-market environmental monitoring.

Members also noted that:

- doubts remain about the validity of safety studies to assess acute toxicity and degradation in digestive fluids with Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 proteins produced in an E. coli strain;

- side effects have been observed that may affect the immune system following exposure to Bt toxins and that some Bt toxins may have adjuvant properties, meaning that they can increase the allergenicity of other proteins with which they come into contact;

- the use of Bt GM crops leads to continuous exposure of the target and non-target organisms to Bt toxins;

- the literature reviews carried out by applicants for the renewal of GMO authorisations is not of high quality.

Undemocratic decision-making

Members recalled that the vote on 26 October 2020 of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health delivered no opinion, meaning that the authorisation was not supported by a qualified majority of Member States.

The Commission recognised that the fact that GMO authorisation decisions continue to be adopted by the Commission without a qualified majority of Member States in favour, which is very much the exception for product authorisations as a whole but which has become the norm for decision-making on GM food and feed authorisations, is problematic.

Recommendations

On the basis of these considerations, Parliament considered that the Commission's implementing decision is not consistent EU law. Consequently, it called on the Commission to:

- withdraw its draft implementing decision;

- move forward with the utmost urgency concerning the development of sustainability criteria, with full involvement of Parliament;

- take into account the EU’s obligations under international agreements, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN sustainable development goals;

- stop authorising GMOs, whether for cultivation or for food and feed uses, when no opinion is delivered by Member States in the Appeal Committee.

The EFSA is called on to:

- widen its risk assessment in order to fully take into account all interactions and combinatorial effects between Bt-toxins, GM plants and their constituents, residues from spraying with the complementary herbicides, the environment as well as impacts on health and food safety;

- no longer accept toxicity studies based on isolated proteins which are likely to be different in structure and biological effects compared to those produced by the plant itself, and to require that all tests are carried out with tissue from the GM plant;

- request data on the impact of the consumption of food and feed derived from GM plants on the intestinal microbiome.