

Aarhus Convention/Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
Moldova's experience
Public participation: good practices, needs and
challenges

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**Joint Aarhus Convention/Cartagena Protocol on
Biosafety workshop**
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Country regulatory framework

- **Ratification of Aarhus Convention on public access to information and decision making, of April 1999**
- **Ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety by the Resolution of the Moldovan Parliament no. 1381-XV of 11 October 2002**
- **Ratification of Amendment to the Aarhus Convention (Almaty, 2005) on public access to decision making in the field of Biosafety, 2008**
- **Law on Environmental protection, 2000**
- **National Law on Biosafety, 2001**
- **National Law on access to the information, Nr. 982 of 11.05.2000**
- **Law on transparency in decision making nr.239-XVI of 13 November 2008**

Moldova's action to consolidate a fully functional system for public awareness and participation in the decision-making:

Case study

- Aarhus Convention Art. 6Bis amended with provisions for public information related to GMO (Moldova ratifies in 2008)
- Electronic register of environmental NGOs elaborated and placed on website
- NGO representatives involved in the National Biosafety Committee and participate in decision making
- www.biosafety.md website is regularly updated with the news and relevant information and feed-back is provided
- Public hearing organized for application for contained use
- Trainings and workshops with NGOs organized
- Production and dissemination of outreach materials, technical manuals, etc.
- Publications and mediatization.

Institutional setting-up to ensure public information and PP on environment/biosafety

- **Ministry of Environment - www.mediu.gov.md**
- **Resp. Division on Policy analysis, monitoring and assessment**
- **Division on Natural Resources and Biodiversity, Section Biodiversity and Biosafety**
- **Biosafety office – UNEP/GEF Biosafety Implementation project**

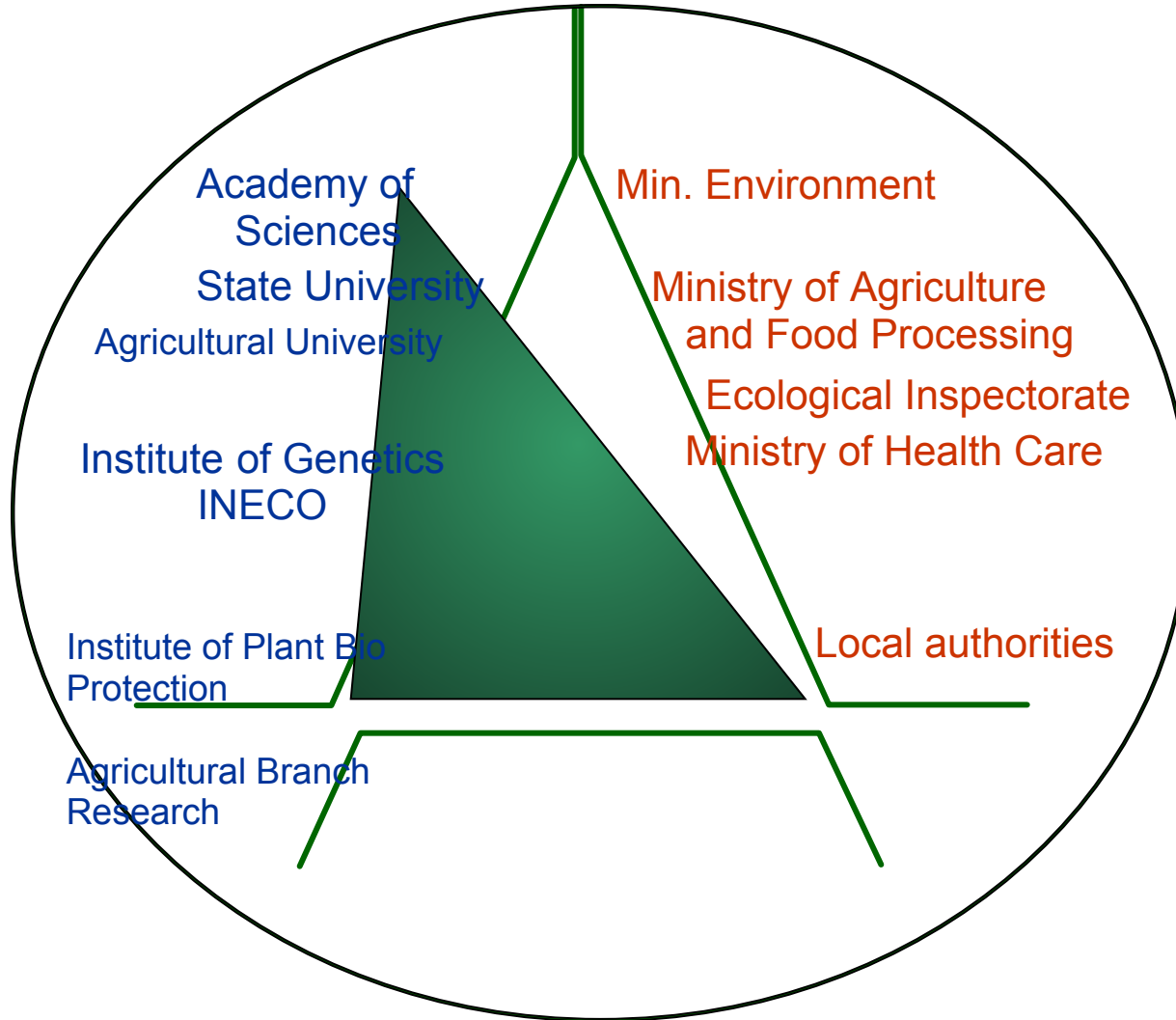
- **National Biosafety Committee - www.biosafety.md**

