

European Seed Association



ESA Statement

**Draft Report Graefe zu Baringdorf
(own initiative report)
Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development
[PE 321.801 and PE 321.801/1-42]**

November 2003

ESA European Seed Association represents the Europe based seed industry with membership of more than 400 seed companies, many of them SMEs, either via their respective national seed associations or as direct company members.

With that, ESA also represents conventional plant breeders and seed producers as well as seed companies using GMOs in their breeding and plant variety development work.

ESA and its Members are committed to provide customers with the best possible seed of their choice and with that to meet the demands from farmers, growers and food and feed industry likewise¹.

With that, the European seed industry already today exercises practical co-existence of different forms of production by using a large variety of different means and measures, depending on crop, use, landscape, climate, harvesting conditions and many other variable factors and by using the long standing expertise in companies and on farm.

ESA therefore supports the Commission Guidelines for Co-Existence as put forward by Commissioner Fischler and rejects impractical and undifferentiated measures and rules for agricultural production of GMOs and conventional crops.

We urge Members of the European Parliament's Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development to reject the draft report of Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf, MEP.

The draft report

- is unbalanced and biased in its negative and often factually false statements on the use of biotechnology in agriculture,
- falsely mixes the issues of authorisation and required safety assessment of GMOs under Directive 2001/18/EC and the subsequent growing of authorised, i.e. safe GMOs in European agriculture,
- proposes to allow Member States to forbid the use of GMOs on their territory in order to achieve Co-Existence which is not only a contradiction in itself but also renders the implementation of the political decision on Directive 2001/18/EC taken by the European Parliament under Co-Decision procedure at the sole discretion of Member States.

ESA considers the draft report to be yet another attempt to prevent European farmers as well as consumers to choose between GM and non-GM products by placing unnecessary, costly and impractical burdens on seed producers and farmers in the EU.

The spirit of the report is contrary to the spirit of the Commission's Guidelines as it aims at and would prevent Co-Existence, not promote and enable it.

¹ v. ESA Statement 'European Seed Industry - providing the seed for all forms of agriculture' ESA_03.0200.3 of 18.09.2003 (available on the ESA website, v. below)

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