



PRESS RELEASE

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DEFENDING GMO AGAINST THE CULTURE OF PRECAUTION

French senators, under pressure from the European Commission, started on Wednesday 21 March to examine the bill on genetically modified organisms (GMO). The bill proposes to severely frame the culture cultivation of GMO and opts for restrictive measures obliging, among other things, farmers to declare parcels of transgenic plants, to obtain an authorisation before any marketing of them and to label their products.

The latest Molinari Economic Institute report published today, [Defending GMO against the culture of precaution](#), invites serious reconsideration of the position of the French government in the area of GMOs. The report defends the idea that far from ensuring the protection and safety of consumers, the culture of precaution deprives individuals of the many benefits of GMOs.

As the author underlines first of all, the risks concerning GMOs are exaggerated. "One of the principal lines of attack against GMOs is the risk of reduction of biodiversity which they would run. The deposit of pollen would involve among other things a process of hybridization which would lead to the disappearance of non GMO species. Actually, the danger, in so much as it exists, could be over-estimated. According to an INRA study published in 2002, if it is impossible to confine GMO pollens on the parcels where it is cultivated, the risk of contamination of other organisms is minimal."

The benefits then of transgenic organisms are underestimated. The author thus indicates that according to many studies, "[the] introduction of new varieties resistant to insect attacks allows the quantity of insecticide treatments to be considerably reduced". He adds: "economists no longer doubt that the development of poor countries can be fostered by the growth of agricultural productivity. Their refusal to use GMO with superior productivity than traditional species, for the reason of very hypothetical dangers, would again deprive them of real and fast help."

For the IEM, the precautionary principle does not constitute an effective decision tool. The danger is inherent with the principle, insofar as calling upon an uncertainty which in any case can never be removed the principle allows any organised group to impose the most unfounded demands. It is because of these requirements that we are deprived from acquiring more knowledge on the environmental safety of transgenic plants.

The report concludes that "finally, with regard to the current elements of the debate, the opposition to GMO amounts to ignoring the facts so as to hold on to the most doubtful assumptions."

The economic note is available on the IEM website :

French version : <http://www.institutmolinari.org/pubs/note20063fr.pdf>

English version : <http://www.institutmolinari.org/pubs/note20063.pdf>

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