

KAZAKHSTAN

Analytical Environmental News Agency «Greenwomen» called earlier the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to ratify the Cartagena Protocol and the GMO amendment. Kazakhstan ratified the Cartagena Protocol which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. The Ministry of Environmental Protection further promised to ratify the GMO amendment. Unfortunately, up to date this promise has not been fulfilled.

There are no concrete mechanisms for public participation in decision-making related to GMOs in Kazakhstan. Electronic dissemination of information is not systematic. There is no regular access to scientific information. Even if civil society is involved within the framework of international projects or governmental activities in risk evaluation, research and discussions of regulatory policy, such practice is not widely applied.

SITUATION ANALYSIS:

Despite a legal obligation to indicate presence of genetically modified components on the label, products containing GMOs can easily penetrate the market. This happens because of the insufficient number of laboratories specialized in identification of GMOs and due to the lack of specified rules for use of genetically modified products (“Delovoi Kazakhstan”). For example, shops commercialize seeds imported from China that can grow only into one generation of plants. Most probably, these seeds are genetically modified and are developed by means of « termination technology » which prevents replanting of the seeds.

Kazakhstan is unable to protect the market from genetically modified products and to fulfill the biosafety requirements. It does not have sufficient capacity to identify presence of GMOs in existing products.

Evaluation of health and environmental risks of food products containing transgenic plants and animals should be carried out by accredited laboratories which are certified according to the rules set in technical laws and regulations..

At the end of September Kazakhstan adopted a technical regulation « Requirements for Safety of Food Products Fabricated From Genetically Modified (Transgenic) Plants and Animals » (Governmental Decree RK 21 September 2010 №969).

Objects of this technical regulation are foods containing genetically modified plants and animals, partially or entirely produced from one or several transgenic plants or animals, as well as foods containing ingredients produced from genetically modified plants and animals.

The regulation establishes four potentially dangerous factors:

- injected genes (genetic products);
- interaction between « foreign » and « native » genes
- spread of « new » genes
- unpurposed (unknown) effects intrinsic to genetically modified technologies

Circulation of transgenic food products without registration in the “National Register of Genetically Modified Objects” is forbidden. This excludes cases of imported samples necessary for registration tests.

According to the regulation, production of foods from genetically modified plants and animals is only possible after conclusions of the environmental and sanitary-epidemic expertise.

Information about food products has to include data about components composed of (or) fabricated from living modified organisms (threshold 0,9 %).

Annotation to the Regulation: Governmental Decree of 21 September 2010 № 969 Validation of the Technical Regulation “Requirements For Safety of Food Products Fabricated From Genetically Modified Plants and Animals”:

The technical regulation is developed in compliance with the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the 18th of September 2009 « Health of the Nation and Health Care System», laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the 9th of November 2004 « Technical Regulations » and of the 21th of July 2007 « Food Safety ». It sets minimal requirements for safety of transgenic foods during their fabrication, processing, circulation, use and elimination.

The technical regulation covers food products from different market group specified in the product nomenclature of the external-economic activities of the customs union.

The decree will come into force within 12 months after the official publication date (Kazakhstan Pravda 28 September 2010 № 255 (26316)).