

EU Directive 90/220

The EU is currently in the process of revising the 1990 Directive on the deliberate release of GMOs into the environment. On 14th February, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) approved a revised EU GM directive.

This revision is intended to clarify some areas of concern with the existing directive.

- Assessment – Clearer guidelines are introduced on the requirements of the risk assessment process, prior to licensing of releases.
- Monitoring – Clearer guidelines on the requirements for monitoring the GMO in the environment and detecting any problems that may arise.

However it has already been criticised on a number of fronts:

- No provision for liability for environmental damage, as mentioned in earlier drafts.
- No commitments to ensuring prior informed consent for exports to non-EU countries.
- No absolute ban on antibiotic-resistance marker genes - to be phased out over a number of years.

Six EU countries (France, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Austria and Luxembourg) have stated they will not accept any new GMO approvals and will retain the “de facto” moratorium until issues of traceability of GMOs and labeling have been resolved. Traceability is a key issue for monitoring in the field and, assigning responsibility.

