



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 8 June 2010 (09.06)
(OR. fr)**

10832/10

**ENV 400
AGRILEG 78**

NOTE

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to : Delegations

Subject : Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
- Note from the French delegation

Delegations will find attached a note from the French delegation on the above question, which will be examined under "Other business" at the meeting of the Environment Council on 11 June 2010.

Genetically modified organisms**Note from the French delegation**

At its meeting on 4 December 2008, the Environment Council unanimously adopted conclusions on GMOs. Those conclusions identified various ways of improving the implementation of the legal framework and better satisfying the aims of European legislation, in particular:

- strengthening scientific expertise and the participation of the Member States in the risk-assessment process;
- revising the EFSA guidelines on environmental risk assessment, including the long-term environmental effects of genetically modified plants and the impact on non-target organisms;
- giving appropriate follow-up to monitoring activities;
- collecting and exchanging information on research into the potential risks involved in deliberate release;
- the Commission producing a report on the socio-economic implications of the placing on the market of GMOs¹;
- the proposal by the Commission of appropriate labelling thresholds for the adventitious presence of authorised GMOs in conventional seeds;

¹ An option allowing Member States to cultivate an authorised GMO on their territory on the basis of socio-economic arguments was mooted by some Member States at the Council meeting in March 2009. This proposal was fleshed out at the Conference held in The Hague in November 2009, at which the search for solutions under existing regulations was proposed, in line with the Council conclusions.

- the need to take full account of the specific regional and local characteristics of the Member States, in particular sensitive and/or protected areas².

It is important that the Commission should be able to inform the Council of the implementation of all these elements³.

Moreover, President Barroso announced in his "policy guidelines for the next Commission" last September that he wanted to discuss the connection between the common framework and common rules on authorisation procedures for cultivation. Of course, this initiative need not weaken or hold up the implementation of the conclusions of 4 December 2008. The Commission could therefore also, if it wishes, keep the Council informed of the progress of its discussion on this point.

² A letter, dated 6 May 2009, was sent to the Commission and to EFSA by twelve Member States, calling for genetically modified maize MON 810 to be reassessed in compliance with the requirements of these conclusions. EFSA's opinion, delivered in June 2009, was not able to take into account the ongoing review of assessment methodologies called for by the Council, but this should take place in 2010, particularly as regards the taking into account of specific local environmental and geographical characteristics.

³ In addition, following on from the strengthening of the environmental guidelines, a question was put to the Commission by France on 22 June 2009 on the statistical power of the tests used in the assessments. The French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA) has been studying the question and the French High Council for Biotechnology (HCB) has raised the point in several opinions.