

Object : International GM Opposition Day in Spring 2006

Addressees : persons who positively replied to the 1st Call for Participation

Chevreuse, the 15th of October, 2005

Dear partners,

First, please excuse the English mistakes of the present French writer.

Next week, on Friday 21, a meeting will be held in Montreuil, near Paris, at the seat of Attac-France. This meeting will convene representatives of several organizations that already coordinated the 2005 GM Opposition Day. Given that not all of you will be able to come to Paris on this occasion (but Gerald Miles of Wales), this message is aimed at:

1/ informing you of the current state of the project, and  
2/ asking for any suggestion you may consider helpful for its development, including your preferred "D" day.

So far, feedback to our Call for Participation came from 21 countries.

South-American countries remained silent, although they may not have been properly informed. Furthermore, as long as the "D" day is not fixed, the project may not seem concrete enough. Three possible dates have therefore been proposed: the 8 of April, the 20th of April, and the 20th of May.

The 20th of April will be the "Day of the Earth";

The 20th of May might be associated with a demo in Germany;

The 8th of April appears to be an interesting candidate, as it coincides with several related events:

- the Biotech Industry's Annual Convention in Chicago;
- the European Social Forum (ESF) in Athens;
- the WTO decision concerning the USA-Europe case about GMO trading.

Brian Tokar tells us that a demo could be organized in Chicago, associated with information points in other US towns. The ESF organizers have been contacted (see the P.S. below). Gerald Miles suggests to *"expand the D Day further by countries send a representation to Brussels bringing a message to the Commission. This could be planned for the day after Opposition Day: each ambassador of every (European) country under their own country's flag marching to a samba band bringing petitions/letters from numerous unions and associations of their countries."*

A possible scenario would thus develop in two steps :

- an information day aimed at people, journalists, corporate share-holders and politicians, on Saturday the 8th of April;
- a demonstration day, either on the following Sunday or Monday at least in Chicago and Brussels, possibly at other "decision places" in the world.

Concerning the content of the "information day", it would belong to activists to define it and set it up at the local level. United contributions are encouraged. Last two years, this had a positive effect on several local associations that learned to know each other and worked together afterwards. Unions of anti-GMO activists belonging to different organizations have even been created on this occasion.

Individual participations may also be considered: for instance, Frederick Ablam Kouwo proposed to talk on radio the D Day, in Togo. Whatever the actions either "local teams" or individuals may be

able to settle, the full international program should be known one month in advance, so as to advertise it in the medias.

Beside the usual contestation of GMO open-air plants and food, it will be tried to promote legal actions or methods that would help populations to resist the GM front (i.e.: alternative agricultural practice, "copyright-free" seeds, labeled food, ...). Apart from being useful in itself, this positive dimension will probably be appreciated by institutions that are asked to support the project. The current call to these foundations is aimed at employing a full-time person, carrying out the event promotion, helping some partners in their organizing process, financing traveling expenses of the partners. It is already planned that every information site will receive a set of shared documents, together with a large "No GMO" banner that will stand for the signature of the day (most probably new releases of the one that was used during the 18th of June, this year).

The way we'll interact until the D day remains to be clarified. At least, the development of the project will involve a dedicated website receiving updated news from every contact person and provide information to everybody (<http://altercampagne.free.fr>).

Once the D day will have been chosen, it will belong to us to widely dispatch information in order to mobilize as much people as possible. The Biotech industry strongly relies on its shareholders, who are rather open-minded and versatile. Realizing how much convinced and united people are against GMOs could make them change their mind and choose other means to bear interest. This may be the ultimate –not too realistic- goal of the project. But even if we don't succeed that well, we'll have contributed to inform people and enhanced an international network, made ready to future actions.

Best regards,

Dominique Béroule  
Member of the GM Opposition Day Coordinating Committee

P.S.: Message to FSE organizers:

GMOs continue to be a central social concern, illustrative of a world dominated by a few private interests.

Despite the disagreement of 70% of European citizens, the Commission is ready to approve the trading of GM food and seeds, mostly exported by the USA through the WTO regulation. Not only may peasants and other farmers become dependent on patented crops, but also public funds would have to compensate for the lack of insurance coverage with respect to related health and environmental risks.

With the coincidence of the Biotech Industry's Annual Convention in Chicago and the European Social Forum (ESF) in Athens, a great opportunity could be seized upon. If the ESF Organizing Committee would acknowledge a GM Opposition Day as part of its program, while US activists are setting up a demo in Chicago, in synergy with several other actions throughout the world, this would generate a strong signal towards the main decision-makers: both politicians and corporate shareholders. The ESF would then have the opportunity to participate in a truly world-wide action.  
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