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International moratorium on transgenic agriculture

Only controlled investigations will be allowed and new forms of sustainable production will be explored

By **Eduard Good**

TEN YEARS after the arrival of the first transgenic plants on the market, governments now announce a precautionary suspension, on an international scale, of both commercial cultures of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and open field tests.

Pressure from the general public has finally succeeded in warning the international community about the dangers involved in transgenics: genetic contamination, uncontrolled food risks, depriving farmers of autonomy, the loss of biological diversity and, above all, the danger of the irreversibility of a transgenic world.

More than 50 countries ratified the Biosafety Protocol on the

tenth anniversary of the World Convention on Biological Diversity (2002) and the 130 signatory countries have taken on the commitment, also reinforcing national and regional legislations. Now a moratorium on the culture of GMOs is beginning, in order to evaluate its consequences and, at the same time, look for possible alternatives.

Thus, from the month of June and for an indefinite period, all culture of genetically modified organisms with a commercial purpose will be forbidden and only investigations carried out in safe conditions by independent investigators will be allowed and, at the same time, investigations on sustainable agriculture will be supported.

Despite this morato-

rium, there is still great pressure against transgenics from social movements all over the world and also from consumers, farmers and investigators of the public sector.

logical monitoring follow-ups, better health tests, prohibition of antibiotic-resistant genes, traceability and labelling, GMOs fortuitous presence thresholds, GMOs producer



Some insist that the moratorium should only be lifted when strict regulations are approved in terms of safety for the environment and the consumer (periodically reassessed licences, bio-

legal liability principle...). Others insist on the moratorium being a step in the right direction to move progressively and definitively towards a world without agricultural GMOs.

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