

EU to simplify GMO import approval: sources

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The EU plans to simplify the import approval process for controversial genetically modified foods and animal feed, allowing member states to decide whether to admit them or not, sources said Wednesday.

The sources said the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will unveil proposals on April 22 which will in effect allow GM products into the 28-nation bloc where previously fierce opposition by some member states had blocked them.

The plan is similar to legislation approved by the European Parliament in January which allows member states to decide for themselves whether to cultivate Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) after years of bitter dispute.

This opt-out compromise means that those countries such as Spain which want GMOs would no longer be stymied by opponents such as France.

If the plans are accepted, import licences currently blocked for 19 GMOs including food, [animal feed](#) and flowers could be cleared.

They also get the Commission off the political hook since if a GMO is judged safe by the European Food Safety Agency, then it has no option but to agree ultimately that it can be imported without restriction into the EU's single market.

Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and three other environmental groups on Wednesday denounced the plans, saying Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker was caving in to vested interests.

Greenpeace EU director Jorgo Riss said: "Juncker promised he would reform EU GM crop decisions to make them more democratic. Instead, he could end up approving more GM crops under the banner of free trade, brushing aside the concerns of EU citizens and risks for the environment."

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Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic.

But around 50 GMOs are marketed in the EU, mainly for cattle feed.

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