



COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

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Leaked EU Council paper reveals cloned food restrictions were possible

As raised during debate in the European Parliament this afternoon, BEUC and the Eurogroup for Animals are bewildered by a confidential document from the Council which reveals that, contrary to what was argued by EU Ministers and Commission during negotiations on the 'Novel Food' regulation, restrictions on the marketing of food from cloned animals and their offspring could be possible with WTO rules and concludes:

- A labelling requirement for food from cloned animals and their offspring would be compatible with GATTⁱ rules;
- The case that this food are not 'like' products as compared to food from conventionally bred animals, thus not resulting in violation of WTO rules, could be defensible;
- With regards to a ban of food from offspring of cloned animals, "the EU might be able to justify the infringement under Article XXⁱⁱ GATT" on the basis of consumers' ethical considerations - as for the cat and dog fur legislation.

With this opinion of the Council's legal service on compatibility of restrictions of food from offspring of cloned animals with WTO rules, it appears the threat of a trade war brandished during the negotiations between the European institutions was exaggerated.

In addition, the document reiterates that "the EFSA was unable to perform a risk analysis for all animal species to which cloning is applied. Hence the risk analysis on the safety of food from these species is absent".

Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of the Eurogroup for Animals and Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation questioned:

"At all stages of the negotiations, EU Ministers and the Commission ignored unequivocal signals that European consumers don't want cloning to be used for food production purposesⁱⁱⁱ. They argued food from cloned animals is safe to eat and invoked the threat of a trade war, however it has now been revealed that both arguments appear not to stand. Whose interests were they representing? Clearly, not the Europeans' interest."

"We urge the Commission to listen to consumers' demands and introduce a temporary ban on cloning and imports of clones and their offspring to avoid further products from entering the EU food chain, to tackle the issue of cloning as a matter of urgency by coming forward with a legislative proposal on this at the same time as the new proposal on Novel Food, and, in light of this document, to explore fully a WTO defence."

ENDS

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ⁱ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

ⁱⁱ rien dans le présent Accord ne sera interprété comme empêchant l'adoption ou l'application par toute partie contractante des mesures

a. necessary to public morals

b. necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health"

ⁱⁱⁱ Flash Eurobarometer 238 – October 2008: 84% of Europeans are concerned about the long-term health and safety effects