

BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH TURKEY ON GMO RULES AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Turkey has established a law paralleled to Cartagena Biosafety Protocol and EU directives by noticing necessities of the country about GMO issue. Biosafety Law and two regulations came into effect on 26th September 2010. In this law, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and Genetically Modified Microorganism (GMM) were identified as a living organism, with the exception of human beings, obtained by transferring gene through the use of modern biotechnological methods, and microorganisms in which the genetic structure has been altered in a way or process that is out of the natural recombination, respectively. The objective of this law is to establish procedures and principles in relation to prevent the risks that may be due to genetically modified organisms (GMO) and its products (GMOP) obtained through the use of modern biotechnology within scientific and technological progresses; to be established and implemented biosafety system with the aims of conservation and ensuring sustainability on human, animal and plant health with environment and biological diversity; and, to be reviewed, set out and monitored these operations. This Law contains the provisions regarding research, development, processing, place on the market, monitoring, using, importation, exportation, handling, transportation, keeping, packaging, labelling, storage and similar operations in relation to genetically modified organisms and its products (GMO and GMOPs). Veterinarian medicinal products and medicinal products for human use and cosmetic products which are permitted or certified by the Ministry of Health are out of this Law's scope. Despite being prepared in the EU harmonization process, the Biosafety Law shows significant differences in some issues with the legislation and practices of the European Union in the same subject. Turkey is not yet members of the European Union, has no importance for Turkey of EU decisions or EFSA report on GMOs. The application process for GMOs in Turkey, assessing risk, and the label threshold considered after applications such as contamination, is likewise apply the rules of the European Union. Prohibition of GMO production, non-use of GMOs in baby foods and imprisonment are the biggest differences with the EU. In the European Union, a decision is made by the European Commission regarding GMOs that have undergone risk assessment by EFSA and received positive reports. In Turkey, the Biosafety Board decides about the risks and socio-economic assessment made GMOs in the scientific community. Positive decisions taken by the biosafety committee are implemented by the relevant ministry after it is promulgate. GMO applications to the European Union are made by the companies with the gene, and any information (including confidential information) on product commercialization is given to EFSA. There are differences between the EU and Turkey on the appeal. The application of GMOs in Turkey, and the decision is taken separately for each purpose. However, in the European Union, there is only one appeal and only one decision is taken for food and feed. According to this, GMO, which is allowed in the EU, can be used both as food and feed. In addition, gene firms did not have GMO appeal in Turkey until today, because of the Biosafety Law rigid. For that reason, the GMO applications were not made by the importing companies for the Biosafety Board and the information that the Scientific

Committees requested from the importer for risk assessment purposes could not be given to the third parties by the producer firms. Appeals made to the Biosafety Board about food were withdrawn by applicants. The use of GMOs in food is prohibited by the fact that there is no consensus. As in the European Union, food and feed have a labeling threshold of 0.9% and a contamination threshold of 0%. In the application for feed, 9 soybean and 26 corn were accepted. The labeling threshold is 0,9% and the contamination threshold is 0,1% as it is in the European Union (for GMOs applying but not yet accepted). Today, 36 GMOs for feed (10 soybean and 26 corn) has approved in Turkey. Thereagainst, 102 GMOs (19 soybean, 65 corn, 12 cotton, 5 rape and 1 sugar beet) approved for food and feed in the European Union . There is no GMOs have been authorized for food in Turkey. However, in the EU this number is 102. Therefore, the EU's zero tolerance policy in GMO contamination on food, compared with Turkey applies very comfortable. In addition, because of the only decision taken for food and feed, allows low-level contamination to be tolerated.