

EU farm chief: GM food meets no quality, diversity criteria

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EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloş says he strongly favours traditional agriculture that produces quality food, diverse diets and natural biodiversity, requirements which genetically-modified crops cannot satisfy.

In an [interview](#) published early this morning in Romanian daily *Adevărul*, Commissioner Cioloş slammed genetically modified food products, which he said did not meet the quality or diversity criteria that he as a consumer would opt for.

Cioloş stressed that his opinion was personal and recalled that within the European Commission, the person in charge of GMO dossiers was his colleague John Dalli, the commissioner responsible for health and consumer protection.

The EU farm chief insisted that European agriculture cannot be based on cheap products whatever the cost, citing the risk of mounting consumer distrust. The bloc's policy on GM crops should not affect the confidence that European and worldwide consumers have in European food products, he said.

Cioloş does not see genetically-modified organisms as a panacea for EU or Romanian agriculture either. He said that the bloc should not bet as much on the performance of GM crops as it should on the diversity and quality of local products. EU agricultural research should also be directed towards the latter, he added.

Europe has always promoted the maintenance and enhancement of agricultural and food diversity, as well as quality and local products, Cioloş said, arguing these may actually be solutions for the development of high value-added production, with direct benefits for both farmers and consumers.

While the commissioner believes that farmers should be entitled to choose what they want to cultivate, including GM crops, Cioloş underlined that such choices should not be to the detriment of those farmers who opt to grow traditional crops.

Last month, members of the European Parliament's environment committee [said](#) that member states should have the right to restrict or ban GM cultivation for reasons related to the risk of contamination of conventional crops (cross contamination) and on other "socioeconomic" grounds, such as protecting organic farming.

In the interview, Cioloş also acknowledged that the United States was pushing the EU to adopt the same open policy on engineered crops as that implemented on the other side of the Atlantic and the rest of the world, despite consumer uneasiness towards genetically-modified foods.

Links

European Union

- Commission: [The common agricultural policy after 2013 \[FR\] \[DE\]](#)
- Commission: [Evaluation of the EU legislative framework on GM food and feed](#)

Press articles

- *Adevărul* [EXCLUSIV/ Dacian Cioloş: „Pentru mine, produsele cu OMG nu corespund criteriilor de calitate”](#) (3 May 2011)
- EurActiv Slovakia: [Cioloş: Geneticky modifikované potraviny nespĺňajú požiadavky na kvalitu a rozmanitosť](#)
- Dnevnik, EurActiv's partner in Bulgaria: [Еврокомисар: ГМО не отговарят на критериите за качество и разнообразие](#)