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 oilseed rape Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 × Rf3 pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

2023/2995(RSP) - 14/12/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 382 votes to 153, with 11 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 oilseed rape Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 × Rf3 pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

On 8 February 2021, BASF SE, based in Germany, submitted on behalf of BASF Agricultural Solutions Seed US LLC, based in the United States, an application to the Commission for the renewal of the authorisation for the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified ('GM') oilseed rape Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 × Rf3.

On 26 April 2023, EFSA issued a favourable scientific opinion. The GM oilseed rape has been engineered to be tolerant to glufosinate.

Lack of assessment of the complementary herbicide

Members 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.

Heightened reliance on complementary herbicides on farms planting the GM crops accelerate the emergence and spread of weeds resistant to those herbicides, thereby triggering the need for even more herbicide use, a vicious circle known as 'the herbicide treadmill'.

The adverse impacts stemming from excessive reliance on herbicides will worsen on soil health, water quality, and above and below ground biodiversity, as well as leading to increased human and animal exposure, potentially also via increased herbicide residues on food and feed.

Undemocratic decision-making

In its ninth term, Parliament has already adopted 36 objections to placing GMOs on the market. Despite its own acknowledgement of the democratic shortcomings, the lack of support from Member States and the objections of Parliament, the Commission continues to authorise GMOs.

Recommendations

Based on these considerations, Parliament considered that the Commission's draft implementing decision was not consistent with Union law and asked the Commission to withdraw its draft implementing decision.

The Commission is also asked to:

- not 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;

- take account of the EU's obligations under international agreements, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN's SDGs, and ensure that draft implementing acts explain how they uphold with the principle of 'do no harm';

- not authorise GMOs when there is not a qualified majority of Member States in favour and respect this position.

The Council is called on to proceed with its work and adopt a general approach on this file as a matter of urgency.