
Petition to strengthen independent risk research thrown out by German parliament

The petition aimed to combat conflicts of interest within the German authorities and to promote independent risk research

17 December 2014 The petition was started in 2013 by a broad coalition of organisations. It aimed to combat conflict of interests within German authorities and to strengthen industry-independent risk research, especially in context of biotechnology. Testbiotech has now been informed that the committee for petitions in the German parliament has recommended rejecting the initiative.

The petition was initiated on the basis of a Testbiotech report about German authorities which contained evidence of conflicts of interest and showed a lack of transparency. The text of the petition demanded a detailed investigation into these allegations, and suggested that industry should be obliged to fund capacity building in independent risk research. It also recommended that non-governmental organisations active in environmental protection and consumer health issues should participate in decision-making on how to allocate and spend the funds.

The urgency of this problem was recently highlighted by a case study on the GRACE project. The EU-Commission is currently spending millions of Euros on risk research in this project, which has been organised by experts with close ties to industry. Amongst other things, it will carry out feeding studies with genetically engineered plants, but as a recent Testbiotech report shows, the project is seriously flawed due to conflicts of interest, lack of transparency and a deficient peer review process.

“This is a crucial issue for the future development of our society. We are becoming increasingly dependent on experts with very close ties to industry. We have to develop new mechanisms to empower civil society to directly interact with these processes”, Christoph Then says for Testbiotech “But we are very aware that this requires greater effort over a longer period of time and are therefore planning further activities in 2015. “

Further information: [More informations on the GRACE Project](#) [1]

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[1] <http://www.testbiotech.org/en/node/1123>