

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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<p>Recommendations regarding the Free Circulation of Genetically Modified Organisms in the Greek Market</p>
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The NCHR took the initiative to issue an important decision concerning the free circulation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and Genetically Modified Foods (GMFs). According to the vast majority of its members, the principle of precaution and the principle of prevention - guaranteed by international, European and domestic law- concerning the right to the protection of the environment and the right to health, prevail over the principle of economic freedom; as a result, the latter can be curtailed when there is a serious risk for the environment and/or the public health. In particular, the NCHR took into consideration the provisions of: article 15 of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on the Environment and the Development; the “Carthagena Protocol” on bio-safety and biological diversity; article 174 of the E.U. Treaty; the provisions of the E.U. Directive 2001/18 and those of the E.U. Regulation 1830/2003; and of article 24 (1) of the Greek Constitution on the right to environment. The main points of the decision were:

a) Greece should immediately incorporate Directive 2001/18 into its national legal order (recently, the European Court passed a judgment against Greece for omission on that ground);

b) scientific research should be encouraged, as stipulated in the E.U. Directive 18/2001;

c) the Greek State should establish specific institutions responsible for public awareness on the preventive level, and

d) all products should carry clear notification on the existence of GMOs in their composition/ingredients, irrespective of percentage.

These recommendations fall within the spirit of the opinion of the NCHR that financial considerations should by no means prevail over the protection of the environment and public health.

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