

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY
Food and feed safety, innovation
Biotechnology

Brussels,
SANTE/E3/AP/nn/ ddg2.E.3 (2016)2639487

Dear Mr Gall,

Subject: New invasive species in Spain

Thank you for your letter, addressed to Commissioner Andriukaitis, in which you raise your concerns in relation to the spread of teosinte, its impact on maize production and the possible implications of its out-crossing with genetically modified maize MON810. Commissioner Andriukaitis has asked me to reply on his behalf. I apologise for the delay to respond to this letter.

You refer to the fact that teosinte has not been included in the Commission's proposal for the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (Union list) pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014. However, in order for a species to be considered for inclusion on this list, a risk assessment in accordance with Article 5(1) of this Regulation is required. The Commission is not aware of the existence of such risk assessment.

I would also like to bring to your attention that in accordance with Article 4(3) of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014, one of the criteria that an invasive alien species shall fulfil in order to be included on the Union list is that it is, based on available scientific evidence, likely to have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity or the related ecosystem services, a criterion that does not seem to be met for teosinte. The information presented in your letter indicates that teosinte is rather a weed affecting the maize production and therefore not likely to be considered for inclusion on the Union list.


In your letter, you also consider that teosinte populations are likely to develop higher invasiveness, by receiving transgenic DNA, stemming from genetically modified maize, cultivated in Spain. The Commission is well aware of teosinte presence in maize fields in Spain and is closely following this issue. At the moment my services are processing all data and information which have been provided by the Spanish authorities on the presence of

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teosinte in Spain. EFSA is also being mandated to check whether, on the basis of these data and relevant existing scientific literature, new evidence emerge which would change the conclusions of the EFSA opinions on MON810 and other GM maize for cultivation.

Yours sincerely,



Chantal Bruetschy

Head of Unit

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