

# 2008 ACTIVITY REPORT

*January 20th 2009*

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## 1. Premise

This is the third edition of the Network annual activity report. The report represents a synthetic overview of the main events of 2008 and an early insight into new challenges, goals and activities planned for 2009.

## 2. 2008 Outlook

Concerning European legislation on GMOs, 2008 was quite similar to 2007, as there were no changes in the European Legislative framework. Anyway, 2008 was marked by two relevant political initiatives which have seen their conclusion in the end of 2008.

The first one was the definition of a Ad-Hoc Working Party on GMOs by the EU Council, which paved the way for the adoption of an EU Council conclusions on GMOs on December 4<sup>th</sup> and that are very relevant for the future of decision making in the field of transgenic crops.

The second one was not directly linked with GMOs but it has an important link with sustainability of European agri-food productions: the green paper on quality in agriculture. This initiative was launched by the European Commission and marked the last trimester of 2008. The GMO-free Network has defined a position where we ask for the definition of a specific GMO-free label as an optional reserved term.

Beside these political initiatives, 2008 has seen the approval by the European Commission of some new GMOs in the European register: soybean MON89788, LLCotton25 (ACS-GHØØ1-3), soybean A2704-12, maize GA21 (MON-ØØØ21-9). None of them is for cultivation.

Concerning relevant initiatives on GMOs, 3 big events were organized in 2008:

- The NGOs initiative Planet Diversity in Bonn, 12-16 May;
- The 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on GMO analysis in Como, 24-27 June
- The non-GM soy Summit in Brussels, 7-9 October

2008 was also an important year for our Network, with the organization of 2 important events:

- the 6<sup>th</sup> Network's conference in Bilbao, 24-25 April;
- A political roundtable in Turin during Salone Internazionale del Gusto, 24 October.

During the Conference in Bilbao, the Network changed its leadership, with Euskadi as the new President and 3 Vice President: Bretagne, Oberösterreich and Toscana.

Furthermore, during 2008, the Network promoted a new partnership by signing a Joint Agreement with Slow Food International.

Concerning other Network meetings, during the year 3 meetings of the Steering Committee and 2 meetings of the Assembly were organized by the Presidency.

Regarding 2009, the 7<sup>th</sup> Network Conference in Urbino (Marche - Italy) will be the moment to review and improve the action and the strategy of the Network. Possible topics are: a) the setting of GM-free zones, b) thresholds in seeds, c) the agreement on a new juridical form of the Network (EGTC) and its Logo.

### 3. Summary of Network activities

*i. 14 February – Steering Committee and Assembly in Brussels*

Setting up of the 2008 agenda. Setting up the 6<sup>th</sup> Network's Conference.

*ii. 24-25 April – 6<sup>th</sup> Conference in Bilbao*

Issuing of a final declaration. Definition of the new Presidency. Setting up of new Working Groups.

*iii. 12-16 May – Participation to the World Summit on Diversity, Bonn*

The Summit was the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the GMO-free movements led by the GENET. Tuscany participated on behalf of the Network to present relevant initiatives and strategies of the Network during a plenary session on day 3.

*iv. 24-27 June – 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on GMO analysis, Como*

Tuscany and Euskadi attended this big scientific conference, where the most updated papers on GMO analysis were presented by International researchers and scientists.

*v. 3 July – Steering Committee in Brussels*

The first Steering Committee after the change in the Presidency.  
Creation of a Rapid reaction group to interact with press when necessary.  
Setting up of initiative with Slow Food.

*vi. 7-9 October – Non-GM soy Summit in Brussels*

Event that was organized as a follow up of the Network Conference on GM-free Soy in December 2007. Large participation by economic operators. The Network was well represented by Bretagne and Oberösterreich.

*vii. 23-24 October – Assembly and Political Roundtable in Turin*

Political meeting with the participation of Regional Ministries from the Network, MEPs and Member of Slow Food International (Vandana Shiva and Beppe Croce).  
Adoption of a Joint Declaration with Slow Food.

*viii. 3 December – Steering Committee in Brussels*

Adoption of a provisional agenda for the 2009.  
Decision to assess the constitution of a European Group for Territorial Cooperation.  
Adoption of a Common position on the Green paper on quality in agriculture.

#### 4. 2009 main challenges and objectives

All 2008 activities have been already closed. So, for 2009 there are no pending actions. Below, a general overview of the 2009 provisional agenda:

When	What	Where
January (28)	Preparative meeting of the GM-free soy market conference (14h-17h)	Brussels (office of Bretagne - Pays de la Loire - Poitou Charentes)
February (5)	Steering Committee meeting + Meeting of Working Group on non-gm agriculture	Brussels (Euskadi office) (Tuscany office)
April (24-25)	5th GMO-free Conference of GENET (Possible collaboration) <a href="http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/food-democracy-april-2009/conference-topics.html">http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/food-democracy-april-2009/conference-topics.html</a>	Lucerne (Switzerland)
June (18-19)	7th Conference of the Network	Urbino (MARCHE), 18-19 June
October (1-2)	Steering Committee meeting + Assembly	Greece
November (9-12)	GMCC 09 – 4 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Coexistence <a href="http://www.gmcc-09.com/">http://www.gmcc-09.com/</a>	Melbourne (Australia)

The place for the Assembly of October has not been set up yet; Slow Food-Spain invites the Network to set up a meeting, during the ALGUSTO fair, to be held in Bilbao in December, 11-14.

##### Main objectives

- the reinforcement of collaboration with the European Parliament;
- the definition of a position on thresholds in seeds, a question that should be newly addressed by EC in 2009;
- the improvement in the involvement of Network partners.

##### Main Challenges

1. As for 2008, one of the main challenges for the Network is the consolidation of the partnership to guarantee the maximum impact on European policies. With the partnership reaching 49 members, the management and the actual participation of every member are not easy to be assured by the Presidency. Reaching a consensus on a change in the network organization (with a juridical form) is a challenge that the new President, Euskadi, wishes to play as a way to strengthen the initiative and to assure a wider and deeper engagement by every partner and, on the other hand, to enlarge its visibility by the Institutions and its capacity.
2. Another challenge is the enlargement of the Network action to the 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).
3. Another challenge facing the Network is the opportunity to obtain resources and increase knowledge under the several structural funds and European programmes.