



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 9.10.2006
COM(2006) 510 final

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

concerning the provisional prohibition of the use and sale in Austria of genetically modified maize (*Zea mays* L. line T25) pursuant to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

(Only the German text is authentic)

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. A genetically modified variety of *Zea mays* L. line T25 was authorised for its placing on the market pursuant to Commission Decisions under Part C of Directive 90/220/EEC and the French authorities granted consent for the placing on the market of this genetically modified organisms (GMO).
2. In accordance with Article 16 of Directive 90/220/EEC concerning safeguard measures, Austria subsequently informed the Commission of its decision to provisionally prohibit or restrict the placing on the market of *Zea mays* L. line T25 and provided its reasons for this decision.
3. The Scientific Committee on Plants was consulted and concluded in its opinions that the information submitted by Austria did not constitute new relevant scientific evidence that had not been taken into account during the original risk assessments for those GMOs and which would necessitate a review of its original scientific opinion concerning the safety of *Zea mays* L. line T25.
4. Directive 90/220/EEC was repealed by Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms¹.
5. In January 2004, the Commission requested Austria to re-consider its safeguard clause in light of the new regulatory framework and if appropriate, to re-notify it under Directive 2001/18/EC.
6. In accordance with Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC, Austria submitted to the Commission further additional information in support of its existing safeguard clause measure.
7. Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC requires the Commission to take decisions in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 30(2) of the Directive which refers to Decision 1999/468/EC.
8. In accordance with Article 28(1) of Directive 2001/18/EC, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was consulted, as established by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council², under which it has replaced the relevant scientific committees and concluded, in its opinion of 8 July 2004³, that the information submitted by Austria did not constitute new scientific evidence which would invalidate the environmental risk assessment of *Zea mays* L. line T25 and would justify a prohibition of this GMO in Austria.
9. A draft Commission Decision requesting Austria to repeal its national safeguard clause was therefore submitted for opinion, under Article 5(2) of Council Decision

¹ OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1

² OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 575/2006 (OJ L 100, 8.4.2006, p.3).

³ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms on a request from the Commission related to the Austrian invoke of Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC, The EFSA Journal (2004) 78, 1-13.

1999/468/EC, to the Committee established under Article 30 of Directive 2001/18/EC.

10. The Committee was consulted on 29 November 2004 but delivered no opinion on the safeguard clause measure which requires that the Commission, under Article 5(4) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC, shall, without delay, submit to the Council proposals relating to the measures to be taken and shall inform the European Parliament.
11. In accordance with Article 5(6) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC, the Environment Council, on 24 June 2005, indicated its opposition by qualified majority, to the proposal requesting Austria to repeal its safeguard measure, which requires that the Commission re-examines its proposals.
12. The Council, in its declaration, stated that 'there is still a degree of uncertainty in relation to the national safeguard measures on the market of [the] genetically modified maize variet[y] T25' and called on the Commission 'to gather further evidence on the GMO in question and further assess, whether the measure taken by [Austria] aimed at suspending as a temporary precautionary measure [its] placing on the market [is] justified and, whether the authorisation of such [an] organism still meets the safety requirements of Directive 2001/18/EC'.
13. In November 2005, the EFSA was consulted as to whether there was any scientific reason to believe that the continued placing on the market of *Zea mays* L. line T25 was likely to cause any adverse effects to human health or the environment under the conditions of consent and in particular, was requested to take account of any further scientific information that has arisen subsequent to the previous scientific opinion that assessed the safety of this GMO.
14. In its opinion of 29 March 2006 (published on 11 April 2006)⁴, the EFSA, following investigation of the evidence presented in the Austrian submission, considered that the scientific evidence currently available does not sustain the arguments provided by Austria and concluded that there is no reason to believe that the continued placing on the market of *Zea mays* L. line T25 is likely to cause any adverse effects for human and animal health or the environment under the conditions of its consent.
15. In accordance with Article 5(6) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC, the Commission may therefore submit an amended proposal to the Council, re-submit its proposals or present a legislative proposal on the basis of the Treaty
16. After having taken into account the Council declaration of 24 June 2005 and re-consulted the EFSA, it appears that, for the third time, the scientific assessment of *Zea mays* L. line T25 confirms that this product is unlikely to cause any adverse effects for human and animal health or the environment. Therefore, the Commission considers that the proposal should not be amended and re-submits its proposal to the Council in accordance with Article 5(6) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC.

⁴ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms on a request from the Commission related to genetically modified crops (Bt176 maize, MON810 maize, T25 maize, Topas 19/2 oilseed rape and Ms1xRf1 oilseed rape) subject to safeguard clauses invoked according to Article 16 of Directive 90/220/EEC, The EFSA Journal (2006) 338, 1-15.

