



**Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and to the Protocol on PRTRs,  
Budva, Montenegro**

**Agenda item 6 (d) - Genetically modified organisms: statement by the European ECO  
Forum**

We congratulate Georgia, France and Malta for ratifying the Almaty amendment, but we are dismayed that after 12 years, we are still waiting for two more country to do so.

All but one of the countries who could bring the GMO amendment into force have long ago ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. By doing so, they have already committed themselves to access to information and public participation with regards to GMOs. It is time to live up to this commitment.

We urge Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine to finally ratify the GMO amendment.

We welcome the fruitful cooperation between the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol and their successful Round Table. We look forward to another one in the next years.

We also welcome the presence of Convention on Biological Diversity representatives at this MOP working on joint efforts on capacity building in public participation.

And of course we re-iterate our call for financial support and speedy implementation in those countries that have already signed the Almaty Amendment - ably complementing their obligations under the Cartagena Protocol.

But there is another pressing issue: we currently see new developments in the field of genetic engineering - technologies called "Synthetic Biology, "new genetic engineering technologies" or "new-breeding technologies".

There are attempts to declare these technologies and their products as "not being GMOs" in order to exclude them from the rules and provisions of the Cartagena Protocol and corresponding national legislations.

Many fora, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Court of Justice, are working on clear definitions.

If a new technology is considered a GMO, then it has to be covered by the Cartagena Protocol and corresponding national legislation.

But if a new technology is not to producing GMOs, then its environmental and human health impacts have to be fully and immediately covered by the Aarhus Convention.

There must not be a grey zone or no-man's land.

Producers should not be allowed to call something both a GMO and not a GMO depending on which international treaty and its rulings they are trying to escape.  
Therefore: You as Parties have to ensure that citizens are not robbed of information, participation and access to justice regarding these new organisms.