

European Commission flies in the face of European Parliament on GE trees

Author: Lucy

Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>Bonn28May2008</p><p>Whataboutresponsibilityandtheprecautionaryprinciple,EuropeanCommission?</p><p>Currently,attheConferenceofthePartiestotheConventiononBiologicalDiversityinBonn,partiesarediscussingapossiblemoratoriumonthereleaseofgeneticallyengineered(GE)trees.</p><p>IntheResolutionof24thAprilonpreparationsforthemeetingoftheConventiononBiologicalDiversity(CBD)inBonn,Germany,theEuropeanParliament:UrgestheCommissionandMemberStatesto:EnsurethatCOP9adoptsafinaldecisiontoagreeamoratoriumontheenvironmentalrelease,includingfieldtrials,andcommercialuseofgeneticallymodifiedtrees.</p><p>However,theEuropeanCommissionisrefusingtofollowthisline.ItisthereforedefyingnotonlytheEuropeanParliament,thePrecautionaryPrinciple,manyEUmemberstatesandcountriesinAfrica,Asia,LatinAmericaandtheIslandsandStates.TheAfricanGrouphasbeenparticularlystronginitsposition.</p><p>AndreyLaletin,ChairmanofFriendsofSiberiaForests(Russia)said:TheCBDisaninternationalagreementwithacollectiveapproachtodecision-making.Regionstryingtoimposetheirownnarrowinterestsonthecollectivedecision-makingprocessunderminethefundamentalprinciplesandthespiritofinternationalagreementssuchastheCBD.</p><p>HelenaPaulofEconexus(UK)said:WearedismayedbythewaytheEuropeanCommission,whichisunelected,isflyinginthefaceofparties, democracyandscience.Electedrepresentativesareaccountabletotheirpeopleandclearlyrecognisethatpublicopinionisinfavourofamoratorium,buttheECisblatantlyattemptingtodefeydemocraticprocess.</p><p>AntjeLorchoftheGene-ethicalNetwork(Germany)said:WeweregladtoseeinAprilthattheEuropeanParliamentdecidedthatitwantedamoratoriumonfieldtrialsandcommercialuseofGETrees,andthatitexplicitlyurgedtheECtoensurethisatCOP9.ButatthenegotiationshereinBonn,theECisnotworkingtowardsamoratorium.Consideringthatthehighrisksofthesenewtechnologiescannotyetbeassessed,wecalltheECtojointheAfricancountriesandothersinsuspendingGETreereleasesandtobeapplythePrecautionaryPrinciple.</p><p>Prof.HubertWeiger,presidentoftheBUND/FriendsofEarthofGermanyconcluded:Ourforestshaveawidevarietyoftreesatarewelladaptedtoawidespectrumofhabitats,butGETreesarelikelytobeproducedinmonoculturesofnovalueforbiodiversity.WithGETreesweareattackingthelifeinsuranceofourforests.TheyarenosolutionandtheEP hastakenawiseandresponsibledecisionwesupportunambiguously.WestronglyurgetheECtoimplementthedeclarationofthedemocraticallyelectedEuropeanParliament.
ENDS
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1.ThefulltextoftheResolutionoftheEuropeanParliamentfrom24April2008(P6_TA-PROV(2008)0179)isavailableat<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0179+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN></p>