

Resolution on preparations for the COP-MOP meetings on biological diversity and biosafety, 20 to 31 March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil

2006/2541(RSP) - 16/03/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on preparations for the COP-MOP meetings on biological diversity and biosafety in Curitiba, Brazil. The CBD has been signed by 188 parties, including the 25 EU Member States and the European Community. Parliament was deeply concerned at the continued loss of biodiversity and at the EU's ever increasing ecological footprint, which extended the impact on biodiversity well beyond the borders of the EU. Parliament pointed out the direct link between the conservation of biological diversity and the provision of ecosystem services, such as food production, water purification, nutrient circulation and climate regulation. Human consumption of natural resources, the destruction of habitats, climate change, the overexploitation of wild species and the unsustainable and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora are increasing in intensity and already put ecosystem services under severe stress. Parliament called on the European Commission and the Member States to show leadership and conviction by agreeing to and facilitating concrete measures for the protection of biodiversity, both domestically and internationally. The EC has committed itself to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Parliament then referred to the CBD Decision V/5, section III, taken by COP5 in 2000, which lays down a moratorium on the field-testing and marketing of V-GURT technology (Varietal Genetic Use Restriction Technologies) designed to prevent, by means of sterility-inducing gene constructs, farm-saved seeds from germinating. Parliament pointed out that the use of genetic engineering to produce sterile seeds would force farmers to purchase new seed each season and could therefore threaten food security, in particular in developing countries. Such genes could contaminate non-GM crops as a result of cross-fertilisation and accidental mixing. It considered that the requirements of the global moratorium on the field-testing and marketing of V-GURT technology with regard to the ecological and socioeconomic impact and any adverse impact on biological diversity, food security and human health, had not been met.

Parliament addressed a series of recommendation to the European Commission and the Member States, inter alia, to:

- set specific, and realistic global targets for the review of the 2010 biodiversity target;
- accelerate implementation of the recent CBD decisions on forest biological diversity and protected areas. At COP8 parties are expected to take stock of the commitments made in the work programme on forest biological diversity, CBD Decisions VI/22 and VII/28, regarding the sustainable use and trade in biological resources, as well as forest law enforcement and governance and action against illegal logging;
- develop new international financing mechanisms to establish a global network of protected areas by 2010 on land, and by 2012 at sea, with special emphasis on large intact ecosystems ;
- develop strong measures to ensure sustainable use of and trade in biodiversity resources, improve forest law enforcement and governance, and combat illegal logging and the related trade, taking into account the recommendations contained in Parliament's resolution of 7 July 2005 on speeding up implementation of the EU action plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) ;
- make use of the FLEGT initiative and other similar regional processes to enhance the implementation of the CBD objectives and contribute to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

- protect marine biodiversity from destructive practices affecting vulnerable marine ecosystems, insist on the consideration on a scientific basis, including the application of the precautionary approach, of the interim prohibition of destructive fishing practices ;

- reject any proposals to undermine the moratorium on the field-testing and marketing of so-called terminator technologies set by CBD Decision V/5 through a 'case-by-case' assessment or approval of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies;

- insist that agreement is reached on a robust regime of requirements for the documentation accompanying shipments of LMOs, so that the legality of imported LMOs can be determined in the country of destination and the importing party can establish adequate traceability and monitor unintended releases into the environment and the use and consumption of LMOs in processed food and feed.

Finally, Parliament urged the speeding up of progress towards meeting the Community's target of halting the loss of biodiversity, including by integrating the CBD objectives into EU development and aid policy, notably into the forthcoming EU Country and Regional Strategy Papers, and drastically improving the implementation of the EU's Habitats and Birds Directives and the related Natura 2000 network.