



Ministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt,  
Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz  
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



# BERLIN DECLARATION

Berlin, May 8, 2015 *On the occasion of the Conference "GMO-free Europe - Future Opportunities and Challenges" of the 64 GM-free Regions of Europe, the GMO-NGO-Network and the Danube Soya Association from May 6 to 8, 2015*

The participants emphasize the four guiding principles and objectives: • Subsidiarity Principle, • Precautionary Principle, • Polluter-pays-Principle, • Freedom of choice for everybody and point out the following:

## **Opt Out**

We accept the compromise reached by the European Parliament and the Council regarding the possibility for Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on their territory. We urge Member States to make the most effective use of this new Directive (EU) 2015/412 within their national, and where appropriate, regional legislation and ensuring legal certainty of territorial bans on cultivation. We emphasise that the adoption and implementation of Directive (EU) 2015/412 does not diminish the necessity to resolve shortcomings of the authorisation and risk assessment procedure at the EU level in any way. Furthermore, making use of the opt-out option cannot reduce a Member States' influence and responsibility within the authorisation procedure.

## **European Protein Strategy**

The European Union's soya imports are equivalent to 12 million hectares of arable land and account for 97% of its demand. This jeopardizes the independence of the EU food supply and causes destructive land use practices in exporting countries. The widespread absence of legumes from crop rotations in Europe has huge negative consequences for our climate, soil fertility, nitrogen balance and biodiversity.

We demand that the EU Parliament and Commission develop a coherent European Protein Strategy to address all these issues. It should effectively promote the sustainable production and use as food and feed of GMO-free oilseeds, protein crops and legumes in Europe. This requires research, development efforts as well as coherent provisions of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Member states should use existing instruments of the CAP and commit sufficient R&D funds to this end.

## **TTIP**

We demand that EU standards on health, the environment, legal certainty and democracy must not be lowered by TTIP or any other free trade agreements. The precautionary principle, as a fundamental principle of EU policies, must not be undermined. We point out that neither existing nor future safety and labelling rules of the EU and its Member States may be restricted or prohibited by the TTIP or other free trade agreements.

## **Low Level Presence**

GMO-free products and seed must remain GMO-free. We therefore demand that no thresholds are established for the contamination of food and feed with GMOs not authorized within the EU. For seeds, not labelled as GMO, the current zero tolerance principle for GMO contamination must be maintained.

## **Non-GMO-Labeling**

Consumers must have a right to full transparency and choice on the use of GMOs in the food they buy. This must also include the use of GMO feed in animal products. We are calling for a European wide harmonized approach to non-GMO-labelling on animal products. In the absence of such a system we ask national governments to implement national labelling systems for animal products fed without GMOs, which already exist in Germany, France, Austria and Luxembourg. Member states should support and participate in drafting an international GMO-free labelling standard, for example the process initiated in Moravske Toplice.

## **New Technologies**

The precautionary principle also should apply for new technologies of genetic modification. New technologies, not yet known when defining GMOs about 25 years ago, have to be assessed in a common coherent and transparent EU-process and must not be abused to undermine the present EU GMO legislation, safety and international standards.