

Viewpoint: On GMOs, energy production, 'fear of progress' is Europe's main attribute

Shale gas, GMOs: here are two topics that usually arouse the public's worst fears. [Europe] has managed to ban the production of these products ... which, paradoxically, does not prevent it from importing them. How did we get there?

Europe: new global store of fear of progress

If we were asked to define the European specialty in terms of new technologies, without a doubt, the fear of scientific and technical progress is becoming the main attribute of the old continent.

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ISAAA, the International Service for the Acquisition of Biotechnological Agricultural Applications, [recently] published [its annual report](#) on the global crop of genetically modified plants for the year 2018 This year, 2.3 billion hectares of GM crops were cultivated worldwide. By 2018, 26 countries (including 21 developing) had grown 191.7 million hectares of biotech seeds. According to the authors, this has yielded positive environmental impacts.

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Nevertheless, Europe, which was once on the cutting edge (especially France, one of the pioneers in terms of field trials) is now at the bottom of the pack in terms of crops. Only Spain and Portugal grow [insect-resistant] BT maize Here again, we see a paradox in which the European citizen does not want to hear about [GMO] crops but is rather indifferent to their importation.

[Editor's note: this article was published in French and has been translated and lightly edited for clarity.]

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