

## Will EU countries be allowed to opt out of approved biotech crops?

After four years of uncertainty, an EU Commission proposal to permit individual countries to opt out of allowing the planting of biotech crops may be approved by the end of the year. According to a report by Inside U.S. Trade, Italian Agriculture Minister Maurizio Martina recently told the European Parliament the Italian presidency of the Council of the EU plans to begin negotiations with Parliament. Regardless of the outcomes of the talks, the EU policies on biotech crops will not become less controversial.

The EU Commission first made its proposal in July 2010 to permit countries to not allow the cultivation of EU-approved biotech crops. The reasoning was that by providing assurances that countries would not be required to allow planting of biotech crops, they would not oppose approvals for the rest of the EU. Many industry people and political watchers have questioned whether it is politically possible for an EU country official to vote for approval of a biotech crop at the EU level while opposing it for planting at home.

The U.S. Agricultural Attaches in the EU have identified a group of opposed countries (Austria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia) that believe that biotech crop cultivation could not coexist with other types of agriculture. They would be dooming their agricultures to fall further and further behind the rest of the EU if others used biotech crops and they did not.

Read full, original article: [Cultivating biotech crops in the EU](#)