

### Network's Steering Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 (09.30 - 13.30)

Euskadi office in Brussels (Rue des deux Eglises, 27)

#### DRAFT MINUTES

Participants:

OBERÖSTERREICH	Gerald LONAUER	<a href="mailto:gerald.lonauer@ooe.gv.at">gerald.lonauer@ooe.gv.at</a>
ASTURIAS	Gemma POLLEDO	<a href="mailto:gemma@princast.es">gemma@princast.es</a>
MARCHE	Antonella PASSARANI	<a href="mailto:a.passarani@regiocentroitalia.org">a.passarani@regiocentroitalia.org</a>
MARCHE	Roberto GATTO	<a href="mailto:roberto.gatto@regione.marche.it">roberto.gatto@regione.marche.it</a>
BRETAGNE	Renaud LAYADI	<a href="mailto:renaud-layadi@region-bretagne.fr">renaud-layadi@region-bretagne.fr</a>
BRETAGNE, PAYS DE LA LOIRE	Justion AMIOT	<a href="mailto:justin.amiot@brplpc.org">justin.amiot@brplpc.org</a>
TOSCANA	Roberto PAGNI	<a href="mailto:roberto.pagni@regione.toscana.it">roberto.pagni@regione.toscana.it</a>
TOSCANA	Fabio BOSCALERI	<a href="mailto:fabio.boscaleri@regione.toscana.it">fabio.boscaleri@regione.toscana.it</a>
PIEMONTE	Luisa RICCI	<a href="mailto:luisa.ricci@regione.piemonte.it">luisa.ricci@regione.piemonte.it</a>
PIEMONTE	Caterina RONCO	<a href="mailto:caterina.ronco@regione.piemonte.it">caterina.ronco@regione.piemonte.it</a>
WALLONIE	Jean-Luc SERVAIS	<a href="mailto:jl258@gmail.com">jl258@gmail.com</a>
VARAZDIN, MOSLAVINA, SISAK	Damir PLESE	<a href="mailto:damirplese@azra.hr">damirplese@azra.hr</a>
AQUITAINE	Vincent LACARCE	<a href="mailto:vlacarce@bureau-aquitaine.be">vlacarce@bureau-aquitaine.be</a>
ENAE	Lambros TSOURGIANNIS	<a href="mailto:tsourgiannis@nestos.gr">tsourgiannis@nestos.gr</a>
TEDKNA	Athanassios GOUMAS	<a href="mailto:regioeuropa@skynet.be">regioeuropa@skynet.be</a>
EMILIA-ROMAGNA	Carlo MALAVOLTA	<a href="mailto:cmalavolta@regione.emilia.romagna.it">cmalavolta@regione.emilia.romagna.it</a>
EUSKADI	Martin ASCACIBAR (Chair)	<a href="mailto:m-ascacibar@ej-gv.es">m-ascacibar@ej-gv.es</a>
EUSKADI	Aitor MINTEGUI	<a href="mailto:aitor-mintequi@ej-gv.es">aitor-mintequi@ej-gv.es</a>
EUSKADI	Azucena SALAZAR (Notes)	<a href="mailto:azu-salazar@ej-gv.es">azu-salazar@ej-gv.es</a>

All the Regions members of the SC were represented in the meeting, except Umbria and Wales, which justified their absence (apologised).

It was agreed that the new member Region Wallonie and a representative of Croatian regions will be represented in the SC so that every Member State is represented in the Network decision board. Carlo Malavolta (Emilia Romagna) participated in the meeting as an observer. Athanassios Goumas represented TEDKNA, which joined the Network recently. Apart from this last Region and Varazdin and Wallonie, which signed the Charter of Florence during the Assembly of Torino, other Regions that have shown interest in joining the Network since then are Lorraine and Auvergne. The Presidency recently received both signatures.

Together with the annotated agenda, some documents about the repercussion in press of the activities of the Network in Torino, brought by Caterina Ronco and Luisa Ricci, were distributed. After a short presentation by EUSKADI and the exchange of ideas after Torino, the topics of the agenda were discussed.

The main outcomes are:

## POSITION OF THE NETWORK ON THE GREEN PAPER

TOSCANA presented the position of AREPO, that had been reached the day before during the definition of the AREPO contribution to the Green paper on quality in agriculture, and that finally included a [reference](#) to the issue of GMOs. That was judged as a success thanks to the efforts made by BRETAGNE and TOSCANA whose political representatives (in both, AREPO and the Network) participated actively in the meeting.

Nevertheless, the proposal for a position from the Network, that has to be clear, short and concise as suggested by ÖBEROSTERREICH, was still supported. The draft was examined and it was considered to be sufficient, with some amendments. But still more time for revision by the members was needed. After the necessary time for revision, suggestions and or amendments should be sent to EUSKADI and then the Presidency will send the contribution to the Commission before 30<sup>th</sup> December.

