Resolution on the draft Commission implementing decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 89034 × 1507 × MIR162 × NK603 × DAS-40278-9 and nine sub-combinations, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

2023/2809(RSP) - 03/10/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 418 votes to 184, with 13 abstentions, a resolution **objecting** to the draft Commission implementing decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 89034 × 1507 × MIR162 × NK603 × DAS-40278-9 and nine sub-combinations, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

On 31 May 2018, Dow AgroSciences Europe, based in the United Kingdom, submitted, on behalf of Dow AgroSciences LLC, based in the United States, an application to the competent authority of the Netherlands for the placing on the market of foods, food ingredients and feed containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MON 89034 × 1507 × MIR162 × NK603 × DAS-40278-9 (the ‘GM stacked maize’). The application also concerned the placing on the market of products containing or consisting of genetically modified maize MON 89034 × 1507 × MIR162 × NK603 × DAS-40278-9 for uses other than food and feed, with the exception of cultivation.

The application concerned the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from twenty-five sub-combinations of the stacked GM maize. Sixteen of those sub-combinations have been authorised already.

Lack of assessment of the complementary herbicide

Parliament pointed out that the vast majority of GM crops have been genetically modified so that they are tolerant to one or more ‘complementary’ herbicides which can be used throughout the cultivation of the GM crop, without the crop dying, as would be the case for a non-herbicide tolerant crop. A number of studies show that herbicide-tolerant GM crops result in a higher use of complementary herbicides, in large part because of the emergence of herbicide-tolerant weeds.

Herbicide-tolerant GM crops lock farmers into a weed management system that is largely or wholly dependent on herbicides, and does so by charging a premium for GM seeds that can be justified only if farmers purchasing such seed also spray the complementary herbicide.

The stacked GM maize contains genes conferring resistance to four herbicides (glufosinate ammonium-based herbicides, glyphosate-containing herbicides, aryloxyphenoxypropionate herbicides (AOPP) and 2,4-D) and produces six insecticidal proteins (‘Bt toxins’).

Parliament stated that assessment of herbicide residues and metabolites found on GM plants is considered outside the remit of the EFSA Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms and is therefore not undertaken as part of the authorisation process for GMOs.

Undemocratic decision-making

Members recalled the vote on 3 July 2023 of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed delivered no opinion, meaning that the authorisation was not supported by a qualified majority of Member States. The reasons for Member States not supporting authorisations include lack of respect for the precautionary principle in the authorisation process and scientific concerns relating to the risk assessment. The lack of support from Member States and the objections of Parliament means that the Commission continues to authorise GMOs.

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 and to submit a new draft to the committee;

- not to authorise herbicide-tolerant GM crops, due to the associated increased use of complementary herbicides and therefore the increased risks to biodiversity, food safety and workers' health;

- to come forward with a proposal to ensure that hazardous chemicals banned in the Union are not produced for export;

Noting that the Commission recognised the need to take sustainability into account when it comes to authorisation decisions on GMOs, Parliament expressed its deep disappointment that the Commission has continued to authorise GMOs for import into the Union, despite ongoing objections by Parliament and a majority of Member States voting against. The Commission is urged to take into account the Union's obligations under international agreements.