



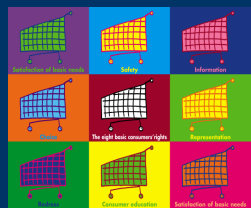
Coexistence and Right of Choice for Consumers

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Coexistence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops

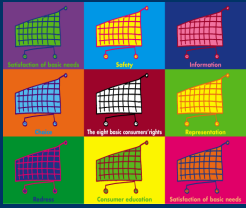
Vienna, 5-6 April 2006



BEUC – the European Consumers’ Organisation

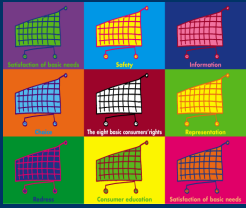


- ✓ 40 members from 29 European countries
(EU25 (minus Lithuania) plus Iceland, Macedonia,
Norway, Switzerland, Romania)
- ✓ Try and influence, in the consumer interest, the
development of EU policy and to promote and
defend the interests of all European consumers
(since 1962)
- ✓ Funded by members and European Commission



Eurobarometer and other surveys

Eurobarometer (Feb 06) (I)

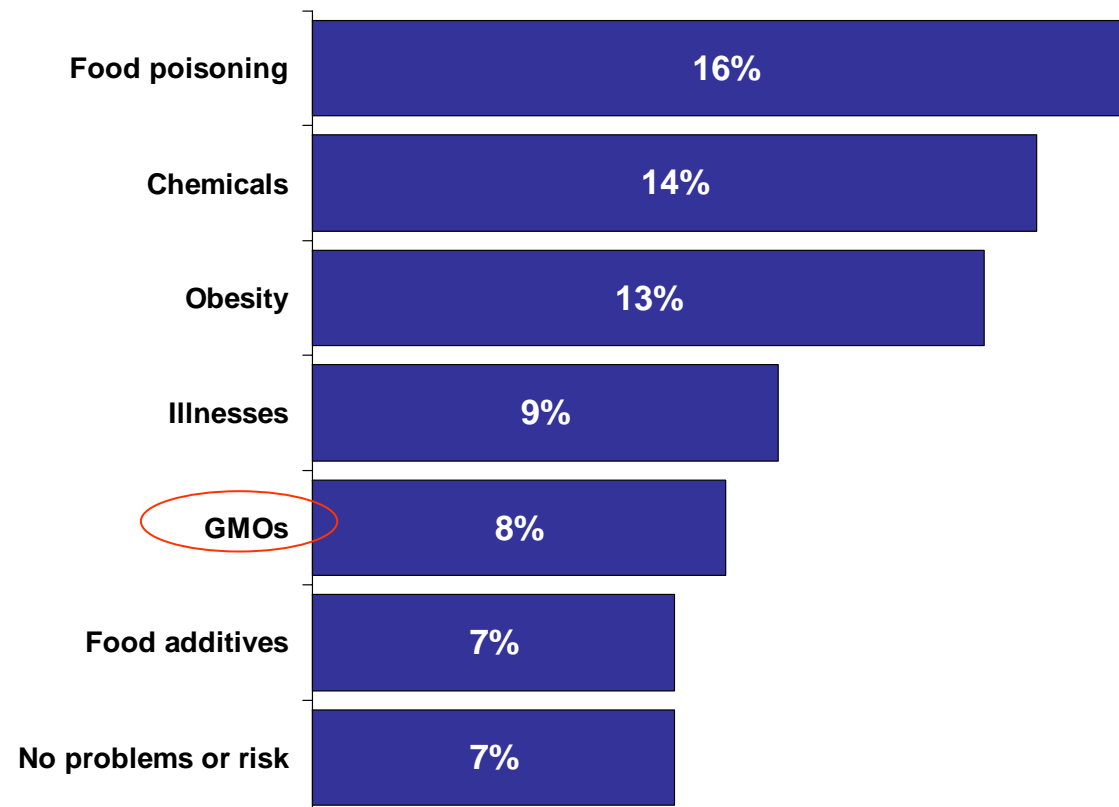


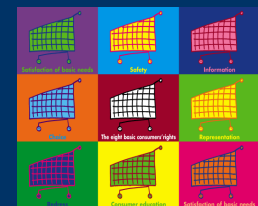
- Jointly commissioned by EFSA and DG SANCO to assess how consumers in the EU perceive health-related risks and in particular food safety;
- Approx. 25,000 face-to-face interviews in 25 MSs;
- Identify key concerns with respect to food safety;
- Assess consumers' views regarding action of public authorities;
- Assess consumers' trust in key information sources.

Eurobarometer (II)

RISK PERCEPTIONS Food-related risks - spontaneous

Question: What are all the things that come to mind when thinking about possible problems or risks associated with food?