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concerning the provisional prohibition of the use and sale in Austria of genetically modified maize (*Zea mays* L. line T25) pursuant to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

(Only the German text is authentic)

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms and repealing Council Directive 90/220/EEC⁵, and in particular Article 23(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) By Commission Decision 98/293/EC of 22 April 1998 concerning the placing on the market of genetically modified maize (*Zea mays* L. T25), pursuant to Council Directive 90/220/EEC⁶, it was decided that consent was to be given for the placing on the market of that product.
- (2) On 3 August 1998 the French authorities granted such consent.
- (3) Pursuant to Article 35(1) of Directive 2001/18/EC which replaced Directive 90/220/EEC⁷, procedures in respect of notifications concerning the placing on the market of genetically modified organisms which have not been completed by 17 October 2002 are subject to Directive 2001/18/EC.
- (4) On 8 May 2000 Austria informed the Commission of its decision to prohibit provisionally the use and sale of *Zea mays* L. T25 and gave reasons for that decision in accordance with Article 16(1) of Directive 90/220/EEC.
- (5) The Scientific Committee on Plants concluded on 20 July 2001 that the information submitted by Austria did not constitute new relevant scientific evidence which had not been taken into account during the original evaluation of the dossier and which would occasion a review of that Committee's original opinion on this product.

⁵ OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1

⁶ OJ L 131, 5.5.1998, p. 30

⁷ OJ L 117, 8.5.1990, p. 15

- (6) On 9 January 2004, as well as on 9 and 17 February 2004, Austria submitted to the Commission additional information in support of its national measures concerning maize line T25.
- (7) In accordance with Article 28(1) of Directive 2001/18/EC, the Commission consulted the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as established by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁸, under which it has replaced the relevant scientific committees.
- (8) The EFSA concluded on 8 July 2004⁹ that the information submitted by Austria did not constitute new scientific evidence sufficient to invalidate the environmental risk assessment of maize line T25, justifying a prohibition of the use and sale of that product in Austria.
- (9) Since, under the circumstances, there was no reason to consider that the product constituted a risk to human health or the environment, the Commission submitted on 29 November 2004 a draft Decision, requesting Austria to repeal its provisional safeguard measures, for consideration by the Committee established under Article 30 of Directive 2001/18/EC, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 30(2) of that Directive.
- (10) However, that Committee did not deliver an opinion and, in accordance with Article 5(4) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission¹⁰, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal relating to the measures to be taken.
- (11) On 24 June 2005, in accordance with Article 5(6) of Decision 1999/468/EC, the Council, acting by qualified majority, rejected that proposal.
- (12) The Council, in its declaration, stated that 'there is still a degree of uncertainty in relation to the national safeguard measures on the market of [the] genetically modified maize variet[y] T25' and called on the Commission 'to gather further evidence on the GMO in question and further assess, whether the measure taken by [Austria] aimed at suspending as a temporary precautionary measure [its] placing on the market [is] justified and, whether the authorisation of such [an] organism still meets the safety requirements of Directive 2001/18/EC'.
- (13) In November 2005, the EFSA was consulted again, *inter alia* on the question whether there was any scientific reason to believe that the continued placing on the market of T25 maize was likely to cause any adverse effects to human health or the environment under the conditions of consent¹¹. In particular, the EFSA was requested to take

⁸ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 575/2006 (OJ L 100, 8.4.2006, p.3).

⁹ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms on a request from the Commission related to the Austrian invoke of Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC, The EFSA Journal (2004) 78, 1-13.

¹⁰ OJ L 184, 17.7. 1999, p. 23.

¹¹ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms on a request from the Commission related to genetically modified crops (Bt176 maize, MON810 maize, T25 maize, Topas 19/2 oilseed rape and Ms1xRf1 oilseed rape) subject to safeguard clauses invoked according to Article 16 of Directive 90/220/EEC, The EFSA Journal (2006) 338, 1-15.

account of any further scientific information that had arisen subsequent to the previous scientific opinion concerning the safety of that GMO.

- (14) In its opinion of 29 March 2006, the EFSA concluded that there is no reason to believe that the continued placing on the market of T25 maize is likely to cause any adverse effects for human and animal health or the environment under the conditions of its consent.
- (15) Austria should therefore repeal the safeguard clause measures concerning *Zea mays* L. line T25,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The measures taken by Austria to prohibit the use and sale of the genetically modified maize, *Zea mays* L. line T25, authorised for placing on the market by Decision 98/293/EC are not justified under Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC.

Article 2

Austria shall take the necessary steps to comply with this Decision at the latest 20 days after its notification.

Article 3

This Decision is addressed to the Republic of Austria.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President