

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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Italy

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Regions Want Italy to Invoke the Safeguard Cause

Report Categories:

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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Report Highlights:

The Italian Region Committee recently requested that the Ministry of Agriculture invoke the safeguard clause to ban the cultivation of EU-approved biotech crops in Italy. The Regions request likely results from the Italian Minister of Environment Clini recent interview in which he publicly endorsed biotechnology.

General Information:

The Italian Region Committee, representing Italy's 22 regions and autonomous provinces, recently requested that the Ministry of Agriculture invoke the safeguard clause to ban the cultivation of EU-approved biotech crops in Italy. This is the second time the Regions have called on the Ministry to impose a full moratorium on biotech cultivation. The former Minister of Agriculture approved the first request and committed himself to invoke the safeguard clause ([GAIN IT1127](#)) but did not follow through.

The Regions second request likely results from the Italian Minister of Environment Clini recent interview in which he publicly endorsed biotechnology and the EU "opt-out" proposal that would allow each Member State to decide whether to cultivate EU-approved biotech crops. The Regions request that the Ministry invoke the safeguard clause to prohibit the use and/or sale of GMOs on Italian territory. The Regions justify the request on the need to protect organic production and Geographical Indications. However, the request does not provide any new or additional scientific information that indicates the EU-approved biotech crops to be a risk to human health or the environment (as required by Directive 18/2001/EC). Moreover, the Regions request that the Minister of Agriculture convey to the Italian Minister of Environment (at future EU meetings) the unanimous opposition of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces opposition to biotech cultivation in Italy. Lastly, the Regions ask the Ministry to change national decree 224/2003 (which implements the EU Directive 18/2001) so that the Regions are entirely responsible for promulgating coexistence regulations.