

Italy asks EU to halt GM maize cultivation

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"MON 810", a variety of genetically modified maize (corn) developed by Monsanto Company is pictured during an action by anti-GMO activists calling for its ban on January 23, 2012 at a Monsanto storehouse in Trebes near Carcassonne, southern France.

The Italian government has asked the European Commission not to renew authorisation of a key genetically-modified corn, according to a letter seen by AFP on Thursday.

The product is US agri-giant Monsanto's MON 810 maize, one of only two GM products cleared to be grown in Europe along with German conglomerate [BASF](#)'s Amflora potato.

Renewal of the maize licence is currently on hold due to hostility or reticence by a string of European Union states.

Eight countries—Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg and Poland—have banned [GM crops](#) on their soil.

The Rome request calls on Brussels to "suspend the authorisation of the cultivation of MON 810 maize seeds across all [EU countries](#)," citing detailed "environmental risks."

Brussels cleared MON 810 in 1998 for 10 years and Monsanto submitted a request in 2007 for it to be extended but the process has been effectively frozen.

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