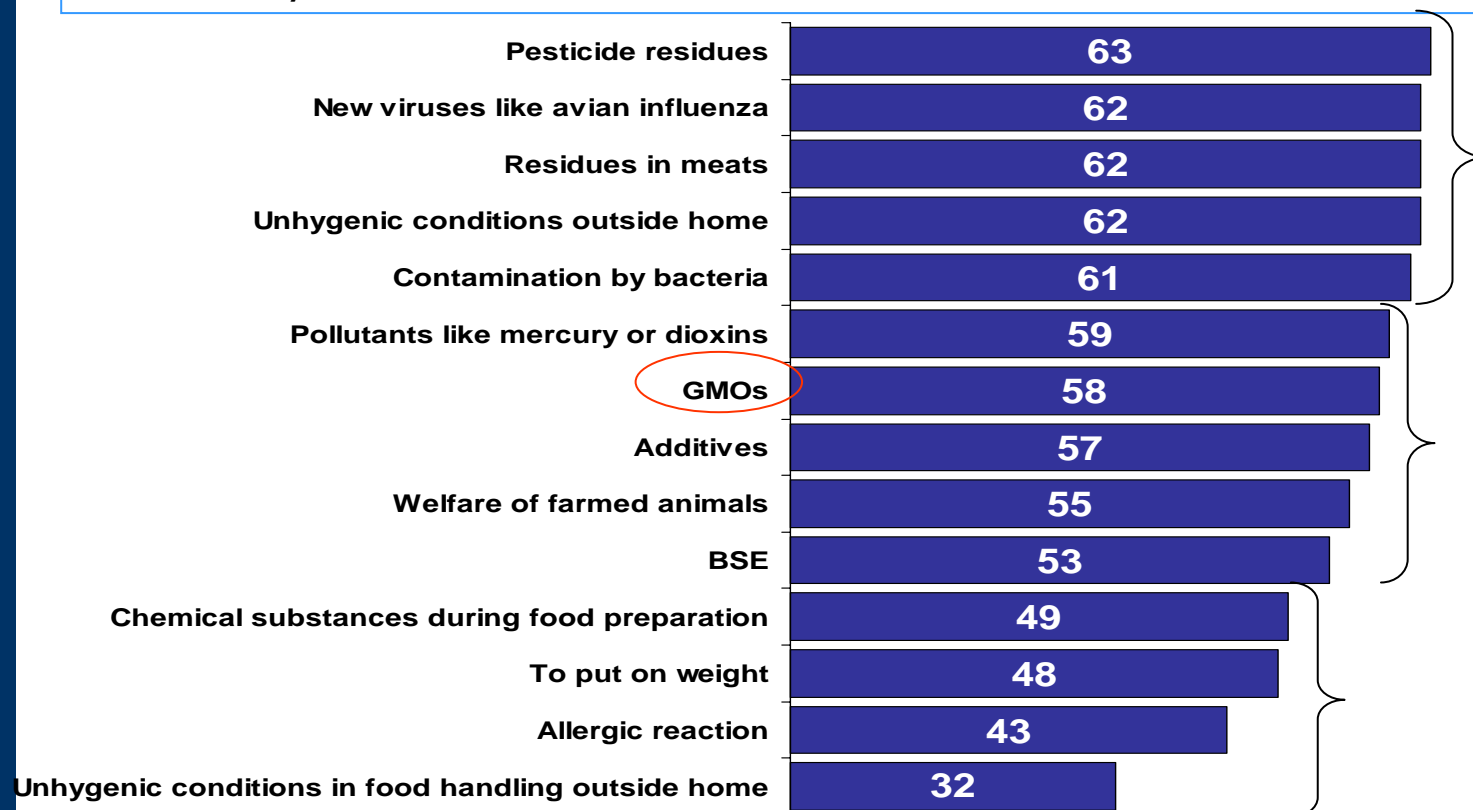




Eurobarometer (III)

RISK PERCEPTIONS Food-related risks - prompted

Question: For each of the following issues, please tell me if you are very worried, fairly worried, not very worried or not at all worried by it? *AVERAGE WORRY "INDEX"*



+100=very worried, +67=fairly worried, +33=not very worried, 0=not at all worried

Eurobarometer (IV)

RISK PERCEPTIONS prompted

Question: *For each of the following issues, please tell me if you are very worried, fairly worried, not very worried or not at all worried by it?*

Answers: **WORRIED**

Austria 69%

European Union 62%

Other Surveys

Denmark (816), Oct 05, avoid GM more than 50%, little awareness of GM labelling requirements

