

Greenpeace Press release/GMOs/Gene Detectives

Agriculture Ministry and Food Safety Authority have illegal secrets toward romanians on GMOs Greenpeace Campaign - „Gene detectives“ – to expose GMOs

Bucuresti, 3rd of June - Greenpeace today launches the “Gene detective” campaign [1] to expose locations for cultivation of GM crops because Governments institutions keeps GMO data as secret [2]. “It’s time that somebody to defend romanians will not eat GMOs against agro-chemical companies and their satellites from the government that treat us as guinea pigs since they refuse to publish locations for GM crops cultivation and the result of lab analysis for suspect food. Starting today any romanian citizen can be a gene detective to expose what Agriculture Ministry and Food Safety Authority are illegally keeping as a secret”, said Gabriel Paun, Greenpeace Campaigner.

For the beginning the campaign aims the fields. The second stage will look into the shelves. The gene detective work consists of observation and sending samples of maize, soya, rapeseed and sun-flower fields that are GMO suspects. Samples are being sent to Greenpeace office that holds 200 fast tests that will offer immediate results [3]. In case of positive results, Greenpeace will announce the national Environmental Guard that should take secondary samples from locations indicated by the detectives together with Greenpeace volunteers specialized in sampling. The locations where GMOs are confirmed will be published on Greenpeace webpage. The gene detectives have “The Suspects List” [4] at their disposal, meaning the list of farmers that have grown GM soya in the last years [5] and that are mainly having rented the largest fields from the State. The campaign should prevent farmers growing GM maize MON810 since the Ministry of Environment has started the procedures to ban it and demands farmers not to grow it starting this year [6].

First ones to answer the call to be gene detectives are the organic farmers. GMOs are banned in organic farming and their presence endangers the entire production. The organic farmers knows that coexistence is impossible and considers the Agriculture Ministry attitude to be illegal and irresponsible. “It’s very likely that the Ministry is afraid that we will prove again that once GMOs are released in environment they will go out of control. Since we don’t know where GMOs are, nobody can be responsible. They make us believe that they are so exposed to agrochemical corporations influence that they are ready to break people’s right to access environmental information that is granted by international conventions and romanian legislation. By keeping in secret the locations where there is GMOs cultivation the ministry is cancelling farmers right to defend against contamination with GMOs and by the lack of proper check products labeling they are refusing consumers right to choose to eat GMO free.”, said Willy Schuster, organic farmer from Transilvania, Romania, member of Biocoop Sibiu.

Greenpeace demands:

- Ministry of Agriculture to publish the locations of GMOs cultivation for 2007 and 2008
- Food Safety Authority to publish the results of food analysis and the measures taken for GM food between 2006-2008
- Ministry of Environment to urgently finalize banning cultivation of GM maize MON810

For more information:

Willy Schuster, organic farmer, member of Biocoop Sibiu, tel: +40 269 862206
Gabriel Paun, Greenpeace România, +40 744 351977

Notes:

[1] <http://www.greenpeace.ro/articol.php?aID=171>

[2] Agriculture Ministry letter to Greenpeace 278234/05.07.2007 is available at request
Food safety authority letter to Greenpeace 41328/20.09.2006 is available at request

[3] To do more testings Greenpeace needs donations because the fast tests are expensive. Greenpeace doesn't accept government and companies money and encourages private persons to make donations for more testing at:

Fundacia Greenpeace CEE Romania

Codul de identificare fiscala: 22747989

Cod bancar: RO 17 BACX 0000 0001 2645 6001

[4] <http://www.greenpeace.ro/articol.php?aID=170>

[5] Cultivation of GM soya has been banned in Romania since 1st of January by Government Decision

[6] Ministry of Environment speech 27.03.2008:

http://www.mmediu.ro/biroul_de_presa/comunicate_de_presa/03_Martie_2008/27.03.08c.doc