

GM crops: One divisive issue that stands in way of US-EU free trade deal

Food safety is a major stumbling block in EU-U.S. talks aimed at creating the world's biggest free trade zone.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) would dwarf previous free trade deals. The European Commission estimates that by 2027 it could boost the size of the EU economy by €120bn (£94bn; \$152bn) – equal to 0.5 percent of GDP – and the U.S. economy by €95bn (0.4 percent of GDP).

European opponents argue that TTIP risks watering down EU regulations in the drive to remove trade barriers.

There are tensions over TTIP in the European Parliament, whose [draft recommendations](#) proved too controversial for MEPs to vote on it this week. What divides the EU and U.S. on food safety?

GM crops

The transatlantic dispute over genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has been raging for years.

American and European biotech firms are frustrated that the EU currently allows cultivation of just one GM plant – MON810 maize. It is grown only in five EU countries, on just 1.5% of the total land area devoted to maize crops.

The European Commission – the EU's top regulator – has given EU member states the power to [ban GMO cultivation](#) for reasons beyond environmental or public health concerns. It has proposed a similar freedom to ban sales of GM foods and animal feed – basically leaving it up to national governments to decide.

The US complained to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and won in 2006, when the WTO ruled that the EU had imposed “undue delays” over GMO applications.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [TTIP talks: Food fights block EU-US trade deal](#)