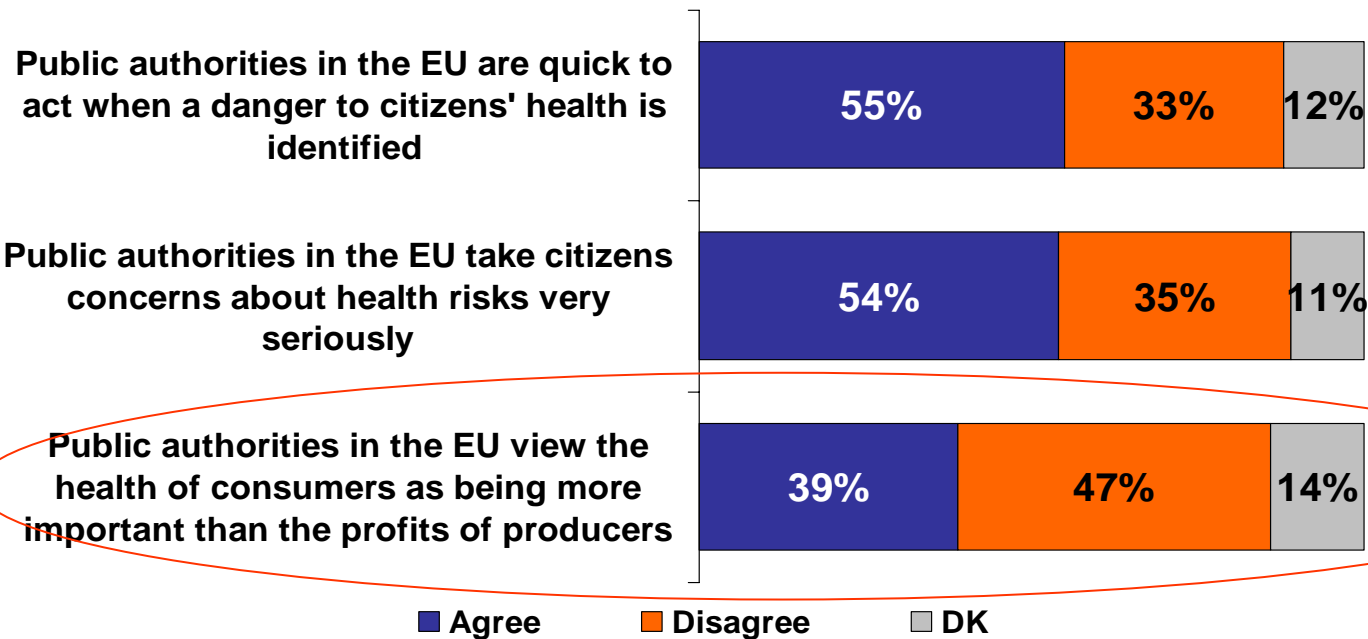
Sweden (514), March 06

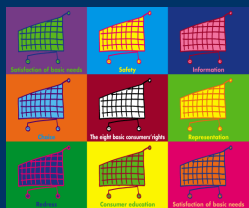
Etc.

Eurobarometer (V)

Citizens' health as a priority

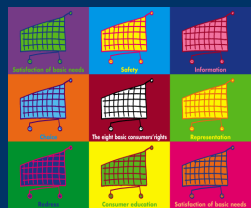
Question: For each of the following statements, would you say that you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree?





Report on Implementation of National Measures on coexistence (I)

- Highly unsatisfactory situation: no coherence, no evidence of planning and good co-ordination between MSs;
- No EU-wide legislation on coexistence at the moment '*because of EU's limited experience*' and need to implement national measures;
- Non-binding codes of practice considered acceptable;
- Rejection of a number of national legislative proposals on the basis of free trade;
- Emphasis on local conditions and need for flexibility.



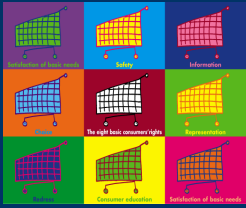
Report on Implementation of National Measures on coexistence (II)

Coexistence measures should not go beyond what is necessary to ensure that adventitious traces of GMOs stay below the EU labelling threshold

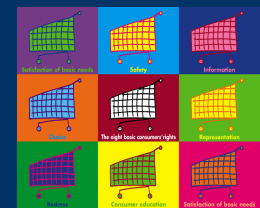
De facto

- acceptance that 0.9% threshold is a tolerance level

0.9% Threshold for accidental and adventitious presence



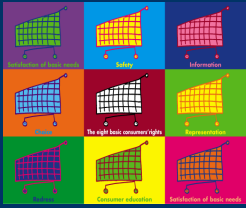
- Evidence throughout Europe of very different interpretation;
- Accidental and adventitious presence = as low as (reasonably) possible;
- Organic and conventional;
- Threshold in seeds, still unresolved.



Seeds

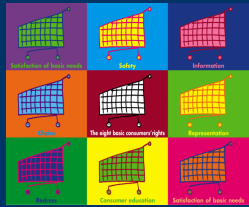
