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Commission reaches impasse on GMO approvals

The European commission has requested further scientific analysis of three genetically modified (GM) crops after commissioners failed on Wednesday to reach a decision on whether they should be approved for cultivation in the EU.

The decision was left to the commission after EU governments failed to reach consensus last year ([EED 17/07/07](#)). It must rule on two GM maize varieties and a potato modified to produce extra starch.

But despite having already been declared safe for human health and the environment by the European food safety authority (Efsa), the commission has asked the agency to assess the crops again in the light of new scientific research.

ENDS understands that environment commissioner Stavros Dimas was strongly opposed to approving the crops despite pressure to do so from a number of his colleagues. The decision to refer them back to Efsa was seen as the best way of breaking the impasse.

In a separate decision adopted on Wednesday, the commission told the Austrian government to lift its import ban on two GM maize varieties approved for sale on the EU market.

Follow-up: [European commission](http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm) (http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm) , tel: +32 2 299 1111, plus [press release](#) (<http://www.endseuropedaily.com/docs/80507a.doc>) . See also reactions from [EuropaBio](#) (http://www.europabio.org/articles/GBE/press%20articles/EUROPABIO%20STATEMENT_%20070508.pdf) , [Greenpeace](#) (<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/news/gm-crop-safety-alarm-bells>) and [Friends of the Earth](#) (http://www.foeurope.org/press/2008/May07_EU_food_agency_under_fire_Commission_debates_GMOs.html) .

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