

# 2007 ACTIVITY REPORT

*March 20<sup>th</sup> 2008*

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## 1. Premise

The annual report about the Network activity is at its second edition. With this document the Steering Committee want to give every member of the Network (and external observers) a synthetic overview of the main events of 2007 and an insight into new challenges, goals and activities planned for 2008.

## 2. Introduction

Concerning GMOs, 2007 was a year of practically no substantial changes in the European Legislative framework, but it was a year of new political input both at single Country and EU level.

From the EU Institutions side, the most relevant topics were:

- the position of the EU Commissioner for Environment (Mr. Stavros Dimas) against the authorization of a new GM maize variety;
- the DG AGRI report about GM feed production scenarios, which gives a very bad perspective for European animal food productions;
- the International Conference on Coexistence held in Seville on November, which underlines some progresses but also a lot of problems in the application of really effective coexistence measures;
- the European Court of Justice's final rule against the Upper Austria's ban on GMOs;
- the EU Council decision to establish the same contamination threshold of the conventional farming in the new organic farming regulation;

Concerning single Member States, important progresses were reached in the application of tangible actions against the wide spreading of GMOs:

- the France Government adopted a very severe policy, wishing to revise the national regulation and authorization mechanisms;
- Portugal put in place the first practical regulation about the identification of GMO-free zones;
- An Italian civil movement successfully promotes a national consultation in favour of good agriculture practices and against GMOs.

2007 was also an important year for our Network, with the organization of 2 important events (5th Network's conference, International Conference "Non GM feedstuff, quality productions and European regional agricultures' strategy") and with the continuous increment in gaining new partner Regions. Furthermore, during 2007, the Network followed the same patterns tracked the previous years, consolidating and promoting new partnerships with other organisations.

Regarding 2008, the next 6th Network's Conference in Bilbao will be the moment to review and improve the organization of the Network, defining a new presidency and revising the Working Group activities.

### 3. 2007 main initiatives

i. 23-24 Jan 2007 – Steering Committee Meeting in Brussels

The meeting was useful to set up the 2007 Network's agenda and to resume and consolidate the 2006 main activities. This meeting also opened the works to organize the 5<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference.

ii. 21 March 2007 – Steering Committee and Assembly meetings in Brussels

These meetings were closely linked. The SC refined the approach to the 5<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference and to the Multilateral meeting. Furthermore, the website and the Network's name started to take shape. The progresses reached were presented to the Assembly.

iii. 18 April 2007 – Multilateral Meeting with EU Commission's services

The multilateral meeting involved 5 EU Commission's services (DG AGRI, DG TRADE, DG ENV, DG SANCO and the General Secretariat of the EU Presidency) and 2 regional networks (GMO-free and AREPO). The meeting was very interesting and gave to the network a lot of information concerning the status quo and the future programmes of the services. The Meeting was followed by a Network's Assembly to quickly report to every partner regions that could not attend directly the event.

Main result: A complete report about the meeting is on the Network's website at the following address: [http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Multilateral-Meeting-Report\\_Final-18apr07.pdf](http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Multilateral-Meeting-Report_Final-18apr07.pdf).

iv. 19-20 April 2007 – 3<sup>rd</sup> GMO-free movement Conference in Brussels

The event saw the participation of several representatives from Network's partner regions. As happened in previous editions, the event was a very excellent box to get information, exchange opinion and find alliances. More information can be found in the official website: <http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/>.

v. 20 April 2007 - BIO4EU Symposium in Brussels

The symposium was organized jointly by the EU Commission and the JRC and presented a study conducted by the IPTS in Seville about the possible development of the biotech sector in Europe. The study covered every sector, using 3 classifications of biotechnology: Human Health, Industrial and primary production. The study underlined the contribution of every single sector to the EU policy objectives stated in the Life Science and Biotechnology – A strategy for Europe (COM(2002) 27 final).

Main result: Biotech is a very relevant sector from the Human Health point of view (medicine, vaccine, etc.). Considering the agriculture, GMOs are a very small part of the general contribution to European policy targets and other biotech options are more important than transgenic technology. The Commission will continue to improve its policy to affirm this technology.

vi. 17-18 May 2007 – 5th Network's Conference in Turin

The 5<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference took place in Turin in a 2 days meeting. 22 regional delegation and about 120 people attended the Conference. The 1<sup>st</sup> day morning was reserved to present the ongoing activities by the working group leaders. The afternoon was reserved to speakers of other

organization and to the signature of a joint declaration between the network and the International Commission for the Future of Food (ICFF). The 2<sup>nd</sup> day morning was reserved to political declarations from Network and European Parliament politicians.

