

GM maize MON810 from the Danube Delta has been destroyed Green groups demands the Government to destroy all GMOs from Romania

Bucuresti, 10 iunie 2008 - The environmental organizations "Save the Danube and the Delta", "Eco Pontica" and Greenpeace appreciate that the illegally cultivated GM maize MON810 in the Danube Delta has been destroyed [1]. The case was signalled by Neculai Amihulesei, editor at "Romania Libera" newspaper and he became the first successful gene detective in the frame of the freshly started Greenpeace campaign [2]. Mr Amihulesei will therefore get the first "Gene Detective" t-shirt as a reward for the efficient detective work. "We thank Mr Amihulesei for signalling this case. Cultivation of GM maize in a protected area - UNESCO World Nature Heritage such as the Danube Delta is a criminal act against biodiversity. It was a totally irresponsible and arrogant gesture of Monsanto, the company that produces MON810, and it was immediately taxed by the Government by destroying it. MON810 is created to kill a pest that doesn't exist in the Delta, so the company's gesture is therefore hard to understand. The Government must destroy all MON810 fields because it affects non-target species, soil health and even the aquatic life", said Gabriel Paun, Greenpeace biodiversity campaigner.

Immediately after finding out of the Delta case, ecologist organizations have asked the authorities for information and to take measures. The answer came from Ministry of Agriculture [3] and it says that the first 2,5 ha of MON810 have been destroyed, but it didn't provided the locations of the other fields according to the NGOs requests breaking therefore Government Decision 43/2007 (the Romanian version of the 2001/18 EU Directive [4]. "The letter received from Mrs Tatiana Preda, a ministry employee that has the habit to participate at pro-GMOs events and to offend organic farmers is in line with answers received in the last 2 years and shows that the ministry still has secrets towards Romanians. We are asking ourselves what is Mr Ciolos Ministry to hide? I think they are afraid that once we'll get the locations we'll proof again that it's impossible to keep GMOs under control", added Paun.

"The Danube Delta, one of the largest wetlands on Earth (580.000 ha) that shelters 1689 flora species and 3448 fauna species is a "natural museum" of biodiversity, and new life forms like GMOs created in laboratories are not welcomed here", said Liviu Mihaiu, President of "Save the Danube and the Delta".

"19% of Romania's surface is part of the European network of protected areas Natura 2000, and the unique biological diversity must not be endangered by additional useless risks, such as GMOs which once they're released into environment they can no longer stay under control and can irreversibly affect the biological diversity", said Florin Palade, President of Eco Pontica.

Recent studies proof that the effects of MON810 that produces it's own pesticide are far away from being predictable and the potential to cause harmful effects it's much higher then previously thought. EFSA is responsible to provide the EU Commission with scientific opinions on GMO risks. On 18th of March 2008 EFSA admitted its limits by signing a mandate from the EC to bring its expertise on long term risks in 2 years time as the EU legislation requires. 5 member states have already banned cultivation of MON810 and 21 of them simply don't grow it. The risks of MON810 for Romanian ecosystems are not assessed. „Romania can and must ban immediately cultivation of MON810 and it's entire territory. We are looking worried the delay of Ministry of Environment to finalize the ban, but we believe that a minister like Mr Korodi is one that keeps his promises", ended Paun.

The green groups calls Mr Attila Korodi, the Environmental Minister to urgently ban cultivation of MON810 in Romania.

Pentru mai multe detalii:

Gabriel Paun – coordonator campanii OMG, Greenpeace

Romania, gabriel.paun@greenpeace.ro

Anamaria Bogdan, PR & Campaigning Manager Asociatia „Salvati Dunarea si Delta”,

anamaria.bogdan@salvatidelta.ro

Florin Palade, Presedinte „Fundatia Eco-Pontica”, contact@eco-pontica.ro

NOTE:

[1] Adresa MADR 117086/29.05.2008 semnata de Teodor Mihalcea, Director General si transmisa de Tatiana Preda, Consilier Superior

[2] Campania „Detectiv de gene”:

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

[3] Pacatele de moarte ale companiei Monsanto:

<http://www.greenpeace.ro/uploads/articole/MONS%207%20Deadly%2008%20update%20Romania.pdf>

[4] Capitolul IV: Alte dispozitii, SECTIUNEA 1: Confidentialitatea, Art. 43 din OUG 43/2007

„(4)Nu sunt confidentiale urmatoarele informatii, transmise conform art. 13-20, 22, 26, 29, 33, 36, 39 s,i 42:

a) descrierea generala a organismului modificat genetic, numele si adresa notficatorului, scopul introducerii, locatia introducerii si utilizarile preconizate