



PRESS RELEASE

UK support for GMO food opens a new scenario for European sustainable development

British Environment Secretary Owen Paterson on Monday backed the use of GM food, stressing its importance in the future of British future security. In an important remark, Mr. Paterson stressed the environmental benefits deriving from GM technology, like sustainable agriculture and environmental remediation¹. An important Minister of a European country releases a declaration on GM food based on available scientific evidence, rather than electoral trends.

“The European Federation of Biotechnology welcomes the British position” – says Professor Marc Van Montagu, President of EFB – “this is certainly an opportunity for the future of Europe, and needs a European solution; we know the UK Government is not alone, and we are confident this will be the chance to stimulate a new way forward. The EFB will play its role in bridging the Scientific community with Institutions and Society, and support the Commission services who already advanced interesting proposals”.

Biotechnology, including GM technology, offers today environmentally friendly and sustainable production solutions that Europe can no longer ignore.

The European Commission has recently published a sequel to its report on 15 years of research on food biotechnologies, with a 10 year follow-up² that represents a total of 25 years research and 300M euros expenditure on food safety and security. The report clearly states that “the main conclusion to be drawn from the efforts of more than 130 research projects [...] involving more than 500 independent research groups, is that biotechnology, and in particular **GMOs, are not per se more risky than conventional plant breeding technologies**”.

Biotechnology addresses the main challenges of sustainable development: the development of renewable resources, a more environmentally friendly production of food, the production of biomaterials. All these aspects are key elements for building the Europe 2020 we imagine.

The news comes while the European Commission and the next Irish Presidency of the Union prepare the Bioeconomy stakeholders conference, to be held in Dublin on February next year, and will certainly have an impact in the implementation of the Europe 2020 and the strategy “Bioeconomy for Europe”.

The European Federation of Biotechnology is actively engaged in promoting awareness in the scientific community, and in the use of participatory approaches in decision making processes, involving Society and Institutions in a continuous dialogue. EFB works with several players in Europe to ensure scientific discovery to be the basis of a sustainable development.

For additional data and details, please contact the EFB Central Office at:

¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9733589/Food-minister-Owen-Paterson-backs-GM-crops.html>

² http://ec.europa.eu/research/biosociety/pdf/a_decade_of_eu-funded_gmo_research.pdf



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