



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**

for the people | for the planet | for the future

## Everything you need to know about GM maize decisions in 60 seconds

July 2017

In the coming days and weeks, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker will decide whether to close Europe's fields to genetically modified (GM) crops for good, or if more GM crops can be grown.

National governments have over the past decade failed to reach a consensus of whether to allow new GM crops to be grown or not. Most countries are against, but under EU procedures they have insufficient numbers to ban them outright. Because of this stalemate the final decision now lies with President Juncker. Depending on the outcome, fields in Europe will either be GM-free for the foreseeable future, or the biotech industry will seize the opportunity to push for more GM crops to be grown in Europe.

Up for authorisation or rejection are two new GM maize varieties for cultivation in the European Union – Pioneer's "1507" and Syngenta's "Bt11". In addition, Juncker is deciding if the only GM maize that can currently be grown in the European Union (albeit on a limited area) will be reapproved – Monsanto's "Mon810".

The two new GM maize strains (1507 and Bt11) are tolerant to a highly toxic herbicide called glufosinate. This herbicide is known to harm the reproductive systems of humans and other animals. Under EU pesticide laws it should be phased out, but Bayer, the company that produces it, is currently attempting to keep it on the market.

GM crops are already deeply unpopular in the EU. A wide and strong GM-free movement has so far forced the banning of the cultivation of GM maize in 17 countries and 4 regions across the bloc. In October 2016, the European Parliament voted with a large majority to reject the 3 GM maize strains mentioned above. Only six national governments support them being grown in the EU.

While these voting outcomes do not oblige Juncker to reject the GM maize strains, we are confident that if he can see that there is enough public pressure against them, he will make the right call and reject them once and for all.

### **Prepared by Mute Schimpf, edited by Paul Hallows, July 2017**

*Friends of the Earth Europe gratefully acknowledges financial assistance of European Commission's DG Environment. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Friends of the Earth Europe and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of the funder mentioned above. The funder cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information this Document.*





**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**

for the people | for the planet | for the future

## Friends of the Earth Europe

### Member Groups

Austria	Global 2000
Belgium (Wallonia & Brussels)	Les Amis de la Terre
Belgium (Flanders & Brussels)	Friends of the Earth
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Centar za životnu sredinu
Bulgaria	Za Zemiata
Croatia	Zelena Akcija
Cyprus	Friends of the Earth
Czech Republic	Hnutí Duha
Denmark	NOAH
England, Wales & Northern Ireland	Friends of the Earth
Estonia	Eesti Roheline Liikumine
Finland	Maan Ystävät Ry
France	Les Amis de la Terre
Georgia	Sakharvelos Mtsvaneta Modzraoba
Germany	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND)
Hungary	Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége
Ireland	Friends of the Earth
Latvia	Latvijas Zemes Draugi
Lithuania	Lietuvos Zaliuju Judėjimas
Luxembourg	Mouvement Ecologique
Macedonia	Dvizhenje na Ekologistite na Makedonija
Malta	Friends of the Earth Malta
The Netherlands	Milieudefensie
Norway	Norges Naturvernforbund
Poland	Polski Klub Ekologiczny
Russia	Russian Social Ecological Union
Scotland	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Slovakia	Priatelja Zeme
Slovenia	Focus
Spain	Amigos de la Tierra
Sweden	Jordens Vänner
Switzerland	Pro Natura
Ukraine	Zelenyi Svit

**Friends of the Earth Europe** campaigns for sustainable and just societies and for the protection of the environment, unites more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups and is part of the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International.