(The draft proposal for a position of the Network in relation to the consultation on the European agricultural product quality policy was adopted and on 26<sup>th</sup> December the Presidency sent the [definitive version](#) to the Council as a contribution of the Network to the Green Paper)

## PROGRAM FOR 2009

Apart from three working meetings of the Steering Committee to be held along the year, a General Assembly and the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Network are foreseen to take place in Urbino (Regione Marche) in mid June (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June). MARCHE, together with the Presidency, will organise the program and feed it with contents and inputs.

Some suggestions about the main topics were advanced. They are related to rules for creating GM-free areas, thresholds for seeds and guidelines for coexistence rules.

A classic yearly appointment for the Network will be the participation to the European Conference on GMO-free Regions, Biodiversity and Rural Development will be held in late April in Lucerne, hosted by GENET. Participation of political representatives of the Network has to be organized.

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Coexistence between GM and non-GM agricultural supply chains will take place in Australia. A representative of the Network should participate. Submission of abstracts can be done until 1st March.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference on GMO-free soy market is being organised by Bretagne and the WG on feed.

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 WGs: Meeting of Working Group on non-gm agriculture Meeting of WG on labelling	Brussels (Euskadi office and Tuscany office)
April (24-25)	5th GMO-free Conference of GENET (Possible collaboration)	Lucerne (Switzerland)

	<a href="http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/">http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/</a>	
June (18-19)	7th Conference of the Network	Urbino (MARCHE), 18-19 June
October (to be set)	Steering Committee meeting + Assembly	Brussels
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)
December (to be set)	Conference on GM-free soy market	Brussels

## WORKING GROUPS

The composition of the WGs is as follows:

WORKING GROUP	COORDINATOR	INTERESTED REGIONS
1. Protection of non-GM agriculture <i>(Voluntary Agreements, GMO-free zones, coexistence feasibility)</i>	TUSCANY AQUITAINE	MARCHE UMBRIA ABRUZZO PIEMONTE CANARIAS TEDKNA
2. Labelling <i>(GMO-free labels, product specifications, marketing,)</i>	EUSKADI OBERÖSTERREICH	DRAMA-KAVALA-XANTHI/ENAE TEDKNA LAZIO ABRUZZO CORSICA
3. Feed <i>(Non-GM feed supply, international agreements)</i>	BRETAGNE ASTURIAS	SALZBURG UMBRIA ENAE/DRAMA-KAVALA-XANTHI MENORCA LAZIO
4. Seed <i>(Contamination thresholds in seeds, analytical tools)</i>	UMBRIA PAYS DE LA LOIRE	MENORCA

It has been considered that coordinators should contact the interested regions and propose the concrete tasks and a timetable.

## Other business

Euskadi made a proposal ([EN FR ES](#)) for a joint declaration on the European quality agriculture policy among AREPO, EUROMONTANA, AREV and the GMO-free European Regions Network. A draft document was handed out and the members of the SC agreed to work on it. The Presidency will ask for suggestions and amendments during January

Aquitaine presented the [contribution](#) of the Network to the debate on genetically modified organisms at the environment council of the European Union (EU). A [press release](#) was prepared by the 'rapid reaction group' of the Network about the Council's conclusions on GMOs and was sent to the members of the Network.

The intended presentation of the Organic Technological Platform by Marco Schlueter, Director of IFOAM EU Group was postponed.

The initiative for a "[Resolution](#) of the Committee of the Regions on the right of the regions to decide for themselves on green genetic technology" has been abandoned by the Committee. It has been suggested to pick this initiative up and try to resume it. Oberösterreich will be in charge of it.

New partners in the Network are Lorraine and Auvergne (France) and TEDKNA – Attica (Greece).

AREPO statement on GMOs:

**L'AREPO demande que la communication positive sur la non-utilisation des OGM soit autorisée**

La position de l'AREPO sur les OGM est ainsi la suivante :

« L'AREPO préconise l'exclusion d'ingrédients étiquetés OGM – au sens de la législation européenne – des cahiers des charges des produits bénéficiant d'une indication géographique.

Les autorités régionales membres de l'AREPO souhaitent laisser libre choix aux filières AOP/IGP de leurs territoires mais constatent que de plus en plus de ces filières s'expriment en faveur d'une absence d'OGM dans leurs process de production.

Afin de rendre cet objectif réalisable, l'AREPO demande à l'Union européenne :

- De mettre en place une politique de production et d'approvisionnement en matières premières pour alimentation animale exemptes d'OGM, particulièrement concernant les oléoprotéagineux et les céréales,
- De mettre en œuvre des dispositifs de soutien pour aider les filières non-OGM à réaliser les investissements supplémentaires d'analyse, de traçabilité et de séparation des lots liés à la préservation contre les contaminations OGM,
- De veiller à ce que les règles de coexistence entre cultures conventionnelles et cultures OGM préservent totalement de tout risque de pollution croisée.
- De **permettre la communication positive**, via un terme optionnel facultatif des filières de production animale qui font l'effort technique et financier de ne pas utiliser d'aliments issus de plantes GM dans leurs process de production »

CONTRIBUTION OF THE [GMO-FREE EUROPEAN REGIONS NETWORK](#) TO THE OPEN DEBATE ON THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT QUALITY POLICY

Green Paper on EU agricultural product quality policy

The GMO-free European Regions Network, which consists of 47 regions and local authorities from 8 European countries, share a united goal of being able to declare themselves, either in full or in part, as being free of genetically modified crops. The Network believes that this is a basic human right of free choice and also supports the free trade principles of the EU.