- **Center for Environmental Information (CIM)-www.cim.gov.md**

Moldova's case study. Public information and participation at national level

- Art.39 of the Law on Biosafety require application of principle of transparency during the procedures of notification and authorization of deliberative release of LMOs to the environment and placing to the market. The transparency in case of contained use of GMOs is a responsibility of National Biosafety Committee.
- National Biosafety Committee is represented by governmental bodies, academia, education and NGOs
- Guidelines brings details and means for public information and feedback
- BCH system involving stakeholders network and website available for public and strengthen capacities of Biosafety Committee

Stakeholders' partnership

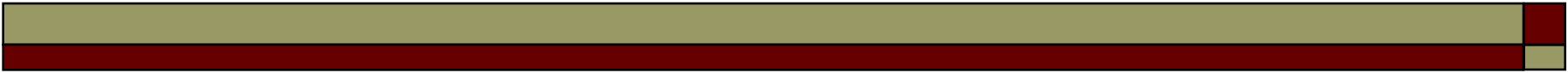


UNEP-GEF Implementation NBF Project

capacity building for public information and mechanism for public participation to the decision making

ACTIONS:

- BCH in place and Web-site www.biosafety.md
- Mechanism for public participation in place
- Stakeholders involvement
- Involvement of NGOs and civil society
- Definition of national procedures and guidelines for decision making
- Risk Assessment guidelines approved and available
- Strengthening laboratory capacity for GMOs detection
- Education, training, publication and dissemination



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Specific issues related GMOs and public information and participation

- **Standards on food staffs labeling and standards on labeling of chemical products, GD Nr. 996 of 20.08.2003**
- **Guidelines on risk assessment of GMOs for human health, biodiversity and the environment during deliberative release or placing to the market, 2009**
- **Regulation on traceability and labeling of GMOs food staffs and feed, or obtained from GMOs, 2009**
- **National Register on information related to GMOs and submitting it to the BCH system of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**
- **Regulation on Emergency measures in case of accidents and management of risks resulted from GMOs use, nr.35 of 26 August 2009**

Principle of transparency in decision making.

Case study

Public hearings organized during the handling of notification submitted by State Moldovan University, laboratory of molecular biology seeking the permission for contained use of 13 lines of GMOs tobacco, in research scope in 2008.

