



SOCHUM – Study guide

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Welcoming Words

Dear Delegate, first we would like to extend a warm welcome to you! We are very happy and honoured that you decided to join SOCHUM at this year's very special anniversary KaMUN X - The Black Forest Summit. We are sure that we will be very pleased to be your chairs and are already looking forward very much to meeting you, having awesome debates and socials together and getting to know you over the conference weekend!

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee, also known as C3 or Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) resides in New York City and usually consists of all 193 UN member states, if they wish to attend. Its work focuses on human rights, humanitarian affairs and social issues. Additionally, it also considers issues regarding the advancement of women, protecting indigenous populations, the promotion of fundamental freedoms and the right to self-determinations, amongst others.

Its powers and functions are laid out in the Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter regarding the General Assembly. The power of all UN General Assembly committees is limited to giving recommendations to States on international issues in order to attain peace, security and disarmament, development, to safeguard human rights and to protect the common environment. The goal always remains to find a consensus on the issues discussed, which is why each of the 193 Member States has one vote.

Topic Recap

This year the delegates of SOCHUM will be debating the especially interesting topic of genetically modified foods and crops (hereafter GMOs). The public debate about the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the ethical concerns regarding the research, production and consumption of GMOs is one that has gained a presence over the recent years.

Having had its first noteworthy breakthrough in 1973 with a modified bacteria, the research on GMOs has come a long way, with various modified small animals like mice and fish and the most recent advancement being the CRISPR gene editing method, with which even modifying humans isn't just science fiction anymore. Along with its advancements came always debates about ethical concerns, controversies involving farmers and biotechnological companies and various conspiracy theories.

With all the listed concerns and polarized opinions around the GMOs, the biggest and probably tangible area of debate circles around the use GM crops. Especially facing the effects of climate change and aiming for a more sustainable form of agriculture, with less use of fertilizers and other chemicals, the use of GM crops to ensure higher yields and food security appears promising. Today there is even scientific consensus that currently available food derived from GM crops poses no greater risk to human health than conventional food¹, a point of contention, that accompanied the debate early on.

It is nonetheless clear, that members of the public, most of all consumers, are much less likely than scientists to perceive GM foods as safe², an issue that has led to a diverse legal and regulatory status of GM foods among the countries. As a result, cultivation of GM crops is permitted and widespread in some countries and outright banned in others.

The biggest issues with GM crops regard question of environmental impacts, whether they are needed to address food needs, whether they are sufficiently accessible in developing countries and of course concerns over subjecting crops to intellectual property law.

Resolutions and Reports

<http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/en/>:

¹ http://www.fao.org/3/Y5160E/y5160e10.htm#P3_1651The

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/01/29/public-and-scientists-views-on-science-and-society/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

List of all Countries involved in the FAO.

There are specific publications for gm crops.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/3077>

World Health Organization: Advancing food safety initiatives.

https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA63/A63_11-en.pdf

Report by the Secretariat.

Good Document for basic information and background information.

https://www.unescwa.org/unbis/food-security?order=title_field&sort=asc

How to measure of food security.

Pathways towards Food Security in the Arab Region.

<https://www.un.org/webcast/worldchron/trans943.pdf>

Arguments about agriculture.

Interview about the use of gm crops.

<https://bch.cbd.int/protocol/text/>

One of the most important agreement on genetically modified organisms.

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo>

European Commission on genetically modified organisms.

Block Positions

<http://www.munish.nl/pages/downloader?code=ga302&comcode=ga3&year=2015> , study guide for a SOCHUM Council from the MUN International School. Rough explanation of terms, background information and a timetable.

<https://www.europeanscientist.com/en/environment/genetically-engineered-crops-a-necessity-for-food-security/> , highlights the problems caused by gm crops and explains how gm crops are made.

Gm crops are banned in Germany, France, Greece, Austria, Hungary and Luxembourg.

Supported in: The USA and Brazil for example.

Example of United States and the European Union:

USA: <https://time.com/3840073/gmo-food-charts/> , genetically modified food in the US.

<http://www.fao.org/english/newsroom/focus/2003/gmo8.htm> Arguments against gm crops, explains how they can be threatening to nature.

-GM crops are widely spread in the US, introduced in the 1990s.

-Can guarantee harvest, especially in dry/cold regions.

-Reduces economic cost.

-US has regulations but not as strict as the EU.

European Union: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/gm_register/index_en.cfm , list of genetically modified food in the European Union. Overview to understand the boundaries within the EU.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0168945209003112?via%3Dihub> , quick explanation of the gm crops conflict between the US and the EU.

<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/countriesruleoutgmos/> , by the European Commission. Overview which countries, within the EU, banned/plan to ban gm crops.

-Strict regulations, food has to be labeled.

-Causes problems with trade, since the EU has to reject products because they contain genetically modified organisms which are unauthorized in the EU.

-long term effects are not entirely known; therefore, gm crops pose a great risk.

-Conflicts within the EU, some countries want a ban for Europe, some countries wish to have the opportunity to use gm crops.