

Round table
on public awareness, access to information and public
participation regarding LMOs/GMOs

Geneva, 15-17 November 2016

**Access to Information (LMOs/GMOs)
in the Republic of Serbia**

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INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Key MEAs

- **Law on Ratification Aarhus Convention** ("Official Gazette of RS- International Treaties", No. 38/09)
- **Law on Ratification the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)** ("Official Gazette of FRY- International Treaties", No. 11/01)
- **Law on Ratification the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with Annexes** ("Official Gazette of RS- International Treaties", No. 16/05)
- **GMO amendment to the Aarhus Convention** (Kazakhstan, 2005)

Focal Points

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection – Division of EU Integration and International Cooperation**
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection – Division of Environmental Protection**
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection – Plant Protection Directorate**



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

No.	Basic laws and regulations	Published “Official Gazette”
1	Constitution	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 98/06
2	Law on Environmental Protection	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 135/04, 36/09, 88/10, 14/16
3	Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance	“Official Gazette of RS” No.120/04, 54/07, 104/09, 36/10
4	Law on Genetically Modified Organisms	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 41/09
5	Rulebook on introducing GMOs and products containing GMOs into production	“Official Gazette of FRY“ No. 62/02
6	Rulebook on the limited use of GMO	“Official Gazette of FRY“ No. 62/02
7	Rulebook on the contents and data of the register of GMOs and products of GMOs	“Official Gazette of FRY“ No. 62/02
8	Rulebook on content and form of application for use GMO in closed systems, manner on protection of confidential data, content of application for renew the approval for use in closed systems	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 69/12
9	Law on Food Safety	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 41/09
10	Law on Agricultural Plant Varieties	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 30/10
11	Law on Inspection Control	“Official Gazette of RS” No. 36/15

- **Environmental information (scope and access)**
 - Information on GMOs
 - **Active and passive** access to information

- **Restrictions on access to environmental information**

- **Effective dissemination of environmental information**
 - General mandatory system
 - Maintain and update information via reports on the state on environment, registers and databases

- **Public awareness on environmental information**

GENERAL AND SPECIAL LAWS

**Law on Free
Access to
Information of
Public
Importance**

**Law on
Environmental
Protection**



o Law on Genetically Modified Organisms

- **Ban on trade and growing for commercial purposes** of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and products containing GMOs
- **Use of GMOs in closed systems**
- **Deliberate release of GMOs into the environment**
- **Limited use of GMO**
- **Handling and transport of GMOs and GMO products**



LAW ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

NON GMO

Agriculture products of non-animal origin
(0.9% threshold and impurities of GMO)

Seed and reproductive material (0.1% threshold and impurities of GMO)



AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

- Availability of the **content of application** to the public
- **One daily newspaper and through the electronic media**
- **Confidential information** in accordance with GMO Amendment
- **Public hearing**
- **Register** of GMOs and GMO products



INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

- Public administration and policy development tasks in agriculture and the food industry
- Protection and use of agricultural land
- GMOs and the use of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture
- System of environmental protection
- Implementation of Aarhus Convention.

Agency of Environmental Protection

- Key national institution for coordination of access to environmental information established in 2004
- Environmental information system - Metaregister on environmental informations

Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection

In charge for controlling free public access
to information



INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Plant protection Directorate- Group for plant variety protection and biological safety

- biological safety (genetically modified organisms)
- coordination of the work of the Expert Council for Biological Safety
- national databases for biological safety
- establishment and implementation of measures for biological safety i.e safe transfer, handling and use of GMOs

Phytosanitary inspection

- inspectorial supervision in the area of plant health, seeds and planting material; plant protection products; food safety of foodstuffs of plant and composite origin; feed safety of feed of plant origin
- plant inspection
- inspection of GMOs in all stages of production, processing and circulation i.e presence of GMOs in plant shipments (border control)

Veterinary Inspection

- Control of GMO food for animals i.e border control

Expert Council for Biological Safety (2009)

- provides expert opinion to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

Accredited laboratories for GMO testing (4 laboratories)

ACCREDITED LABORATORIES

GMO testing

- **SP Laboratory (member of “Victoria Group”)**

Address: Industrijska Zona bb,
Becej

Web page: www.victoriagroup.rs

- **Laboratory for Seed Tasting (part of Institute for Crops and Vegetables Novi Sad)**

○ Address: 30 Maksima Gorkog,
Novi Sad

○ Web page: www.nsseme.com

GMO testing

- **A Bio Tech Lab**

Address: Vojvode Putnika bb,
Sremska Kamenica

Web page:
www.abiotechlab.com

- **Institute for Molecular Genetics and Genetics Engineering**

Address: Vojvode Stepe 444a,
Belgrade

Web page:
<http://www.imgge.bg.ac.rs>



PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

- From 2001–2009, there were **four approvals** of applications for **deliberate release of GMOs into the environment** (experimental purposes)
- **One application for placing GMOs on the market** and **one application for growing GMOs**, submitted after 2009, were rejected because of the ban introduced by the 2009 Law
- Use in closed system (experimental purposes - no applications)



PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

- **Environmental information on web sites:**
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, <http://www.eko.minpolj.gov.rs>
 - Agency of Environmental Protection, <http://www.sepa.gov.rs>
 - Metaregister, <http://www.ekoregistar.sepa.gov.rs>
 - Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, <http://www.poverenik.rs/yu/praksa.html>
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection - Plant Protection Directorates, <http://www.uzb.minpolj.gov.rs>
 - National Assembly, www.parlament.gov.rs
- **National Assembly - Public hearings** on impacts of GMOs on human health and environment
 - 1st Public hearing on GMOs (13th November 2012)
 - 2nd Public hearing on GMOs (6th February 2013)
- **Recent panel – 6th Agricultural Forum, “Food for Europe – Foods Safety”, Vrsac 3-5 November 2016**



BENEFITS OF HAVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- **Public knowledge** on GMO
- **Public awareness** about GMOs and foods safety
- **Product labelling** –product benefits and risks
- **Transparency** of making public policy decisions
- **Easy access** to GMO data
- **Promoting safety testing** of GMO products
- **Direct access** to information on **modern biotechnology**



CONCLUSIONS

- Serbia has a policy of keeping its agriculture **free of GMO**
- Serbia has established **legal and institutional framework** and mechanism to ensure public access to information
- **Financial instruments** have not yet established
- **Synergy between access to GMO information and implementation of Cartagena Protocol**
 - coordination among focal points in monitoring and enforcement
 - coordinated legislation and capacity building (CBD, Cartagena protocol and GMO Amendment)
 - cooperation between institutions and administrations involved in implementation and enforcement
 - exchange of information's between Secretariats, governments, competent authorities, institutions, organizations and civil society
 - information and awareness raising campaigns



THANK YOU

**Ministry of Agriculture and
Environmental Protection**

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