

## The No to GMOs Platform of Turkey

*No to Genetically Modified Organisms  
To protect our biological diversity,  
For sustainable agriculture,  
For equal, just and safe food,  
So that life cannot be patented!*

The "No to GMOs" platform is a civil society movement formed in a spirit of solidarity and comprised of organizations working in Turkey in the area of ecology, environment, agriculture, and consumer rights, including unions and professional chambers. The platform was launched in March 2004 with the first meeting of its constituents in Istanbul, following the drafting of its statement of principles, "Life Cannot be Patented," by a working group in February of that year. It was at this meeting that the platform's name was adopted.

The platform has accomplished much since then. First, an internet communications group was formed to facilitate coordination among members. Next, informational posters, stickers, buttons, bulletins, guides, and other materials were produced. Petitions were organized in several regions of the country; public and private meetings of various kinds were held; scrutiny of regulations and legislation was undertaken in order to undertake political pressure actions among relevant agencies and actors; a website was created. Finally, a news bulletin ("Life is Ours") was published to disseminate news of all these activities.

The "Monster Tomato," an anti-GMO publicity balloon created by Friends of the Earth to tour Europe, was brought to Turkey in October through the platform's initiative with support from FoEE and Heinrich Böll Foundation and travelled to 15 provinces in Turkey. This tour, which logged 5000 kms throughout the country, succeeded in bringing the issue of GMOs to public awareness in Turkey, and moreover, with a significant impact on public opinion. Preparatory work with the media prior to the "Monster Tomato" tour ensured a smooth implementation the planned itinerary, as well as resulting in a broad and highly visible press coverage.

With its "Monster Tomato Tour," the "No to GMOs" platform succeeded in bringing awareness of GMOs in seed and in food to the population of Turkey for the first time. Its objective was to draw attention to the ease with which these high-risk products were being brought into the country, and the fact that citizens were consuming them unaware. In addition to informing both consumers and producers of these dangers, the platform also called on the Agriculture Ministry to take measures to control and contain them. At this time, the platform is preparing itself to intervene with informed comments on the Agriculture Ministry's Biosafety bill, currently in the process of being drafted.

Life Cannot be Patented, as stressed in the Declaration of No to GMOs Platform, signed by a hundred thousand people during the campaign (full text available at: [www.gdoyahirplatformu.org/indexen.html](http://www.gdoyahirplatformu.org/indexen.html) )

An evil spirit has been threatening our dining tables, our health, and our future for some time already, and the world is beginning to awaken to the extent of the danger it represents. The name of this threat, created by multinational corporations and encouraged by greedy investors, is Genetically Modified Organisms, or GMOs.

- GMOs are a threat to biological diversity

Turkey, with its eleven thousand plant species of which two thousand are endemic, is a country rich in biological diversity. Just as with our underground resources or historical remains, our plant and animal species are among the most important resources of our country.

- GMOs are a threat to human and animal health

Scientific research has shown toxic and/or allergic effects of GMOs in humans and animals when ingested. Other negative effects include resistance to antibiotics and increasing ineffectiveness of microorganisms found in humans and animals.

- GMOs are not a solution to the hunger problem

The hunger problem of third world countries is not due to lack of productive capacity, but rather to unplanned use and unequal distribution of this capacity. Existing agricultural production is more than sufficient to meet the nutritional needs of the world population.

- GMOs are a means of establishing hegemony over productive resources

Patent rights are the chief means for securing productive hegemony in any sector. A handful of multinational companies are collecting patent rights on the resources of the world. These rights of ownership are being approved for existing micro organisms, in addition to organisms whose genetic structure has been modified. The right to a patent should be limited to only the technique used on genes that are modified, and should not include organisms that have been living in nature for thousands of years. Life cannot be patented.

We demand that:

- entrance of GMO products of any kind into Turkey be halted;
- GMO-containing seeds be prevented from entering our country, and agriculture using GMOs not be permitted;
- imported foods containing GMOs be labelled;
- the imported products of GMO-producing companies be strictly supervised;
- protective zones shielded from any and all GMO contamination be created; and
- the National Biosecurity Law be implemented without delay.

The genetic resources of Turkey are among our richest resources. NGOs, together with the government, should institute official measures for the protection and sustainability of these resources. They should also work together to create legislation to shield against the threats to health and biodiversity posed by the practices of multinational companies.

### **Platform Members**

- AKÇEP Akdeniz Çevre Platformu  
(Environment Platform of the Mediterranean)
- BAÇEP Bati Akdeniz Çevre Platformu  
(Environment Platform of the Western Mediterranean)
- BAKÇEP Bati Karadeniz Çevre Platformu  
(Environment Platform of the Western Black Sea)
- BASMAKÇI GÜL KOOPERATIFI  
(Basmakci Rose Cooperative)
- BIYOLOGLAR DERNEGI  
(Biologists' Association)
- BUGDAY DERNEGI ve DERGISI  
(Bugday - Association for the Support of Ecological Life)
- ÇEVRE İÇİN HEKİMLER DERNEGI  
(Association of Doctors for the Environment)
- ÇEVRE MÜHENDİSLERİ ODASI  
(Chamber of Environmental Engineers)
- DAÇE Dogu Akdeniz Çevre Platformu  
(Environment Platform of the Eastern Mediterranean)

- DEGİRMEN ÇİFTLİĞİ  
(Degirmen Farm)
- DOKÇEP Doğu Karadeniz Çevre Platformu  
(Environment Platform of the Eastern Black Sea)
- EKODER  
(Ecological Life Association)
- EKOLOJİ KOLEKTİFİ  
(Ecology Collective)
- ETO  
(Ecological Agriculture Organization)
- FETAV  
(Fethiye Tourism Foundation)
- GREENPEACE -Turkey
- JADE ÇİFTLİĞİ  
(Jade Farm)
- KADOS Kadıköy Bilim Kültür ve Sanat Dostları  
(Kadikoy Friends of Science, Culture and Art)
- KLAN ÇİFTLİĞİ  
(The Clan Farm)
- MARÇEP Marmara Çevre Platformu  
(Marmara Environment Platform)
- Nilüfer YG21  
(Local Agenda 21 Nilufer-Bursa)
- ODTÜ Çevre Topluluğu  
(METU Environment Club)
- ONDOKUZ MAYIS ÜNİVERSİTESİ,  
EKOLOJİK YAŞAM KULÜBÜ  
(19th of May University Ecological Life Club)
- ORGÜDER  
(Organic Producers Association)
- TOPLUMSAL EKOLOJİ GRUBU  
(Social Ecology Group)
- TÜRÇEK  
(Turkish Environmental and Grasslands Protection Society)
- TÜRKİYE KÜÇÜK ÇİFTÇİ SENDİKALASMA İNİSİYATİFİ  
(Small Farmers' Unionization Movement of Turkey)
- TÜKETİCİ HAKLARI DERNEĞİ  
(Consumer Rights Association)
- TÜKODER  
(Consumer Rights Association)
- VETERİNER FAKÜLTELERİ MEZUNLARI  
DAYANISMA DERNEĞİ  
(Veterinary Graduates' Mutual Aid Association)
- VETERİNER GIDA HIJYENİSTLERİ DERNEĞİ  
(Veterinarian and Food Hygienists' Association)
- YESİLLER  
(Greens of Turkey)
- ZİRAAT MÜHENDİSLERİ ODASI  
(Chamber of Agricultural Engineers)