



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Delegations

Subject : Imports of unauthorised GMOs into the European Union

Delegations will find attached a note from the Belgian delegation on the above question, which will be examined under "Other business" at the Council meeting (Environment) on 23 October 2006.

**Contribution by Belgium on imports of unauthorised GMOs
into the European Union**

On 18 August 2006, the United States informed the European Commission that long-grain rice contaminated by genetically modified LL RICE 601 may have been exported to the European Union.

This transgenic rice is not authorised either in the European Union or in the United States. Given the potential risk posed by unauthorised GMOs, the Commission, applying the precautionary principle, adopted Decision 2006/578/EC on emergency measures regarding the non-authorised genetically modified organism LL RICE 601 in rice products. Consequently, Member States may only authorise the placing on the European market of long-grain rice originating in the United States where an analysis certificate, based on a validated detection method and issued by an accredited laboratory, demonstrates that the cargo does not contain any genetically modified organisms. In addition, Member States must run checks of products already placed on the market. Analyses carried out by operators and by the competent authorities have confirmed the presence of this unauthorised GMO on the European market.

Moreover, on 21 September 2006, Germany detected the importation of another unauthorised transgenic rice, originating in China.

Last year, a similar case occurred with unauthorised genetically modified BT 10 maize, also originating in the United States.

These various events show that despite the strict European policy on genetically modified organisms, unauthorised GMOs may sporadically find their way onto European markets. Furthermore, the European Commission and the competent authorities of the Member States do not have the necessary analytical tools to effectively check for the absence of unauthorised GMOs.

In these circumstances, Belgium would like a strategy to be developed at Community level so as to avoid further imports of unauthorised genetically modified organisms and to facilitate Member States' access to detection methods and reference materials for such GMOs not authorised in the European Union.

Belgium would ask the European Union to discuss as soon as possible within the institutions (Regulatory Committee under Directive 2001/18/EC and Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health) concrete actions and/or measures to avoid and acquire the means of checking for the presence of unauthorised GMOs.

Belgium supports in particular the discussion underway at the Commission's Joint Research Centre on unauthorised GMOs and wonders whether more resources should not be released for research in this area.

Finally, Belgium expects the full and complete cooperation of economic operators and in particular of producers of GMOs.
