

DECLARATION OF GM-FREE REGIONS' NETWORK
ON LABELS AND GM-FREE FARMING

Brussels 4 February 2010

The *GM-Free Regions' Network* which gathers 51 regional governments of the European Union is proud of the great success of its initiative "3rd Conference Non-GM Labels, quality productions and European regional agricultures' strategy", taking place in Brussels on 3 and 4 February 2010 thanks to the support of the European Union's Committee of the Regions, the European Association of Geographical Indications (AREPO), Slow Food and the members of Greens groups - EFA, Social - Democrat and Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

This conference, which welcomed several hundreds of participants from the United States, Brazil, the European Union, India, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine, allowed showing the reality of a fully-committed non-GM labelled products' market gaining by a powerful consumer's movement. To that effect, we have to understand the establishment of national labelling policies in Austria, Germany, France and tomorrow, Ireland. To that effect too we have to understand the participation of about a hundred of food processing production and transformation businesses collecting their products among more than 700 000 farms.

The network is proud of its concerns being heard beyond the Union's borders. To answer to its call, Brazilian producers created in June 2008 the ABRANGE which federates the supply of GM-free soy. On 16 and 17 march 2010 in New Delhi will be held the first Indian conference on GM-free soy to which is invited the GM-free European Regions' Network.

The Network is also proud of groups from the European Parliament having answered to its call and, on their own initiative, having organised for 5 November 2009 a meeting called "GM-free products an economic opportunity for European producers" strictly in accordance with the objectives defended by the regions.

The *GM-Free Regions' Network* expresses its satisfaction before the progress achieved since its first mission in Brazil in 2005 and the organization of December 2007 1st Conference on GM-free soy.

They note with keen interest:

- That the producers of GM-free soy have organized themselves and that the spectre of a shortage of this raw material vital for a good many industries is removed.
- That in Brazil but also in the United States, the number of lands dedicated to GM-free production stopped decreasing and that in some cases, they succeeded for the first time in reversing the trend. They are proud of GM soy's banning in India.
- That in several countries of the EU national laws were set up to allow identification of meat and dairy products without resorting to GMOs in animal diet.
- That many sectors are trying to reduce their dependence to imported vegetable proteins to commit themselves to a farming allowing a better bond with the soil, a bigger respect for human, environment, landscapes and climate.
- That today and even more tomorrow, one of the conditions to conservation of competitiveness in European farming, within the framework of the CAP's revision, will lie in its capacity to maintain the authenticity, the tradition, and the bond to territory of its products for an open, healthy and fair commercial supply.

- That the issue on genetically modified organisms' use in farming is a high importance strategic and trade issue both for production sectors and environment, economic, social and territorial sustainability of the European regional economies.

The *GM-Free Regions' Network* urges its institutional partners of the **European Commission**, the **European Parliament**, and the **Committee of the Regions** to consider the wishes expressed by the whole parties, production sectors, transformation sectors, distribution networks and regional institutions attending the conference:

- The network requests that the European Commission and the European Parliament, taking advantage of the open debate by its various interventions, do their best to know exhaustively the real issues of making secure a GM-free animal diet.

⇒ *The network requests that a specific policy on needs detection be created considering all the interests of the sectors' contributors.*

- The network hopes that the consumer have access to a **real openness** from the pitchfork to the fork and among others that consideration be taken on the exact nature of the animal diet's composition part of the European livestock's intake for production of dietary goods.

⇒ *The network requests that the consumer have access to an educated-choice with Labels and quality distinction signs.*

- The network considers as vital to bring up again the question of the **European Union's** capacity to produce this type of raw materials.

⇒ *The network requests that a policy on GM-free vegetable proteins production be implemented over the European Union territory and that this chapter be recalled in a specific way in bilateral trade relations with the United States, India, China, Africa, and the MERCOSUR.*

The network requests that these themes be considered in the next revision of the common agricultural policy in order that European agriculture represents an example of sustainable development for the whole planet, in order to break food shortage, development gaps and inequality in resources' access.

The GM-Free Regions' Network undertakes to:

- help making known the efforts of private and public labels in their wish to defend their products quality,

- give substance to and reinforce the implementation of sustainable agriculture to reconcile producers and consumers and to protect the environment in which the next generations will live.

- contribute to the work of national and European authorities over the issue because the regions, thanks to their institutional role and/or their closeness with civil society, are in the best position to provide the defence of their territory interests.

Brussels, 5 February 2010