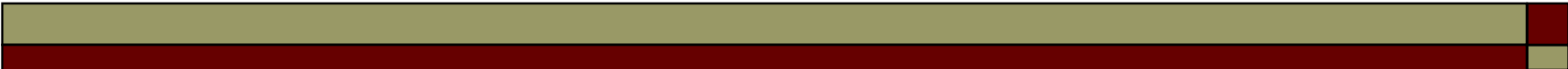
Public accessible summary and information were published at the web-sites www.mediu.gov.md, and www.biosafety.md, E-mail information sent via List of Register of interested public and NGOs

During one month the comments from different interested stakeholders, members of Biosafety Committee, academia community, environmental NGOs, public were collected and taken into consideration during the Biosafety Committee session.

It was considered relevant to request the additional information regarding the risk assessment information, and monitoring plan.

The authorization for GMOs contained use has not be issues, the notifier application documents has been retired.

Challenges: inactivity of NGOs, low number of comments received as feedback, members of National Committee have weak understanding and knowledge about the notification applications and risk assessment documents according to international standards.



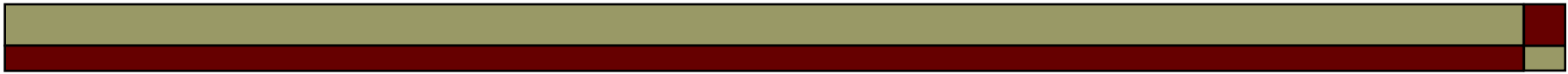
National Register on information regarding the genetic modification of organisms of GMOs and submitting of information to the BCH of the Cartagena Protocol/Electronic Register

- Stipulates requirements regarding public information and participation to decision making.
- Transparency principle during decision making is ensured by National Biosafety Committee
- National Committee maintain the Register of interested public
- National Committee in term of 10 day informs the public via Internet, e-mails or via hard copies
- National information regarding GMOs regulation and approvals is available via BCH web-site and Electronic Register
- Regularly, accurate and timely submitting of National information to the Central portal of BCH of CPB



List of interested public

- Non-governmental organizations
- Consumer associations
- Doctors and Health care associations
- Mass-media
- Scientific community
- Farmers associations
- Seeds importers
- Local public authorities
- Farmers
- Local communities



Good practices and constraints to Enforce a comprehensive National Biosafety policy

- Socio-economic assessment for the Action Plan was performed revealing its impacts on economy, trade, farmers, agriculture
- BAP was widely consulted with the different stakeholders: policy makers, decision makers, farmers, consumer associations, local public authorities, researchers, civil society during the meetings and workshops
- The debates were held and finally the consensus on BAP was reached
- BAP published on BCH and ME web-pages and in newspapers
- **Constraints:** reaching of consensus due to the different opinions and weak information of stakeholders
- **Outcomes:** The Biosafety AP for 2009-2015 as a policy document was approved in 2009

Issues and Challenges: Consultation process for Strengthening of regulatory regime. Case study

- Different stakeholders involved and consulted to drafting national regulations and guidelines
- Drafts of regulations published on web-page for consultation and improvement
- Challenges: difficult reaching of consensus with sectorial governmental bodies
- Good practices: workshops, meetings and round table organized to meet consensus
- Outcomes: The draft Amendments to the agricultural laws in have been approved by the Government and submitted to the Parliament, was adopted in the first reading



Moldova's experience in involving local communities to the decision making

The local communities are considered as interested public in cases when the GMOs intended to be released in the territory of local settlements or in closed neighbor.

In this case the comments are received during 30 days since the local community being informed.

Public awareness workshops and meetings were organized in different districts: Orhei, Soroca, Ungheni, Leova, Sholdanesti et al.

Different means of information are used: web-site, local press and media, posters in the public administration halls, public hearings, Internet and other methods.

Local authority, medical personnel, NGOs, media, school teachers, farmers and farmer associations, consumers were highly interested to be informed of the eventual GMOs use and strongly intended to participate during the decision making.



