

The March

The day of the "March for a GMO-free Europe" is the **5th April 2006**, as on this particular day the EU-conference will be

formally opened by European Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer-Boel and Austrian Federal Minister of the Agriculture Council Josef Pröll. The participants arriving from different regions of Europe will meet at **8.00 a.m. at "Praterstern"** in Vienna, a place located in the immediate vicinity of the conference venue, which can be reached by subway, tram or by bus. From Praterstern we will march along Ausstellungsstraße towards the **Vienna Congress and Exhibition Centre**. A scaffold will be erected directly in front of the Congress Centre, where from 9.00 a.m. **speeches** by representatives of GMO-free regions as well as of organisations fighting against the use of genetically modified organisms will be held. A **multilingual moderation** and translation will be provided. A **cultural and musical programme** including cabaret will warm our hearts, while organic farmers will supply us with GMO-free organic-farming products. We will address the participants of the conference and the European media.

Travel arrangements

Travel arrangements will have to be **organised** by the delegations from the regions and organisations **individually**. We will provide you with information on cheap accommodation facilities, on how to get to the site and with a set of useful contacts.

Meeting point: 5th April 2006,

8.00 Uhr, Wien Praterstern (Wien Nord)

9.00 Uhr, Congress Center (Ausstellungsstraße)



March for a GMO-free Europe

Support and organisation

The Conference is organised by the **platform "GMO-free regions and countries"** already including Agrarbündnis, AI-Naturkost, ARGE gentechnikfreie Regionen Kärnten, ARGE Schöpfungsverantwortung, ÄrztInnen für eine gesunde, Attac, Austrian Biologist Association, Austrian Green Farmers Association, Bio Alpe Adria, Bioernte Austria, Evangelical Church A.B., FIAN, Forum Wissenschaft & Umwelt, Gentechnikfreies Vulkanland, GLOBAL 2000/ FoE Austria, Greenpeace, Die Grünen Österreich, Initiative G7, Klimabündnis Österreich, Naturschutzbund Austria, Ökobüro, ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria, Österreichischer Demeterbund, Permakultur Austria, PermaNetzwerk, SPÖ-Bauern, Slow Food Österreich, Steirisches Aktionsbündnis gegen Gentechnik, Umweltbeauftragte der katholischen Kirche Österreichs, Verein Pro Landwirtschaft, WWOOF Austria and others.

Public invitation to protest and registration

We welcome, each and everyone among citizens who care for the environment, farmers, representatives of GMO-free Regions, non-governmental organisations, ecclesiastical institutions, companies selling GMO-free food, all people opposing the use of GMO-products in agriculture and feeding stuffs industry, to **take part in this action** and to **support it**.

You are kindly requested to let us know whether all representatives from your region or organisation will be present in the march and if you are planning to **contribute a speech or some cultural event** to the programme. We furthermore ask you to inform us about the contact person for means of organisation.

Please contact

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March for a GMO free Europe without genetic engineering

Vienna · 5th April 2006

EU-Conference on genetic engineering "The Freedom of Choice"

During the Austrian EU-Presidency in the first six months of 2006, crucial decisions for setting the course in the field of genetic engineering will be taken. The **EU-conference** on "genetically modified, conventional, and organic crops", ironically called "The Freedom of Choice" will take place in Vienna from the 4th to the 6th April 2006. It is envisaged as a conference where experts and politicians from all EU Member States will discuss and establish a **framework for the coexistence of the organic farming and genetic engineering.**

The EU is currently approving genetically modified organisms (GMO) against the will of the large majority of the citizens, even though risks to nature, environment, and health are unpredictable. In case GMO will be grown, this will cause a contamination of the conventional ecological grown crops. Neither insurance companies nor genetic engineering companies will assume responsibilities for the damage caused.

The environmental and consumer organisation's understanding of "Freedom of choice" is different to that of the EU-Commission: **Coexistence of GMO and GMO-free agriculture does not work**, neither biologically, nor economically. Solely a **protection of GMO-free regions** by adequate legal and organisational framework can ensure a long term GMO-free conventional and ecological growing of crops.

There is a widespread public concern, that conventional and organically grown crops are successively contaminated by GMO. In

order to protect local economy, culture, and environment, thousands communities and provincial governments within the European Community want **to ban the growing of genetically modified plants** on their territories.

Therefore the environmental, consumer and peasant organisations demand EU-legal protection of GMO-free regions and a legal framework that enables local or regional authorities to declare their territories as GMO-free regions.

March for a GMO-free Europe

The "**March for a GMO-free Europe**" of people from European regions, declared as GMO-free, sets an example for the whole Europe. The big action, supported by many organisations, aims to visualise the **European-wide resistance** against GMO.

Environmentalists, consumer protectors, politicians, farmers, anti-globalists, and citizens from many European countries will **march towards the conference** accompanied by tractors and agricultural machinery. We will march towards the conference under place-name signs, and banners with names of our country, region, city, or village.

Plants and agricultural products from our local agriculture, traditional clothing, banners, and symbols against genetic engineering and of our campaign against GMO will make an impression to the participants of the conference and the international media.

The action is organised by a broad **network of environmental organisations, farmers associations and other organisations** in

March for a GMO-free Europe

Austria together with international and regional movements against GMO. As we want to symbolize the European regions, we very much rely on NGOs and individuals from all over Europe to take part in this action, whose success could be a decisive factor for the future of GMO-free agriculture throughout Europe.

The objectives of the March

- A long term **GMO-free agriculture**, horticulture, apiary, aquaculture, and forestry is to be ensured.
- The **freedom of choice and the right of self-determination** of consumers and farmers, who want to waive genetic engineering is to be **protected**.
- Regions need to have the **possibility of self-determination** whether to declare as GMO-free, and this declaration is to be determined within a legal framework.
- We support the **Petition "GMO-free regions and local areas"**, addressed to the EC-commission, which is supported by organisations, and regions. See: www.gmofree-europe.org.
- We will present the **"Vienna Declaration for a GMO-free Europe"** to the Conference, a document with our position towards coexistence and our understanding of a GMO-free-Europe.

Until the above-quoted problems are not solved on the EU-level, **no further approvals** for genetically modified organisms might be issued on the EU-level!

