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## **AMIGA project at its last stage in the study of Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) of GM plants**

*After three years of activities and fields studies, the AMIGA project will meet with stakeholders to disclose some significant outcome of the project on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October at the ENEA premises in Brussels.*

One year before the closure, AMIGA has reached its late stage, achieving relevant results and launching the last of the three field seasons foreseen in several European countries. The scientific activities in AMIGA consist of case studies of biosafety assessment in maize and potato, the two GM crops currently approved for cultivation in the EU, and surveys in non-GM agro-ecosystems. A cornerstone of the project is the application for laboratory and field experiments of the Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) guidelines from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which is the basis for the update of the regulatory process of GM plants in the EU.

After submitting reports on the overview of field studies, examples of datasets, statistical models and a simulation tool, and the analysis of the potential economic impacts of the growth of GM crops in the EU, the project has reached now its final stage.

In 2012, the partners started the field experiments in which they have been studying possible assessment end points for Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA). The third field season started last February, and the partners are now collecting and analysing the huge amount of data emerged from the second season on pollinators, natural enemies and other highly relevant Non-Target Organisms and biological components of soil in different bio-geographical regions. This data is enriching the datasets, protocols and models that will be collected in a geographical information system database, which has already been set up by partners.

Likewise, the consortium is very attentive to the more general controversies taking place at European level in respect to GMO discussion, especially in some of the countries involved in the field trials. Extra activities are addressed to public at large, such as open debates and field visits, and to early career researchers, such as the organisation of a Summer School in Carlow, Ireland, last September 2014.

The third Stakeholders Consultation meeting, only open to invited attendees, is an occasion for the partners to share the development of the AMIGA project and discuss the field trials set up in 2014, with representatives from EFSA, European institutions, farmers associations, NGOs and national competent authorities. The meeting will be preceded by an introduction in which the project coordinator, Dr. Salvatore Arpaia, and the deputy coordinator, Dr. Antoine Messean, will give a general overview of AMIGA and will also reveal some outcomes in view of the final conference that will be held in Brussels in 2015 involving stakeholders and policy makers.

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*AMIGA «Assessing and Monitoring the Impacts of Genetically modified plants on Agro-ecosystems» is a project funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), aiming to produce scientific data related to the possible environmental and economic impacts of cultivation of genetically modified plants (GMPs) relevant to European environments. The consortium includes 22 partners (Research institutes, Universities, State Agencies and SMEs) located in 15 EU countries and an ICPC country (Argentina). [www.amigaproject.eu](http://www.amigaproject.eu)*

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