- JRC report;
- Questionable interpretation of the 0.9% threshold;
- Technical zero.

Need for a European Framework



- Science-based European framework to address the need for transparency versus purely political/economic arguments;
- Different situations in different countries, not acceptable;
- Harmonisation of practices (across border issues);
- Long-term approach;
- This is not an area for self-regulation by industry.

Food Production Costs



The issues:

- Liability for direct responsibility;
- National fund for when responsibilities are not clear;
- Non-mandatory insurance;
- Cost in field production but also in separation throughout the food chain (transport, storage, processing);
- Need for a much more rational approach to the estimate of economic consequences of the implementation of co-existence measures.

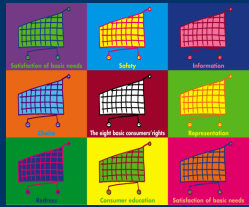
EU Projects on GM and scientific evidence

- GMO Compass
- Co-Extra
- National research (need for more co-ordination and transparency)
- Environmental impact
- Important role of EFSA (issue of independence and openness)

In conclusion

The introduction of GM production should not destroy non-GM production and availability

- European Legislation based on scientific assessments on coexistence measures;
- Correct and harmonised interpretation of threshold concept;
- Technical zero for seeds;
- Science-based consideration of environmental effects (within coexistence framework);
- Clear analysis of the increased cost of food production.





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