Main result: A final declaration from the Network. A joint declaration with the ICFF. An improvement in existent collaboration with IFOAM, FotE and MEPs.

*vii. 3-4 October 2007 – Steering Committee and Assembly meetings in Brussels*

These meetings were particularly focused on the GM-free feedstuff Conference and on the organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference. Tuscany Region promoted a reflection about the Network's organization and the renewal of charges. The presidency presented an overview about the use of the website. A presentation of new member took place during the Assembly. A better use of structural funds by the Network was indicated as desirable.

*viii. 21-22 November 2007 – GMCC07, 3rd International Conference on coexistence in Seville*

The Conference was organized by the JRC in Seville and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of an international review about research on coexistence. 3 representatives of the Networks were in Seville (Euskadi, Tuscany and Wales). The contents were extremely technical and the information covered a wide range of coexistence related issues. An important aspect emerged during the event was the high presence of pro-OGM organizations at the final round table which resumed the Conference works with a not very well balanced way.

*ix. 5-6 December 2007 – International Conference on GM free feedstuff in Brussels*

The Conference was the final event of an initiative started in 2005 inside the working Group n.5. It succeeded in gather the political and the economical perspectives about an important question related to GMOs policies: the non-GM feedstuff world market and its driving forces. The Conference gained a lot of interest in Europe and was a meeting point for economical actors from all around the World.

Main result: A final resume will be soon available in several languages.

#### 4. 2007 activities complete quick summary

Date	Object	Further info
January 23-24	Steering Committee meeting	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Steering-Committee_23Jan07%20_Outcomes.pdf">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Steering-Committee_23Jan07%20_Outcomes.pdf</a>
March 21	Steering Committee and Assembly meetings	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Steering-Committee_21Mar07_Outcomes.pdf">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Steering-Committee_21Mar07_Outcomes.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Assembly-outcomes_21mar07.pdf">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Assembly-outcomes_21mar07.pdf</a>
April 18	Multilateral meeting + Assembly	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Multilateral-Meeting-Report_Final-18apr07.pdf">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/Multilateral-Meeting-Report_Final-18apr07.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=46">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=46</a>
April 19-20	3rd GMO-free movement Conference in Brussels	<a href="http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/">http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/</a>
April 20	BIO4EU symposium	<a href="http://bio4eu.jrc.es/">http://bio4eu.jrc.es/</a>
May 17-18	5th Network's Conference in Turin	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=43">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=43</a>
October 3-4	Steering Committee and Assembly meetings	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/03Oct07_SC%20-%20Minute.pdf">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/docs/ajax/ogm/03Oct07_SC%20-%20Minute.pdf</a>
November 21-22	GMCC07, 3rd International Conference on coexistence in Seville	<a href="http://teamwork.intbase.com/0703_03/index.php">http://teamwork.intbase.com/0703_03/index.php</a>  <a href="http://www.coexistence-conference.org/">http://www.coexistence-conference.org/</a>
December 5-6	International Conference on GM free feedstuff in Brussels	<a href="http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=44">http://www.gmofree-euregions.net:8080/servlet/ae5Ogm?&amp;cms=null&amp;id_cms_doc=44</a>

#### 5. 2008 main challenges and objectives

The calendar of events and engagements for the forthcoming year is filling up quickly also this year. In addition to activities started in 2007, that will conclude this year, like the 6<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference (April), 2008 will see important highlights such as the organization of a meeting at the European Parliament and a first Network's position about the new CAP revision process. Furthermore, some Working Groups are called to improve the activities, which saw a slowing down in last 2 years.

##### Main objectives

2008 main objectives include the reinforcement of collaboration with the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions. A possible important aspect could be the acceleration of the debate on contamination thresholds in seeds, a question that has been pending for several years. 2008 opens with a good news from France, with the official ban over MON 810 maize.

##### Main Challenges

As for 2007, the main challenges in pursuit of Network's goals will centre on the effective participation of the network in the ongoing debate, and encouraging a contribution to the work of the

Network from every member Region (not always easy). A new consensus on how to improve the network's organization and working arrangements could be a first step to allow a wider participation.

From a political point of view, a big challenge could be holding an internal Network debate on future CAP reform, starting from a regional perspective and exploring the scope for added value in local and regional agri-food production.

The Network could be used as a platform to lobby EU Institutions not only on the GMO issue but also on a wider range of related matters (including/starting from GMOs).

Another challenge facing the network is the opportunity to obtain resources and increase knowledge under the several structural funds and European programmes.