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FACTBOX - Government responses to EU GM crop plans

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REUTERS - The European Commission adopted proposals on Tuesday allowing national governments to decide whether to ban or grow genetically modified (GM) crops, a bid to unblock paralysis in EU GM approvals.

The proposals include changes to EU GM legislation, which will need the backing of a qualified majority of EU governments under the bloc's weighted voting system in order to pass.

But some EU countries including France and Spain have criticised the plans as an attempt to dismantle the 27-nation bloc's common policy on GM crops.

Below are comments and reactions to the draft proposals from EU government officials:

FRENCH FARM MINISTER BRUNO LE MAIRE

July 12, at a ministers' meeting in Brussels

* "We hope that decisions (on GM crops) continue to be taken at community level."

* "We don't support the re-nationalisation of decisions, which would take things in the wrong direction -- no more solidarity, no more common approach."

FRENCH ENVIRONMENT MINISTER JEAN-LOUIS BORLOO

June 11, at a ministers' meeting in Luxembourg:

* "The EU27 decided unanimously in December 2008 to completely review the assessment methods and expertise for authorisations. They agreed that in its current form, the system fails to provide sufficient assurances."

* "I'm waiting for the European Commission to tell us where we stand now. The prospect that later we could discuss the use of subsidiarity in future authorisations wouldn't be a problem for me. But there is no way we would swap subsidiarity for the absolute need for a tightening of the assessment criteria."

* "When the 27 countries talked about it (in 2008), they clearly said that no new authorisations can be approved in the current circumstances. That's where we stand."

SPANISH AGRICULTURE MINISTER ELENA ESPINOSA

June 11, at a ministers' meeting in Luxembourg:

* "Moving to authorisations by each country could take us to the beginning of re-nationalisation, something we have never supported in Spain."

* "In Spain we have always defended the idea that it should be a European policy. Let us not forget that agriculture is a common policy. A particular product has no reason not to have a common policy."

* "We've been asking for years for a European directive to deal with the question of coexistence (of GM and non-GM farming). I transmitted this idea to the Commissioner (John Dalli) and we hope that things could move that way."

BELGIAN EU DIPLOMAT HERMAN CLAEYS

June 9, at a seminar in Brussels:

* "We have some doubts ... with their compliance with the internal market rules, with the World Trade Organisation and with some bilateral agreements."

* "We also perceive that for investment security for companies, for the public services, it's maybe not the best thing."

* "It's not good that the (current) system shows every time that position-taking is too difficult and that member states are so divided, so we are positive that there is an initiative of the Commission going forward."

* "As a general sign we don't like the de-harmonisation of Europe. That's not specifically for GMOs, but it's not in our spirit of Europe."

AUSTRIAN HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIAL MICHEL HAAS

June 9, at a seminar in Brussels:



* "On the whole we got the impression that the Commission is going in a good direction. Half of the member states would, I think, also be very happy with the proposals, but there are some member states which are not in this half."

* "Following the proposal that we had informally tabled, we got the impression that the Commission has in some way taken account of that."

* "Of course it may be a longer-lasting process, but I got the impression that the decision could be made quite quickly."

DUTCH AGRICULTURE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

June 4, in a statement:

* "The Dutch Agriculture ministry is pleased that the Commission is embracing its idea of giving member states the final say on whether to grow or ban GM crops, and expects the proposals to be formally announced soon."

(Compiled by Reuters news bureaus; editing by Keiron Henderson)

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