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PRESS RELEASE

## **EU Commission proposal rejected: MEPs say no to the GMO opt-out proposal**

The EU Food and Feed Chain partners feel relieved by today's decision of the European Parliament to reject the European Commission's trade-distorting proposal aimed at allowing EU Member States to opt-out from authorised Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) for food and feed uses in the EU. The Coalition strongly opposes the proposal and calls on the EU Commission to withdraw it.

Providing Member States with the possibility to impose national bans on EU-approved GMOs is in clear contradiction with the core principles of the EU's internal market. By allowing that scientific findings on the safety of products be plainly overruled by non-science-based restrictions to the free movement of goods, the Commission would be setting a dangerous precedent (added to the legalised restrictions on GMO cultivation) that would severely undermine the reliability of the European food and feed chain. Dismantlement of the single market will destabilise the balance of the EU commodities market and have a negative impact on the EU budget.

This proposal would result in substantial commercial and legal risks for operators, condemning them to overly high costs and undue trade disruptions. By threatening the competitiveness of the agri-food chain, the largest employer in Europe today (30 million jobs in 2014 – 13.4% of total employment) and 3.5% of the EU GDP, this proposal is in clear disagreement with the EU's political priorities on "jobs and growth" and "better and smart regulation".

The EU Food and Feed Chain partners reiterate their call for a properly functioning and evidence-based EU policy on GMOs as a key element to secure the development and availability of innovative products to the benefit of consumers. The food and feed supply chain gathers a variety of operators (involved in research, development, manufacture and trade in products as diverse as seeds, grains, feedstuffs, oils, etc.) and requires that the agri-food business be based on a workable and predictable policy framework free of undue distortions. Jointly, we believe that a timely application of the existing EU legislation will provide for the much needed legal and regulatory certainty for all operators. The FFC also calls for a dedicated debate to address the relevant issues involving biotechnology and GMOs.

### **References:**

- [Economic Impact Assessment of the European GM "opt-out" proposal](#), COCERAL, FEDIOL and FEFAC, 20 October 2015
- [Position paper EU Food and Feed Chain Coalition for a functioning evidence-based EU policy on GMO](#), 28 May 2015
- [EU food and feed chain partners reject EU Commission proposal which threatens Internal Market for Agri-food products](#), 22 April 2015

Notes to the editor (list of FFC members):



FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN RICE MILLERS



**a.v.e.c.** is since 1966 representing and promoting the interests of the European poultry meat sector. Members are national organisations representing poultry processors and the poultry trade in 16 EU countries with about 95% of the EU poultry meat production. The European poultry meat business employs more than 300 000 citizens and has a turnover of more than 32 billion Euros.

**COCERAL** is the European association of cereals, rice, feedstuffs oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply trade. It represents the interest of the European collectors, traders, importers, exporters and port silo storekeepers of the above mentioned agricultural products. COCERAL's full members are 26 national associations in 18 countries, and 1 European association [Unistock]. With about 2500 companies as part of COCERAL national members, the sector trades agricultural raw materials destined to the supply of the food and feed chains, as well as for technical and energy uses.

**Copa-Cogeca** is the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents over 23 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 66 member organisations from the EU member states.

**ESA** European Seed Association is the voice of the European seed sector, representing those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds. Its membership consists of more 36 national seed associations, representing more than 7000 seed businesses, and of more than 60 individual company members.

**EuropaBio** is the European Association of BioIndustries. Our members are involved in research, development, testing, manufacturing and commercialisation of biotech products and processes in human and animal healthcare, diagnostics, bioinformatics, chemicals, crop protection, agriculture, food and environmental products and services. EuropaBio also counts a number of National Biotech Associations in its membership who in turn represent more than 1800 biotech SMEs.

The **European Flour Millers'** association is the voice of the European flour milling industry. It gathers the national associations from 28 European countries. They represent 3 800 companies employing some 45 000 people. With some 45 million t of agricultural commodities processed in the EU each year, the sector is the largest single food user of EU domestic wheat, rye and oats.

**EUVEPRO** is the European Vegetable Protein Federation representing the interest of the producers of vegetable proteins for human consumption in the EU.

**FEDIOL**, the EU vegetable oil and proteinmeal industry association, represents the interests of the European seed and bean crushers, meal producers, vegetable oils producers, refiners and bottlers. FEDIOL's members are 12 national associations and associated company members in 5 other EU countries. With about 150 facilities in Europe the sector provides 20.000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 36 million tonnes of basic products a year, both of EU origin and imported from third country markets.

**FEFAC** is the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation. FEFAC represents 24 national Associations in 23 EU Member States as well as Associations in Switzerland, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, Russia and Norway with observer/associate member status, and is the only independent spokesman of the European Compound Feed Industry at the level of the European Institutions. The European compound feed industry employs over 110,000 persons on app. 4,000 production sites often in rural areas, which offer few employment opportunities.

The **Federation of European Rice Millers** is the voice of the European rice milling industry. FERM is made up of 21 company members from around Europe as well as 3 national rice milling associations of Italy, Spain and Portugal. In representing over 90% of the milling capacity in Europe it is able to reflect credibly and authoritatively the interests of the industry.

**Starch Europe** is the trade association which represents the interests of the EU starch industry both at European and international level. Its membership comprises 24 EU starch producing companies, together representing more than 95% of the EU starch industry, and in associate membership, 7 national starch industry associations. Before October 2014 Starch Europe was called the AAF.

The **European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)** represents national federations of livestock traders, meat industry, and meat traders. Through its 52 national member federations, UECBV is the voice for some 20,000 trading and industrial companies.

**Unistock Europe** is the only European association of professional storekeepers for agribulk commodities in the European Union. Unistock Europe full members are present in 11 countries. With a total of approximately 79 port silos facilities Unistock Europe proactively represents the united voice for the agri-bulk storage sector towards the EU authorities. Unistock Europe is a full member of COCERAL.