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Croatia

Biotechnology

Green Action Anti-GMO Activities

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Report Highlights:

This report explains the anti-biotech campaign and activities of the Croatian NGO - Green Action (Zelena Akcija – ZA). The report describes the line of thinking of Croatia's anti-biotech activists and the majority of Croatians.

Includes PSD Changes: No
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Zelena Akcija – (ZA) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization registered in 1990 and based in Zagreb. They are a member of Friends of the Earth (as of 2000) and a partner of WWF (from 2001) in implementing their programs in Croatia.

Anti-Biotech Activities:

"BLJAK" (Campaign Against GMO's) - Campaign BLJAK '99 started in the summer 1999 and was based on "consumers' right to know". The culmination of the BLJAK '99 campaign was an "occupation" of the entrance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, where they chained the door and glued protest letters with demands on them. The campaign received much media coverage both in daily papers and on television. It was done on a national scale through a network of the Green Forum. During 1999, they managed to put the issue on the political agenda and in the media. The direct result of the campaign was that field trials of biotech corn were destroyed and forbidden, and that all major political parties in Croatia adopted the position of an effective moratorium on all tests until a law is adopted. In 2000, a report on the state of GMOs in Croatia was published by Iza Kruszewska, International Coordinator ANPED, Northern Alliance for Sustainability, and with ANPED the campaign continued into autumn 2000 and spring 2001 with lectures, round tables, street demonstration and concerts throughout Croatia. In 2002, they organized a farmers tour where American farmers spoke directly to Croatian farmers against biotech products.

Latest Anti-biotech Activities:

Zagreb, 13.December, 2003- The campaign, called "Bite back: WTO hands off our food!" - A giant inflatable tomato toured Zagreb as part of an international campaign for awareness and public participation in the current trade dispute between the United States and EU over genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

In this way ZA appealed to citizens of Croatia and the world to make their own legal submission to the WTO demanding their right to decide what they eat and to protect their environment.

Zagreb, 11th November, 2003 - A Regional Food Industry Conference entitled "How can we avoid the use of GMOs in seed, food and feed?" organised by Green Action, Green Network of Vojvodina and Umanotera from Slovenia was held in Zagreb and gathered over 60 experts from all over Europe.

The opening began with a welcome speech by the Deputy of Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Miroslav Bozic, who then handed the program over to the President of Green Action, Jagoda Munic. Ms. Munic clarified the aims of the conference: to outline the existing GMO legislation in the region and the European Union and its implications for the food industry; to learn from the experiences of producers in EU countries in meeting the standards required by the new EU legislation; to show the issues arising in implementing traceability systems in practice, as well as the costs of implementation; and finally to present initiatives to create GMO-free zones in Europe, especially the Austrian example.

Zagreb, 3rd October 2003- The latest updated black/white list of food manufacturers in Croatia relating to their position towards genetically modified organisms has been completed. Green Action expresses its gratitude to citizens and companies for their support during the compilation of the black/white list.

Zagreb, 1st October 2003. - To mark the passing of the new Environmental Protection Law, Green Action called on consumers to boycott products which contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and farmers to boycott GMO seed which would, in practice, result in Croatia becoming a GMO free zone (see HR 3019 for details)

Details can be found at:

<http://www.zelena-akcija.hr/eng/index.html>