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Veille citoyenne d'information sur les OGM et les semences

In 2025, more and more organisations are opposed to the deregulation of GMOs

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In February 2025, two statements opposing the European Commission's proposal to deregulate GMOs were published. On 11 February 2025, more than 200 organisations, including farming unions, NGOs, small and medium-sized breeders, and players in the organic and non-GMO sectors, published a "*joint declaration on the deregulation of new GMOs*". On 21 February 2025, more than 70 French players in the organic sector published a collective opinion piece online in *Mediapart*.



In quick succession in February, two collective position papers were published opposing the deregulation of the "*new GMOs*". Firstly, a major common front in European society called on the European institutions to stop the dialogue on a proposal for the deregulation of GMOs initiated by the European Commission in 2023. Secondly, ahead of the Paris International Agricultural Show, 70 players in the organic sector have called on professionals, activists and scientists in the sector to discuss, cooperate, fight and organise themselves "*around an ambitious policy involving all the players in the industry*" to "*ourselves provide now with the means to meet the food and*

environmental challenges at stake".

A major common front for European society

On 11 February, on the initiative of Greenpeace, Centro Internazionale Crocevia, the European Coordination of La Via Campesina (ECVC), IFOAM Organics Europe, Nordic Maize Breeding and Pollinis, over 200 organisations published a "*joint statement on the deregulation of new GMOs*" aimed at "*protect the business of small and medium size breeders, farmers, and the organic and non GMO sectors in the EU*"[i]. Since July 2023, when the European Commission published its proposal for the deregulation of many GMOs, none statement or petition has been signed by so many organisations. The document was published at a time when successive EU presidencies (Spain[ii], Belgium[iii], Hungary[iv], Poland [v]) were attempting to "*to rush an agreement in the Council and negotiations between the Council and the Parliament*", leaving many problematic issues unresolved.

Drawing on detailed arguments, the organisations say they are concerned about "*human health and nature and [...] patents, identification and detection methods, price of seeds, seed diversity, coexistence, negative socioeconomic impacts and risk of further corporate control of the food chain* ". As we can see, the European Commission's proposal has a number of grievances. In addition to the environmental risks and the lack of transparency for consumers, the signatories stress what they consider to be the dangerous effects of deregulating many GMOs for farmers, the organic and non-GMO sectors and small and medium-sized breeders in the European Union:

" 1_ Patents on living organisms leading to biopiracy.
2_ Increased legal uncertainty for breeders and farmers and increased risk of lawsuits against them, putting their business in danger.
3_ Threat to the viability and existence of the organic and GMO free economic sectors.
4_ Irreversible increase of farmers' dependence on few seed companies with expected increase in their production costs.
5_ Less seed diversity adapted to local conditions and climate change and risks to food security.
6_ Likely increase of the EU's food chain vulnerability."

Faced with these concerns, the more than 200 signatory organisations are calling on "*European countries to protect their farmers and breeders, as well as citizens and nature*" by stoping "*the de-regulation of new GM plant*".

In France, a collective opinion of organic stakeholders

On 21 February, at the initiative of the Minga Faire ensemble association, more than 70 companies and organisations decided, two days before the opening of the Paris International Agricultural Show, to publish the opinion column "*Produire dans le respect du vivant : un enjeu vital*" [vi]. With this letter, the signatories recall that "*the basis of organic farming is above all an agricultural commitment to the fact that it is impossible to produce quality food sustainably by mistreating ecosystems*".

Then, acknowledging the scientific reality of climate change, the signatories take a hard line against climate sceptics and techno-solutionists: "*The war against life is lost in advance. Artificial and soilless agricultural crops, GMOs, new genomic techniques*[vii]*, the questioning of the precautionary principle and the privatisation of living organisms - all these attempts will not change a thing*". Referring to the French political context of recent weeks, he adds that "*the attempt to*

close the Agence Bio, [...] the systematic attacks on the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) [...], the Senate's desire to reintroduce the use of neonicotinoids [...] reveal an irresponsible policy that confuses the interests of the strongest with the general interest".

However, the signatory organisations are no less self-critical of their own shortcomings, stating that "*this headlong rush by the proponents of productivist agriculture is also the result of too long a period of depoliticisation of the subject of organic farming by the players themselves*". That's why they conclude by stressing the need to mobilise and give themselves "*the means to meet the food and environmental challenges at stake [...] around an ambitious policy involving all the players in the industry [...]. Not just from* "field to plate"*, but from* "seed to plate"*, from the artisan seed growers who select tomorrow's seeds in the field, to the growers and breeders, researchers, teachers, local authority officials, processors, cooks, distributors and consumers*".

These two positions are published at a time when some of the signatory organisations have also launched petitions calling on "*the European Commission and the EU Member States to adopt a firm position against any attempt to exclude new GMOs from existing European legislation on GMOs*"[viii] or asking the French government "*to adopt a firm position during the forthcoming discussions against any attempt to exempt new GMOs from existing European regulations on GMOs*"[ix]. These simultaneous calls come at a time when Poland has put a proposal on the table of EU Member States aimed at "*resolving*" patent issues, the sticking point in discussions on the proposed deregulation of GMOs[x]. An increasing number of European civil society organisations seem determined to keep up the pressure on national and European authorities to abandon this proposal to deregulate GMOs.

[i] Greenpeace, Centro Internazionale Crocevia, ECVC, IFOAM Organics Europe, Nordic Maize Breeding and Pollinis, « JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DEREGULATION OF NEW GMOS », 11 February 2025.

[ii] Eric Meunier, « Le législateur est prié de ne pas trop discuter », *Inf'OGM, le journal*, n°175, avril/juin 2024 (in french).

[iii] Eric Meunier, « Les États membres bloquent la déréglementation des OGM », *Inf'OGM*, 8 February 2024 (in french).

[iv] Eric Meunier, « La Hongrie tente de faire bouger les États membres », 1er October 2024 (in french).

[v] Eric Meunier, « Polish proposal on patents and GMOs casts doubts among Member States », *Inf'OGM*, 28 January 2025.

[vi] Minga Faire ensemble, « Produire dans le respect du vivant : un enjeu vital », 21 February 2025 (in french).

[vii] Remember that products derived from these "*new genomic techniques*" are considered GMOs under European law, and are therefore governed by Directive 2001/18.

[viii] Biodynamic Federation Demeter International, WeMove Europe, Friends of the Earth EUrope, ECVC, Slow Food Europe and CEO, « Keep GMO food regulated and labelled! ».

[ix] Pollinis, « Contre un monde génétiquement modifié, exigez du gouvernement qu'il dise non à la dérégulation des nouveaux OGM ».

[x] Eric Meunier, « La proposition polonaise sur les brevets et les OGM plonge les États membres dans le doute », *Inf'OGM*, 28 janvier 2025.

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