

# Coexistence between the genetically modified farming and the conventional and organic ones

2003/2098(INI) - 29/09/2003

The Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of its Recommendation and held a substantive political discussion on the main concerns relating to the coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming, on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the Presidency. Delegations generally welcomed this recommendation as a first major step towards applying measures that would ensure such coexistence within the Community on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and confirmed that such measures should be developed and applied by the Member States in line with the recent Decision of the Council and of the European Parliament to amend Directive 2001/18/EC. The Council's positions on the questionnaire submitted to the delegations by the Presidency may be summarised as follows : 1) As regards GMO-free zones, the Member States noted the possibility of considering regional measures in accordance with the principles of proportionality and specificity. Several delegations stated that measures for guaranteeing coexistence should take account of the different plant varieties and regional peculiarities. A number of delegations asked for a definition of GMO-free zones. 2) A number of delegations requested the rapid adoption of tolerance thresholds for the adventitious presence of GMOs in seeds, while others considered it unnecessary in principle to lay down thresholds that were different from those covered by the current rules. 3) A number of delegations wondered about the need for a specific tolerance threshold for the adventitious presence of GMOs in organic agriculture and wanted this issue to be discussed in detail. 4) A large number of delegations wanted to examine whether it would be possible to lay down Community-level rules on liability in the event of contamination of conventional and organic crops by genetically modified crops. They referred in particular to the potential risks of distortions of competition between Member States.