Consolidate a fully functional system for monitoring and enforcement: Case Study

- Centre for Certification of Seeds and Agriculture production , LMO detection laboratory is equipped with 7300 Real time PCR system and is accredited to ISO-17025
- Centre for Biosafety and Laboratory of the State University of Moldova provides GMO detection (corn, soybean, potatoes)

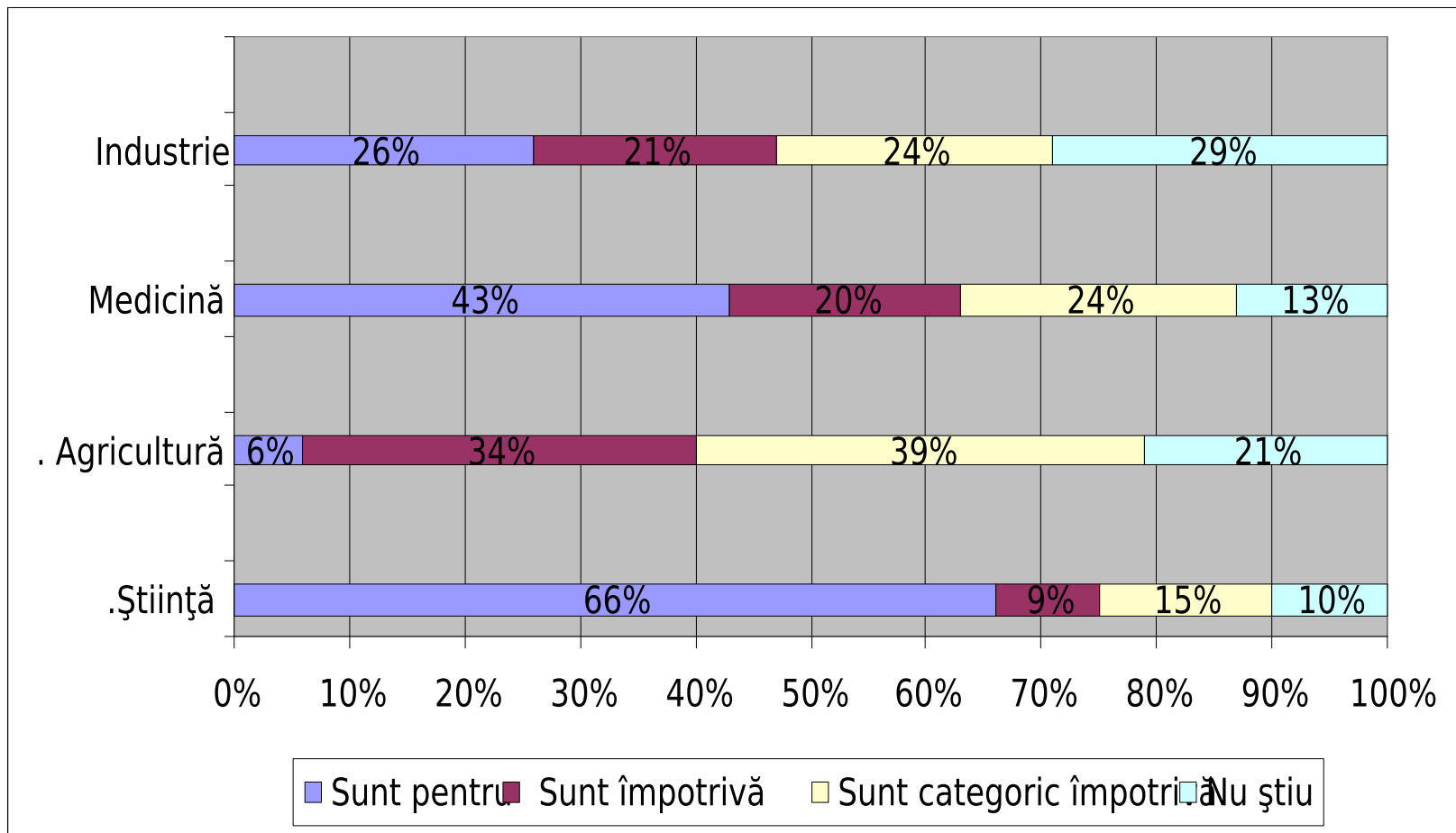
GMOs testing of food market in Moldova/SGS (NGOs Eco-TIRAS)

