

RESOLUTION

Republican Scientific & Practical Workshop "GMO Detection in the Republic of Belarus"

The workshop was held under the UNEP-GEF Project “Support to Preparation of the Third National Biosafety Reports to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety – Latin America, Caribbean and Central and Eastern Europe Regions”

The Republic of Belarus ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993 and has been the Party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to this Convention since 2002 which is aimed at the provision of proper protection level in the field of safe transfer, handling and the use of living modified organisms which are the result of the modern biotechnology application and can cause adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity taking into account human health risks and placing special emphasis on their transboundary movement. The Protocol was adopted on January, 29 2000 and came into force on September, 11 2003.

The National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre was established in 1998 and operates successfully in the Republic of Belarus. The Centre took part in the development of the Cartagena Protocol and now acts as a liaison with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and participates in the Biosafety Clearing-House as the information exchange mechanism on the presence and use of genetically modified organisms in the scientific research, agricultural industry and biotechnological production, advanced and contemporary methods of GMO detection, legal regulation of Genetically Engineering Activities around the globe and the implementation of the Parties' obligations on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The Scientific & Practical Workshop "GMO Detection in the Republic of Belarus" was held on September, 21 2015 with the support of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, as well as UNEP-GEF within a framework of the Third National Report preparation on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in the Republic of Belarus on the basis of the SSI "Institute of Genetics & Cytology of NAS Belarus"

functioning as the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre in accordance with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 963 of June, 19 1998. Fifty representatives of organizations in Belarus responsible for the biosafety issues attended the workshop. Among them there were representatives of Accredited Republican GMO Detection Laboratories, biosafety experts from the Institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Republican ministries and government agencies, as well as representatives of the institutions involved in the genetically engineering activities. The following reports have been presented in the course of the workshop: "Research in the Field of Genomic Biotechnologies at the Institute of Genetics & Cytology of NAS Belarus", "Implementation of the Eurasian Economic Union Agreement in the Scope of Accreditation", "Biosafety System of the Republic of Belarus", "Control over Food Products with GMI Content in the Republic of Belarus", "Recombinant Lactoferrin of a Human: Biological Activity", "Development of Transgenic Plants Resistant to Glyphosate", "GMO Release for Test Trial and to the Market: Domestic and International Experience" and "Information Resources on Biosafety Available on the Internet".

The workshop participants noted that Belarus has gained some experience in the field of genetically engineering activities and biosafety. The methods of cell engineering and DNA-technologies have been developed and are widely used in the plant-growing and livestock breeding including the development of transgenic plants and animals. A flock of transgenic goats with a lactoferrin gene of a human has been reared for the needs of the pharmaceutical industry. For the first time in the CIS a transgenic potato has been released into the environment for carrying out trials in the Test Field that corresponds to the biosafety requirements. The permission to release transgenic rape for test trials has been obtained from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus.

The legal regulation of the genetic engineering activities in the Republic of Belarus conforms to international requirements and takes into account approaches laid down in the legislation of the EU countries, the Eurasian Economic Union and other states involved in conducting of the genetic engineering research or the use of research results. The Biosafety Strategic Plan 2012-2020 has been developed and is being implemented.

The National Biosafety System exercising control and monitoring of the turnover of products containing GMO has been established and operates effectively. GMO Detection Laboratories are equipped with modern facilities; all activities are

performed by highly qualified personnel; test conditions and the registration of their results comply the Standard Requirements STB ISO/IEC 17025-2007.

Considering that modern biotechnology has great potential for human well-being, provided its development and use in line with appropriate levels of protection for the environment and human health, the workshop participants **believe it necessary** to adopt a number of scientific and organizational measures to increase the efficiency of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety implementation:

In the field of research: continue the development of the information and methodological database at the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre to constantly inform GMO detection laboratory specialists of the results of similar tests carried out in other countries, the directions in the approaches and new detection methods of Genetically Engineering Events as well as changes in the legal regulation of the genetically engineering activities both within the country and abroad.

In the field of management measures: recommend to the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre the following steps:

- accurately implement the Biosafety Strategic Plan 2012-2020
- ensure a sustainable strategic liaison between the National Co-ordination Biosafety Centre and GMO detection laboratories of the Republic of Belarus including conducting joint interlaboratory collations as well as the validation of new methods and specialized training for staff
- establish information exchange with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus and other State Bodies
- put forward a proposal to the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Belarus on taking part in the Customs staff training in the field of biosafety and the commitment of the Republic of Belarus on implementing its obligations under Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on the Biological Diversity, as well as elaborating a corresponding programme for specialist training;
- jointly with the GMO detection laboratories analyze the Customs Union statutory documents regulating the issues in the field of the Genetic Engineering Activities, movement of genetically modified objects on the territory of the Customs Union and across the Customs Union Border, as well as the development of GMO containing products and their circulation in the market taking into account

practices in their application in the GMO and GMO detection and set up proposals for the Customs Union legislation development.

Workshop participants note that they shall make every effort to ensure that the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will further boost the country's prestige in the international community, promote the research development in the field of genetic engineering, make a significant contribution to the achievement of the main objective of the Cartagena Protocol – ensuring the environmental security and human health safety in today's world of new biotechnologies and encouraging the active use of their results in scientific and practical activities.