



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 13 March 2009

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**AGRILEG 33
ENV 203**

NOTE

from: Netherlands delegation
to: Council
Subject: GMOs: approval and cultivation

Delegations will find attached a note from the Netherlands delegation on the abovementioned subject, which has been entered under "Any other business" on the agenda for the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) meeting on 23 March 2009.

**NOTE FROM THE NETHERLANDS DELEGATION UNDER AOB ON
AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL OF 23 MARCH 2009**

Subject: “GMOs: approval and cultivation

Background

When proven safe for humans, animals and environment GMOs can be approved for the European market according to the existing EU-legislation. The Netherlands find compliance with EU-legislation an essential anchor in European cooperation. Therefore the Netherlands in general give their approval to proposals for GMO-admissions which are in accordance with existing EU-legislation.

Because of the increased attention in society for GMOs and rapid technological developments the question may be raised whether a distinctive approach on the approval of GMO products and the cultivation of GMOs can provide a solution for the often complex and difficult EU decision making process on GMOs. Considering the above, the Netherlands want to bring the following statement under the attention of the Agricultural Council (also expressed in the Environmental Council of the 2nd of March 2009):

From the principle that the compliance with EU legislation is an essential anchor in European cooperation, the Netherlands in general gives its approval to decisions established by the European Commission, which are in accordance with existing European legislation.

The Dutch government recognises however that the European legislation on GMOs is not taking into account the recent developments and worries in EU-society and socio-economic dimensions of use and market access of GMOs.

Therefore, the Netherlands urges the Commission to take the initiative to develop proposals on adapting the existing GMO-regulation, taking into account the socio-economic dimensions of GMOs.

As far as the Netherlands are concerned a possible solution would be that, conform present legislation, internal market rules apply to the import of products, but when it comes to cultivation the choice is left to the individual MS. Furthermore it is important that the process of including the socio-economic dimension into the balance is readily started.

Goal

With this paper the Netherlands would like initiate an exchange of views with the MS about the possibility of adaptation of EU-legislation in the light of the recently increased attention in society on GMOs and rapid technological developments. The Netherlands want to actively contribute in bringing the decision making process of GMO approval and cultivation a step forward.