



# PRESS RELEASE

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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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## Just politics...

## Germany abandons its science based approach to GM plants

**German agriculture minister Ilse Aigner (CSU) has banned the cultivation of MON810 Bt maize in Germany with immediate effect, invoking the safeguard clause in the EU's GM legislation.**

**Any cultivation and any further sale of MON810 maize in Germany is now prohibited.**

Member States may temporarily restrict the sale of a GMO product, when "new or additional information" gives "reasonable grounds to believe" that the GMO product concerned presents a risk to either human health or the environment. But the Minister did not give any information what these risks are in the case of MON810 or what new scientific evidence she obtained that justify her decision.

Instead, she just referred to five other EU countries which have invoked the safeguard clause for banning the cultivation of MON810 maize. "Very likely, there is no new science behind this decision at all.", Garlich von Essen, Secretary General of ESA European Seed Association assumes in pointing out that none of these national bans have not been upheld in the scientific assessments called for in the EU legislation. The scientific GMO Panel of the European Food Safety Authority EFSA again and again came to the conclusion that there is no scientific evidence to justify the national bans on MON810.

"It is obvious that Mrs Aigner tries to please her political party that is fighting for its political survival at the upcoming elections to the European Parliament. And in her home Bavaria, being anti-GMOs has become very much 'en vogue' lately" von Essen points to the widely reported likely motivation for the change of policy by Germany.

In the past, Germany had generally supported the EU's legislative framework on GM authorisations and had defended the scientific and political independence of EFSA in its safety assessments. But already at the recent votes on the lifting of the bans in other Member States (based on the findings of EFSA), Germany sidelined with the GM opponents.

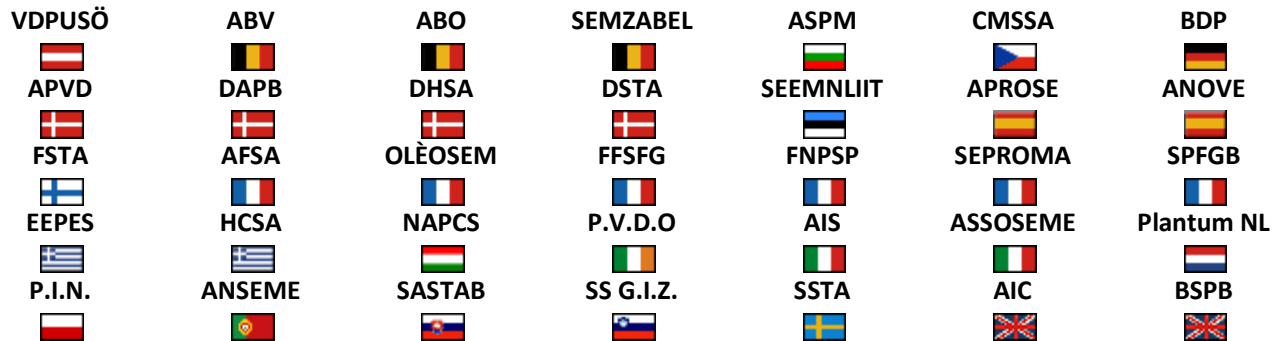
"It remains to be seen if and in how far the German position will really change in the future." von Essen hesitates to draw a general conclusion at this point. He is convinced that with the German elections coming up in September, everything may change yet again. "But it is sad to see a country with such a strong tradition and proud record in natural sciences, and led by a natural scientists as Chancellor, abandon all of this just to please a troubled local political party."

Seed companies and associations that are direct members of ESA:

INDIVIDUAL SEED COMPANIES (47)



NATIONAL SEED ASSOCIATIONS (35)



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (8) AND OBSERVERS (2)

