

John Dalli
Member of the European Commission

Brussels, 16 March 2010
CAB D(2010) 32

Dear Ms Harms,
Dear Mr Cohn-Bendit,

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2010 concerning the genetically modified Amflora potato.

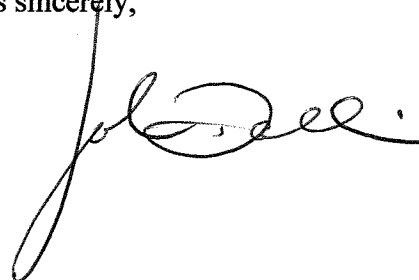
It is the role of the Commission to take decisions in a timely manner, on the basis of scientific evidence. In this case, I have acted with all due care, considering the advice of all expert agencies involved as well as the outcome of several years of careful scrutiny at all levels by all Member States, in line with the prevailing legal framework. In particular, I have scrutinised the EFSA opinion issued in June 2009 on the use of antibiotic resistance marker genes in genetically modified plants. This opinion which was made with the assistance of experts from the European Medicine Agency (EMA) and from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) recognised the therapeutic relevance of kanamycin and neomycin and concluded by reiterating its previous favourable opinion on Amflora potato based on the low probability of gene transfer from plants to bacteria and to the fact that this antibiotic resistant gene in bacteria is already widespread in the environment.

You may also be aware that the conclusions adopted by the Environment Council of December 2008 under the French Presidency highlighted that the EU has a comprehensive framework for the authorisation of GMOs aiming at ensuring a high level of protection of the environment, human and animal health. In this context, the Council also indicated that it was necessary to continue to proceed with applications without undue delays and respecting the relevant EC international obligations.

As to our work to improve the regulatory guidelines, for environmental as well as many other matters before EFSA, rest assured that each successive improvement will be applied and I am committed to a rigorous and continuous process to continue to ensure the independence and reliability of the work of the Agency.

I look forward to engaging in a balanced debate with all colleagues in the European Parliament, as we go forward to prepare the next steps to improve the regulatory framework in line with President Barroso political Guidelines to combine a science based Union authorisation system with the freedom for Member States to decide whether or not they wish to cultivate genetically modified crops on their territory.

Yours sincerely,



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