

Nijmegen Declared GM-Free through Citizen Action

ISIS Report 11/07/11

Read the rest of this report here
www.i-sis.org.uk/Nijmegen_Declared_GM-Free.php

A model local initiative for banning GMOs.

Dr. Mae-Wan Ho

Or read other articles about biotechnology here www.i-sis.org.uk/biotechnology.php

The Community Council of Nijmegen declared the city GM-free on 29 June 2011 [1]. This is only the third GM-free region after Culemborg and the province of Friesland in the Netherlands, a country in close competition with the UK for the most pro-GM national government in Europe.

In both Culemborg and Friesland, the initiative came from the Netherlands green party, GroenLinks. In Nijmegen, however, it came from a group of citizens that started in 2009 to raise awareness on GM food and agriculture. The group, "Citizens for GE-free food" came up with a Citizens' Initiative for a GM-free Nijmegen. Nijmegen is a city of 164,000 inhabitants and requires 100 signatures to put an issue on the agenda of the Community Council. The group collected 4,000 signatures and handed in their Initiative to the Community Council in April 2010. The Initiative requested the Community Council to tackle the issue in four steps as follows.

1. Make a statement in the press declaring the city GM-free, referring to the citizens' objections listed in the initiative, and send the statement to the national government and the national parliament.
2. Get legal advice on the options available to local authorities within the framework of the EU Directive 2001/18, to protect regular and organic agriculture from undesired GMOs.
3. Communicate the citizens' concerns on GMO safety to companies wishing to start field trials within the community.
4. Draw up a formal Note on Sustainability setting out a community policy based on more than just the national guidelines on sustainability and including the notion "GM-free."



Nijmegen is the oldest city in the Netherlands, first mentioned in 1 BCE. This is a view of Burchtstraat in Nijmegen as seen from Stevenskerk.