

PRESS RELEASE

EURO COOP AGAINST COUNCIL DECISION TO ALLOW GMOs IN ORGANIC FOOD

Brussels, June 13th 2007- The Agriculture Council voted yesterday on the new regulation for organic food and farming, deciding to allow the presence of GMOs in organic production up to a threshold of 0.9%. By their vote, EU ministers have ignored repeated calls from Euro Coop, along with environmental NGOs, to keep GMOs out of organic food.

Commenting on the decision, Rosita Zilli, Policy Adviser at Euro Coop said : *"It is a real disappointment from a consumer perspective; the EU is once more letting European consumers down, by turning a deaf ear to their right to choose between GMO-free and contaminated food"*.

Since a number of food scares affected Europe, consumers have been continuously urging for the whole truth about the food they buy. Unfortunately the EU does not seem willing to provide the transparency and protection that it has committed to and that is legitimately expected by EU citizens.

Laura Street, Food Policy Officer at Euro Coop explained: *"When consumers make the responsible choice to go for organics, they are seeking a high level of quality and safety, and do certainly not expect to end up with GM contaminated food on their plates."* *"It's a breach of trust"* she added, *"Allowing traces of GMOs in organic food creates confusion and undermines consumer confidence. It is therefore not only damageable for consumers, but also for the whole organic sector."*

In the absence of a strict legislative threshold for GM presence in organic food, stringent coexistence measures appear as the only tool left to curb contamination. Euro Coop therefore exhorts EU decision-makers to work on a clear definition of such measures.

EURO COOP is the European Community of Consumer Cooperatives, whose members are the national organisations of consumer cooperatives in 17 European countries. Created in 1957, EURO COOP today represents over 3,200 local and regional cooperatives, the members of which amount to more than 22 million consumers across Europe.

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