№ пробы	Название колбасы или сосисок	Производитель	Дата закупки	Вес, кг	Дополнитель-ная информация
1	Колбаса «Мозаичная», высший сорт	ООО Карди, Бендеры	15.09.08	0,72	ТУ У 15.1-25878614.006-2002
2	Сосиски «Венские», первый сорт	Тираспольский мясокомбинат	_»_	0,8	ТУ У-15.1-30978685-018-2004
3	Вареная колбаса «Столовая», второй сорт	Бендерский мясокомбинат	15.09.08	0.79	ТУ У 15.1-00443111.002-2001
4	Сосиски «Lacta», высший сорт	Фирма «Pegas»	15.09.08	0.542	Magazin «Plaza» / Green Heels, Chişinău
5	Сосиски «Lacta», высший сорт	Фирма «Banian»	15.09.08	0.518	Magazin nr. 1, Chişinău
6	Сосиски «Lacta», высший сорт	Фирма «Valul Traian»	15.09.08	0.506	Magazin «Plaza» / Green Heels, Chişinău
7	Сосиски «Slivochnye»	Фирма «Basarabia Nord»	15.09.08	0526	Magazin «Plaza» / Green Heels, Chişinău
8	Сосиски «Gingasie»	Firm «Carnez»	15.09.08	0.520	Magazin nr. 1, Chişinău
9	Сосиски «Lacta»	Фирма «R&R»	15.09.08	0.520	Magazin nr. 1, Chişinău
10	Колбаса «Lacta», высший сорт	Фирма «Soro Meteor»	15.09.08	0.570	Magazin «Plaza» / Green Heels, Chişinău

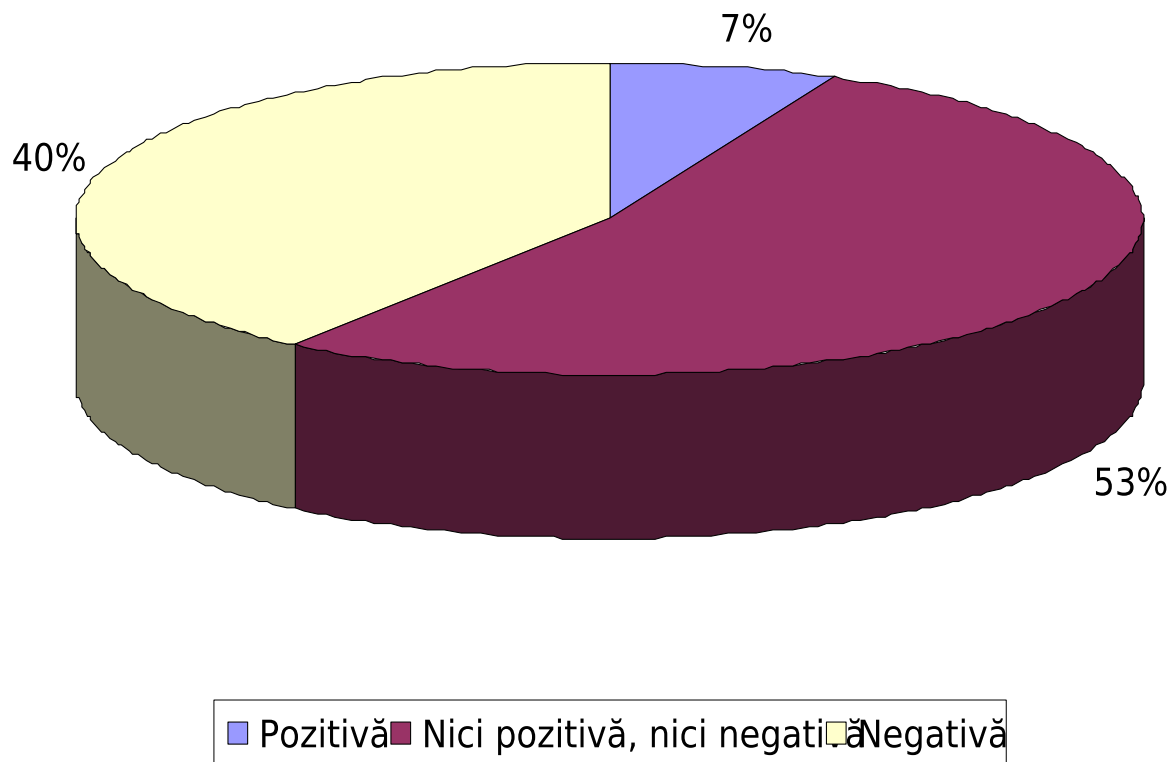
GMOs detection of soy products in Moldova, 2007

