

Europe's GMO compromise: Is the glass half full or half empty?

Is the glass half full or half empty? Today the European Parliament passed proposals to allow EU member states to permanently ban the cultivation of GMO crops on their territories, even if scientific assessments show that the crop is safe and environmentally beneficial. This law formally sidelines the European Food Standards Agency by allowing member states to ban not just specific crops or traits, but the entire class of 'GMOs', without the need to provide any meaningful scientific evidence to support this ban.

The biotechnology industry is understandably furious, because it knows that it now has no chance of getting new seeds and crops approved for cultivation across the entire EU – which will no longer operate as a Europe-wide free market.

That's the glass half empty view. I agree with it in principle: after all, allowing anti-GMO activists to dictate agricultural policy across most EU countries is a bit like allowing homeopaths and anti-vaccine campaigners to take over European health services.

So why is the glass also half full? Because member states like the UK where a more pro-science attitude is prevalent will be able to go ahead with cultivation of GMO crops without now being blocked by the forever-anti states like Austria, Hungary and France.

Read full, original article: EU GMO cultivation decision – science sidelined, but UK will get right to choose