

# Most EU nations seek to bar GM crops

October 4 2015

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Nineteen of the 28 EU member states have applied to keep genetically modified crops out of all or part of their territory, the bloc's executive arm said Sunday, the deadline for opting out of new European legislation on GM crops.

The EU nations had until October 3 to seek an opt-out which would give

them the opportunity to ban GM crops already authorised as safe for cultivation, or under consideration, by the European Union.

Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia made last-minute applications for such a ban, the EU Commission said.

They thus join Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland in seeking to keep the [genetically modified crops](#) out of their fields.

Britain is also seeking a ban for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, leaving only England to willingly allow GM crop cultivation.

Belgium has opted to keep its French-speaking Wallonia region GMO-free.

Those national demands must be put to the big agricultural multinationals, including the likes of Monsanto and Dow.

The agro companies have the right to oppose such calls for these GM products to be banned from individual member states.

If they do so then member states can still invoke "substantial grounds", for example specific environmental or agricultural issues, for a ban.

The legislation crucially allows member states to ban GMOs on environmental policy considerations, even if the crop has already been cleared on health and safety grounds at the EU level.

So far only one GM crop is cultivated in the European Union—Monsanto's MON 810 GM maize.

The product's genetic modification aims to protect the crop against a

harmful pest -- the European corn borer.

MON 810 is cultivated in few member states, mainly in Spain and Portugal.

There are also eight pending applications for GMO cultivation in the EU, including renewal of the MON810 authorisation.

On top of that, 58 GMOs are authorised for import into the EU for food and feed uses, rather than for cultivation.

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Citation: Most EU nations seek to bar GM crops (2015, October 4) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-10-eu-nations-bar-gm-crops.html>

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