Nr. d/o	product	Country of export	Qualitative testing	Quantitative testing
1.	Soybean flour	SUA	Depistat MG	> 5 %
2.	Soybean flour	Israel	Depistat MG	> 5 %
3.	Soybean flour	Poland	Depistat MG	> 5 %
4.	Soybean protein	SUA	Depistat MG	less 0,1%
5.	„Meat „ from soybean	Ukraine	Depistat MG	> 5 %
6.	„Meat „ from soybean	Olanda	Nu s-au depistat MG	--
7.	Soybean grist	România	Depistat MG	2,6 % +_ 3,3%
8.	Soybean grist	Brazil	Depistat MG	> 5 %
9.	Soybean grist	Moldova	Depistat MG	Not detected

Public opinion pool survey: What is your opinion regarding the GMOs use?:



What is your attitude regarding perspectives of GMOs use in Moldova?





Public opinion pool survey

- **Approx. 60% of respondents confirmed that they are informed about GMOs.**
- **Public consider the most credibility of available information regarding GMOs that is offered by scientific community (62%), medicine (59%) and environmental organizations (47%).**
- **About 2/3 of respondents accept GMOs use for researcher scops, but not in the field of agriculture.**
- **Categoric not accept any GMOs use in agriculture about 80% of respondents.**

Main Challenges for Moldova

- Insufficient level of awareness of decision-makers regarding GMOs
- Insufficient level of awareness of public and NGOs regarding GMOs regarding consumers rights to be informed and to participate to the decision making
- Inappropriate data and/or lack of databases
- Insufficient scientific data and arguments regarding adverse risks of OMGs
- Insufficient national capacities and experience in risk assessment and evaluation.
- Insufficient experience for public participation to the Risk assessment procedures, monitoring on GMOs in foodstuffs market, feed, labeling etc.
- Low level of Government - NGOs cooperation
- Low level of cross-sectorial cooperation
- Gap between level of information between public form cities and local communities
- Insufficient Computer and internet accessibility in the villages and local communities

Lessons learned

- **Increase the interest and awareness of government and decision makers in Biosafety concerns via publications, seminars, mass-media, information notes and professional meetings**
- **Strengthen intergovernmental cooperation and through information and data exchange, joint action programs, meetings and involvement in implementation of Biosafety Action Plan**
- **Improve the cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations through meetings, debates, round tables, feed-backs and involving into decision-making**
- **Synergy between the Biosafety and other related programs in Biodiversity, Environment, Agricultural, research and development**
- **Promoting the best practices for GMO risk assessment and management, monitoring, inspection and control**
- **Continue work on public awareness through information, dissemination and feed-back activity**

Further needs and recommendations

- **Involvement of public and consumers to the scientifically proved procedures for risks assessment resulted from GMOs and strengthen their capacities and access to decision making**
- **Capacity building to improve public access to information and public participation to risk assessment, monitoring and public control, labelling, economic risk assessment**
- **Respect consumers rights and interests to be fully informed during the process of approval and labelling**
- **Strengthen capacities on GMOs detection in food staffs and feed and agriculture**
- **Education of students, decision makers, operators, business, farmers related modern biotechnology and biosafety**
- **Critical needs in Internationally agreed guidelines and toolkits related public participation to risk assessment procedures, control and labeling of GMOs (proposal for AC further activities)**
- **Improve capacities of BCH systems of Aarhus and Cartagena P.**