



Chairman's Conclusions
INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
“GMO free agriculture: a chance for rural development in Central and South Eastern Europe”
Vienna, 10 May 2017

Ministers and Heads of Delegations, responsible for agriculture and rural development gathered in Vienna on May 10th, 2017 to discuss the opportunities that GMO-free agriculture can create for rural development in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Gratitude was expressed to the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management for hosting this high-level meeting, commending the initiative and coordinational/organizational support of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South East Europe and Danube Soya.

The Ministerial Conference emphasized that achievement of sustainable rural development and GMO-free agriculture is of immense importance for regional food safety and security, for attainment of national economic and social goals and for the well-being and livelihoods of individuals and families involved in agro-food sector, but most importantly the entire population in general.

The Ministerial Conference recognized the growing importance of environmentally and economically sound agriculture as a source of wholesome resource supply for human consumption and attached high priority to ensuring the contribution of sustainable agricultural production to food security, income and rural development.

The Ministerial Conference noted that greater consideration should be given to the development of more appropriate agro-environmental approaches to rural development and management in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

In addition, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations agreed on the following:

1. to recognize the importance of regional cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development on achieving harmonized frameworks and establish common mechanisms of collaboration essential for environmental and economic sustainability of the Central and South-Eastern European region.
2. to acknowledge and consider taking advantage of the flexibility of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU to promote rural diversification, to encourage protein crops and legumes

production under the agro-environmental programs and implement measures for sustainable rural development;

3. to accord high priority in supporting GMO-free areas and organic farming in countries/regions of small-scale farming structure and/or in regions with higher densities of niche markets for creating market and export opportunities of regional products in line with EU-compliant standards;
4. to draw attention to the promotion of regional value in support of genetically unmodified agricultural production that is environmentally sound and economically sustainable for the rural population and the national economy;
5. to highlight the value of meeting consumer demands and choice by creating transparent and traceable production, reliable and controlled product labeling for brand programs and products;
6. to recognize the work of the inter alia International Danube Soya Association and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE devoted to regional ownership and integration efforts to the scope of realizing sustainable agriculture and regional development in the Danube and SEE regions;
7. to emphasize the need of strategic partnership and programs, know-how transfer and better practice models for sustainable agro-food production and rural development in addition to the prevailing activities in the region, and call for international and EU commitment in cooperation with existing regional structures for pursuing these goals;
8. to stress the necessity of mutual action, through regional organizations and in collaboration with all other partners concerned with rural development, to seek the optimal and sustainable use of agricultural and natural resources, to increase organic production practice by promoting rural development measures and monitoring, therefore ensuring added value to national socio-economic goals while attaining regional food security.