



European Seed Industry Call for Action

Brussels

02. March 2009

ESA is the voice of the European seed industry, representing those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural and ornamental plant species. It represents 37 national seed associations (and with that more than 1000 seed businesses in the EU, most of them SMEs) and 55 direct company members.

ESA's mission is to work for fair and proportionate regulation of the European seed industry, freedom of choice for customers in supplying seeds as a result of innovative, diverse technologies and production methods and for effective protection of intellectual property rights relating to plants and seed.

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For 10 years, the European seed industry has addressed the Commission on the need to set thresholds for the adventitious and technically unavoidable presence (AP) of GMOs in conventional seed - without any legislative proposal being adopted by the College and presented to Member States for discussion and approval.

During this period of 10 years, the overall acreage of GM crops has been increasing at a double digit growth year upon year with the corresponding increase of plant breeding and seed production for GM varieties for this market. This fact alone should be sufficient to understand that the need to set such thresholds has become greater year by year. But instead of an increasing understanding of the severe economic and legal problems caused by the absence of thresholds, the seed industry is facing an increasing lack of willingness to assume responsibility and leadership in the Commission.

Next to the seed industry, Europe's farmers as well as Ministers for Agriculture (following the Vienna Conference 2006) and most recently Ministers for the Environment in their conclusions of the Council meeting of 4th December 2008 have repeatedly called upon the Commission to move forward on this issue. **The European seed industry considers it incomprehensible and unacceptable that the Commission still is not answering this unanimous request.**

Call for Action

The European seed industry once again calls upon the Commission and specifically on Commissioners with responsibility for GMOs to urgently conclude the preparatory work and to present a legislative proposal on thresholds for adventitious presence of GMOs in conventional seed for decision by the appropriate body without any further delay.

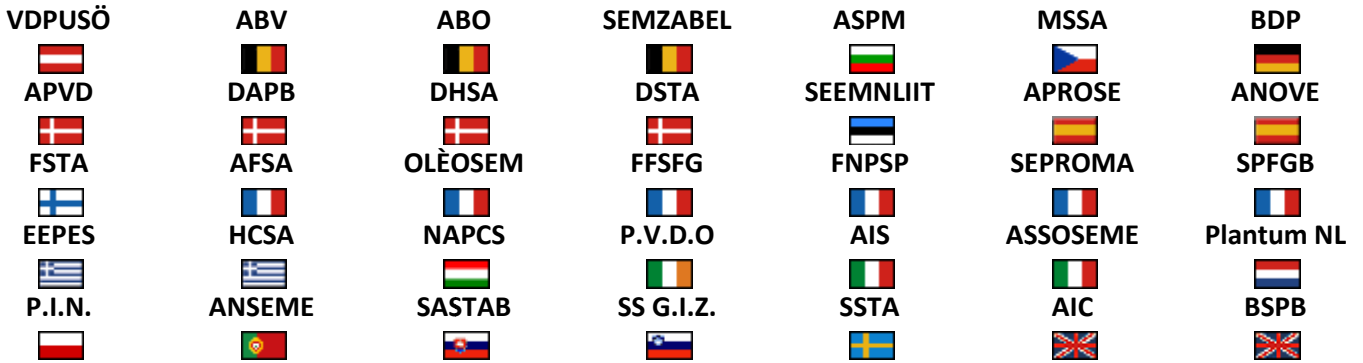
10 years of inaction have severely damaged the EU's common market for seed and have harmed Europe's seed companies and seed producing farmers in their economic and technological competitiveness. This inaction is financially and legally intolerable and threatens the future of the EU's plant breeding and variety development and with that its sustainable agriculture.

Seed companies and associations that are direct members of ESA:

INDIVIDUAL SEED COMPANIES (47)



NATIONAL SEED ASSOCIATIONS (35)



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (8) AND OBSERVERS (2)

