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ATOMIC5

**France and Poland join challenge against Commission decision to authorise antibiotic-resistance GM potato**

**Brussels, International - A growing number of European countries are challenging the European Commission's decision to authorise the cultivation of BASF's antibiotic-resistance genetically modified (GM) potato, said Greenpeace.**

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(Media-Newswire.com) - Brussels, International — A growing number of European countries are challenging the European Commission's decision to authorise the cultivation of BASF's antibiotic-resistance genetically modified ( GM ) potato, said Greenpeace. France and Poland have announced that they are joining Hungary, Austria and Luxembourg in a legal challenge to the European Court of Justice.

The five countries [1] argue that the Commission acted illegally in authorising the GM potato, known as Amflora, which contains an antibiotic-resistance gene. [2] The antibiotics affected by this gene are vital to combat deadly diseases such as tuberculosis and under EU law, antibiotic-resistance genes that can threaten human health and the environment should have been phased out by the end of 2004. The World Health Organisation and the European Medicines Agency also say these antibiotics are of "critical importance".

Greenpeace EU agriculture policy advisor Stefanie Hundsdorfer said: "Commission president Barroso's blind crusade for GM crops is being challenged from all corners of Europe. The Commission should immediately stop rubberstamping GM crops that have not been properly tested and withdraw the authorisation of the antibiotic-resistant GM potato."

The antibiotic-resistant GM potato, which was authorised this March by the Commission, is intended for use in the pulp and paper industry and as animal feed. The company openly admitted in its application in 2005 [3] that it would be impossible to keep Amflora out of the human food chain. The Commission therefore also granted BASF the right to contaminate human food by up to 0.9%, meaning GM food could end up directly on our plates. BASF botched its first Amflora growing season this year by accidentally mixing in seed from an untested GM potato known as Amadea.

Hundsdorfer added: "The Amadea contamination debacle clearly shows that GM crops cannot be controlled and that this puts the environment and our health at risk. Even during the first, still small-scale planting of this GM potato, BASF was not able to prevent a mix-up."

Over one million Europeans have signed a petition in support of a moratorium of GM crops in the EU. The petition is the first to reach a million signatures under the EU's new citizens' initiative. [3]

Notes to Editor

[1] Hungary officially filed the complaint to the European Court of Justice on 27 May. Austria approached the court to join the complaint in the first week of September and Luxembourg followed on 14 September. On 25 September, French environment minister Jean-Louis Borloo told the press that France was also joining the lawsuit ( <http://www.forum-lyon-liberation.org/> ). On 28 September, the Polish government confirmed its support. The participation of Austria, France, Luxembourg and Poland still has to be formally accepted by the European Court of Justice.

[2] Amflora was the first GM crop authorised for cultivation in the EU for 12 years. BASF's Amflora and Monsanto's MON810 maize are the only two GM crops currently grown in the EU.

[3] BASF Plant Science 2005: Application for Amylopectin Potato Event EH92-527-1 according to Regulation ( EC ) No 1829/2003, p. 7.

[4] [www.greenpeace.org/gepetition](http://www.greenpeace.org/gepetition)

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