



Press release, for immediate distribution
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Romanian civil society asks the new Minister for Agriculture to NOT genetically manipulate Romania

73 Romanian NGOs have expressed deep concern with regards to the appointment of Romania's new Agricultural Minister, Valeriu Tabara. The main reason for the concern is that Valeriu Tabara has a conflict of interest on the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Will Mr. Tabara be capable of representing the interests of Romanian farmers and consumers given his contractual connections¹ to Monsanto - the largest GMO producer in the world?

Romania does not have a democratic history regarding GMOs cultivation. Valeriu Tabara played an essential role in the intense pro-GMO lobby² which he participated in at all decision-making levels. Mr. Tabara himself does not make a secret of his conflict of interest. According to his latest declarations³ on the GMO issue, he is still keeping in close contact with Monsanto.

Therefore, 73 Romanian NGOs are asking for the replacement of Valeriu Tabara. He is incapable of making serious decisions with the urgency required by the current situation in agriculture. He is too compromised by his position in the GMO debate to be an effective minister for agriculture.

Romania's agricultural priorities should not include GMOs. The genetically modified maize MON810 is at the moment the only GMO authorized for cultivation in Romania. Romanian farmers don't want this GM maize as it has not agronomic value. Official data shows how unpopular MON810 maize is⁴.

GM soy - another of Mr. Tabara's well-known passions- was cultivated in Romania between 1998 and 2006. Romania was the only state in the world to report higher production using this soy than conventional soy. The authenticity of these numbers was never proven.

We take this opportunity to remind readers of the numerous scientific studies⁵ which show negative effects from GMOs on the health of mammals and the environment. Based on these studies, important states from the EU have banned GMO cultivation. Among these states are France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria. GMOs don't represent development in agriculture but rather a terrible risk which we should not take.

No GMOs in our fields!

"According to opinion polls⁶, Romanian consumers don't want to eat GMOs. 74% of Romanians are against the consumption of GM products and 81% would like to see a GMO ban. The authorities must defend our right to healthy food and must not serve the interests of the biotech industry. Valeriu Tabara cannot ensure that he will honor the citizens" declares Ramona Dumnicioiu, president of the Genetically Modified Organisms Information Centre.

"The return of Tabara to the position of Minister for Agriculture puts him in a new situation of incompatibility, due to his collaboration with Monsanto. Once Tabara is installed, no one will stop this greedy company from contaminating our foods and fields with GMOs. Our health, biodiversity and agriculture are at risk. The appointment of Tabara is a shameful act by the Romanian

1 CV Valeriu Tabara: http://www.infomg.ro/storage/Photos/Valeriu_Tabara_Curriculum_Vitae.pdf

2 Interventions Valeriu Tabara, Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament:

Oct. 2005 http://www.infomg.ro/storage/Listititems/Dezbateri%20parlamentare_OMG_osansapentruRomania.pdf

May 2005 http://www.infomg.ro/storage/Listititems/Dezbateri%20parlamentare_sustinere_soia.pdf

Interpelation Feb. 2006 http://www.infomg.ro/storage/Listititems/interpelare_min-ag_tabara_soia_i1104B.pdf

3 Interview Valeriu Tabara: http://www.4shared.com/video/5mxiT17L/Mafia_organismelor_modificate_.html?

4 http://www.infomg.ro/web/ro/Situatia_in_Romania/

5 Scientific studies: http://www.infomg.ro/web/ro/Resurse/Studii_stiintifice/

6 Romania National opinion poll Apr. 2010 http://www.infomg.ro/storage/Photos/Sondaj%20OMNIBUS_OMG.pdf

government. This mistake must be repaired by replacing him as Minister for Agriculture" declares Gabriel Paun, president of the Agent Green Association"The return of Tabara in the position of Ministry for Agriculture puts him in a new situation of incompatibility, due to his collaboration with Monsanto. Once Tabara is installed, no one will stop this greedy company in contaminating our food and fields with GMOs. Our health, biodiversity and agriculture is at risk. The appointment of Tabara is a shameful act for the Romanian Government. This mistake has to be repaired by replacing the Agriculture Minister", declares Gabriel Paun, president of Agent Green Association.

"I don't want to cultivate GMO plants! I have an organic farm. I am afraid that one day my maize will be contaminated with GM maize and nobody will be held responsible. Romanian farmers do not have to serve Monsanto" declares Willy Schuster, organic farmer, vice-president of the Eco Ruralis Association