



Clubul Ecologic  
Transilvania - CET



Federatia Nationala de  
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Centrul de Informare Asupra  
Organismelor Modificate Genetic  
- InfOMG

Asociatia de Dezvoltare  
Rurala Huedin

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## More GMO Free Regions in Romania

### ***14 new local authorities demand the government the right to ban GMOs***

Romania's Federation of Organic Farmers (FNAE), Transylvania's Ecologic Club (CET), the GMO Information Centre (InfOMG – Romania) and the Huedin Rural Development Association are pleased to announce Romania's second GMO Free Region. 14 new localities located in the Cluj County – the so-called Huedin microregion - have declared themselves as a *GMO Free Zone*.

The 14 localities followed the example of another GMO Free Region established in the Bistrita Nasaud County in March 2006 (2 towns and 24 communes). The new GMO Free Region consists of one city (*Huedin*) and 13 communes (*Mărgău, Beliș, Râșca, Mănăstireni, Măguri Răcătău, Mărișel, Poieni, Ciucea, Negreni, Săcuieu, Călățele, Sâncraiu and Izvoru Crișului*). All are part of the *Huedin Rural Development Association*.

The local authorities' reason for declaring their communities GMO free is based on their rural development strategy oriented towards sustainable agriculture, agrotourism and environmental protection. In this context all mayors recognize the threat that GMOs represent. This is a first step to declare their opposition to GMOs.

The mayors have equally asked Romania's Government to recognize their right to ban GMOs in the areas under their jurisdiction. According to Romanian legislation (Law No.215/2001), local authorities should benefit from a considerable amount of autonomy. However, as is the case in other EU countries, this excludes the right to ban GMOs.

The local authorities' concerns are ever more pertinent as Romania's government is ready to cultivate yet a new GMO (MON810 maize), which in return threatens to contaminate the country's valuable patrimony of traditional maize varieties. In light of this all majors of the Huedin microregion are demanding the following:

- A. Assurance from the relevant national and regional politicians that no GM plant is or will be cultivated this year and in the future in the entire country;
- B. Legal protection for Romania's farmers who want to produce GMO-free
- C. Enforcement of practical measures to avoid GMO contamination

'GMO Free Romania' is funded by the Germany-based Grassroots Foundation. The project's aim is to make local authorities aware of the risks posed by GMOs; to encourage them to take practical measures to protect their regions in the context of coexistence and to support a national public debate on GMOs.

In Europe there are currently 174 Regions and over 4500 Zones/Municipalities declared as 'GMO Free'. Amongst the countries which have taken a strong role in promoting this concept are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the UK etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gmofree-europe.org/>  
<http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/>

GMOs - an extremely controversial issue in the entire world - raise numerous questions concerning their impact on human health, biodiversity, farmers, legislation etc.

In Romania debates on this subject are practically inexistent and the population is poorly informed on the risks, the related regulations at the national and European level, as well as the reactions and initiatives of the European communities regarding the cultivation and consumption of GMOs.

Official data released by the Ministry of Agriculture indicates that Romania has been Europe's largest cultivator of transgenic crops (GM soy – 14 varieties) for the past 2 years. Whilst in 2005, 87.600 ha were registered as GM soy, in 2006 the figure was at 130,000 ha. In February 2006, Romania's Government announced the decision to stop the cultivation of GM soy from January 2007, however even to date no regulation what so ever has been put in place.

According to Gheorghe Popa, executive director of the *Huedin Rural Development Association*, "It is crucial not to compromise our environment and the rights of our farmers. GMOs are incompatible with the principles of sustainable development. Saying 'NO to GMOs' is our duty to future generations."

"No actions are taken to support and protect farmers and communities who refuse to plant and consume GMOs. The fact that more and more communities are declaring themselves 'GMO Free' clearly demonstrates that local authorities are concerned and that they are ready to take a strong stance for the people and the environment. We now need our Government to listen, understand and act along the local will," adds Dan Craioveanu, GMO Campaign Coordinator for Romania's Federation of Organic Farmers.

\* \* \*

Images, documents and maps can be found at [www.gmo.ro/gmo-free](http://www.gmo.ro/gmo-free) .

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