

## Joint Statement from Cooks Against the Deregulation of new GMOs

With this statement, we, cooks from Slow Food's Belgian Alliance and their allies, express our concerns regarding the proposal by the European Commission on new genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As culinary professionals we are worried of the impact that a deregulation of new GMOs will have on the integrity of ingredients, the well-being of our customers and suppliers, and ultimately, on the art of cooking. Slow Food believes that the EU should promote technological advances that work within agroecological practices and that are proven to support sustainability, in line with the principles of good, clean, and fair food systems.

GMOs have been a subject of debate and concern for many years, and with the introduction of *new* genetic modifications, our worries grow stronger. Here below we have outlined our main reasons for opposing the deregulation of new GMOs:

### 1| Labelling

As cooks and chefs, we rely on knowing the origins and characteristics of the ingredients we use. The introduction of new GMOs without proper labelling jeopardizes our ability to make informed choices in the kitchen. We want to keep the freedom of choice as whether to serve food containing new GMOs or not. This requires the continued mandatory labelling of products derived from new genomic techniques.

### 2| Protection of consumers

The quality of the food is of utmost importance as we need to ensure the food we serve our customers is safe, healthy and tasty. The long-term effects of introducing new GMOs into our food system remain uncertain. As culinary experts, we advocate for a cautious approach, prioritizing thorough scientific evaluation. This requires strict safety assessment of new GMO foods.

### 3| Traceability

We want our suppliers to be able to know whether their food contains new GMOs or not. We want organic food to remain protected from possible contamination of new GMOs. This requires rules to enforce traceability of new GMOs.

### 4| Respect of small-scale producers

We want our suppliers to be free to grow what they want and to be independent from patents owned by companies. Local and artisanal producers play a vital role in preserving unique flavours and culinary traditions. Deregulated GMOs may disproportionately benefit large agribusinesses, potentially undermining the livelihoods of small-scale producers. This requires enforcing fairness and accountability in food systems.

### 5| Protection of biodiversity

As cooks, we are custodians of biodiversity, and our culinary heritage has been preserved and continues to be enjoyed thanks to the diverse range of ingredients that are accessible in nature. Favouring monocultures and use of synthetic inputs, the deregulation of new GMOs puts biodiversity at risk, potentially endangering local varieties that have been cooked for centuries. This requires rules that strictly monitor the presence of GMOs and prevent contamination of non-GMO fields while safeguarding biodiversity of crops and pollinators.

*Our call: We call on Belgian decision-makers to reject this deregulation proposal which risks destroying the credibility of the quality of Belgian restaurants. We advocate for the maintenance of a regulatory framework that ensures thorough safety assessment and transparency in the introduction of new GMOs, safeguarding the interests of consumers, culinary professionals, the environment and the art of cooking. Ultimately, we call for policies that support the agroecological transition.*

## **Signatures /**

Georges Athanassopoulos, Måloma

Damien Bouchery, Restaurant Bouchéry

Yorick Coomans, Mazette

Denis Delcampe, Restaurant Le Tourmant

Arthur Dielens, La Turbean

Sarah El Mounaim, Mazette

Ugo Federico, Racines Bruxelles

Micol Genesis,

Diamantis Kalogerinis,

Sara Lenzi, Entre Nous

Angelica Magni, GRAMMES 1060

Sophie Marconi, Restaurant Chabrol

Isabelle Nizet, Horia

Florian Parmentier,

Maxime Renard, La Table Conviviale

Philippe Renard, Philosophie de Cuisine

Martin Ringlet, Agricotiers

Véronique Socié, La Fruitière

Quentin Szuwarski, Ivresse

Are you a cook? Sign here: <https://forms.office.com/e/mFfsxDWXjh>



*Slow Food is a global grassroots movement acting together to ensure good, clean and fair food for all. We cultivate a global network of local communities who defend cultural and biological diversity, promote food education and advocate for more just and equitable food policies.*