The Network is equally committed to protecting *the reputation of European regional agro-food production, which has developed following years of regional policies aimed at improving and protecting the quality of its green produce and reducing the environmental impact of agriculture.* Indeed the quality of European agro-food produce is already widely appreciated by a diverse range of consumers across Europe and to build on this success will further help develop the sustainability credentials of EU agriculture.

The quality of produce can therefore be directly associated to the country of origin and certain geographic areas are '*de facto*' a quality trade-mark that might be negatively affected by GM crops. Thus, if a region is considered to be GMO-free, then it can add value to the quality of the produce produced by these regions and which should be mentioned in the labeling of their agro-food production. The Network therefore considers the role of GM crops as being relevant to the on-going debate on the Green Paper.

Given the above, and with regard to question number 3 of the Green Paper, the GMO-free European Regions Network:

- **SUPPORTS a specific EU regulatory rule drafted by the Commission, in which the optional reserved terms describing farming methods in particular sectors must be laid down**
- **AND REQUESTS 'non-GMO' and 'grown in a GMO-free area' to be considered as optional reserved terms.**

Brussels, 3rd December 2008

**PRESS RELEASE**

December 5<sup>th</sup> 2008

**European GMO-free Regions Network**

**“The Council has missed an opportunity to enable regions and/or local authorities to determine GMO-free areas”**

The 48 member regions of the European GMO-Free Regions Network<sup>1</sup> warmly welcomed last July the initiative of the French Presidency of the European Union to create an “Ad-hoc” working group in the Council that would examine GMOs under the following areas:

1. Environmental assessment and monitoring arrangements;
2. Socio-economic criteria;
3. Scientific evaluation process;
4. Threshold for seeds;
5. Sensitive and/or protected areas.

This "Ad hoc" working group on GMOs, composed of Member States' representatives, prepared the conclusions on GMOs which the Environment Council approved yesterday.

The European GMO-Free Regions Network is pleased to see that the Council conclusions on GMOs duly address some critical points such as the GMOs authorization procedures, the better use of expertise and the lowest technically practicable threshold for seeds.

However, the European GMO-Free Regions Network would have preferred the Commission and the Member States to define a set of socio-economic and agronomic criteria which could be taken into consideration during the authorisation process of GMOs.

At the same time, the European GMO-Free Regions Network underlines the importance of regional and local administrations in sizing up the economic and societal impacts of GMOs inside their administrative boundaries.

We also believe that sensitive and or protected areas should be recognised as GMO-free zones on the basis of the precautionary principle without prior risk assessment. Moreover, we consider that Member States, Regions and/or local authorities should be allowed to recognize GMO-free zones created by voluntary agreements decided by the majority of economic operators and not by a unanimous decision.

The European GMO-Free Regions Network firmly believes that regional and local governments should be allowed to determine GMO-free areas as a coexistence measure.

**Further Information**

Contact the Secretariat of the Network of GM Free Regions on:

---

<sup>1</sup> Burgenland, Kärnten, Niederösterreich, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg and Wien (Austria) / Wallonie (Belgium) / Sisak Moslavina and Varaždinska Zupanija (Croatia) / Euskadi, Menorca, Principado de Asturias and Gobierno de Canarias (Spain) / Aquitaine, Auvergne, Bourgogne, Bretagne, Centre, Corse, Franche-Comté, Ile-de-France, Limousin, Lorraine, Midi-Pyrénées, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Basse-Normandie, Haute-Normandie, Pays de la Loire, Poitou-Charentes and Rhône-Alpes (France) / Drama-Kavala-Xanthi, Tedkna and l'Union des Autorités Préfectorales (Greece) / Abruzzo, Bolzano, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Marche, Molise, Piemonte, Sardegna, Toscana, Umbria (Italy) / Highlands and Islands, Wales (United Kingdom)

- +34/ 945 016 314 - [Azu-Salazar@ej-gv.es](mailto:Azu-Salazar@ej-gv.es) (Network's Secretariat in Euskadi) or
- +32/ 2 285 45 30 - [aitor-mintegui@ej-gv.es](mailto:aitor-mintegui@ej-gv.es) (Euskadi delegation in Brussels)

#### Notes for Editors

- <http://www.gmofree-euregions.net>
- The European Network of GM Free Regions was established in November 2003 in response to the European Commission's recommendation of 23 July 2003 on guidelines for the development of national strategies and best practice for the development of national strategies for the coexistence of GM crops with conventional and organic farming.
- The European Network of GM Free Regions aims to preserve farmers' rights to grow organic and non-GM crops and consumers rights to reject GM food.