

Most Europeans hardly care about GMOs

June 2019 Eurobarometer survey on food-safety in the EU

19 June 2019

Executive Summary

A special Eurobarometer survey report on food safety was published this month. It shows once again that the regularly promoted narrative that “90% of Europeans are against GMOs” is bogus. ‘Genetically modified ingredients in food and drink’ are reported as having a comparatively low level of concern associated with them (27%) – number 8 of the 15 specified concerns on the list. Concern has more than halved compared to the last similar survey, published in 2010, when GMOs were reported as the 4th highest ranking concern (66%). Of all the issues of concern in the survey, genome editing is the one with the lowest concern (4%) and awareness (22%). Three issues surface most frequently in most Member States: antibiotics, hormones and steroids (44%), pesticide residues in food (39%) and food additives (36%).

Main Observations

1. In reality, most Europeans hardly care about GMOs

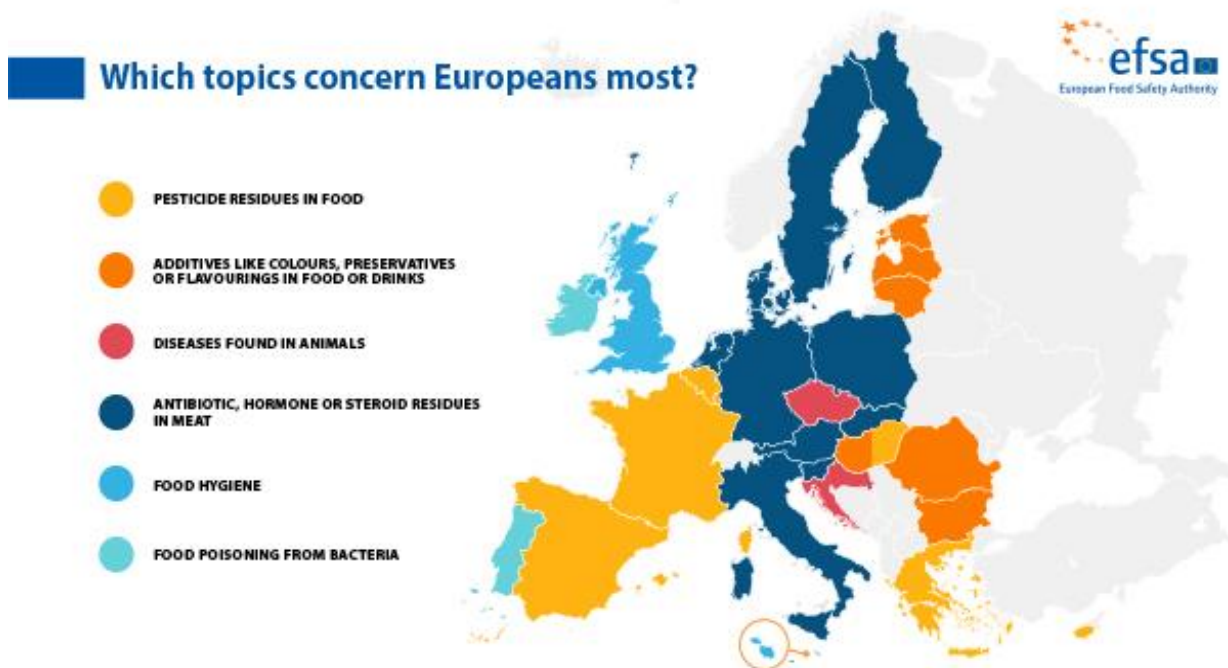
Even when prompted with a list of topics starting with GMOs, a mere 27% are concerned by GMOs. Only in one quarter of the member states, this level is over one third¹. The regularly promoted narrative that “90% of Europeans are concerned about GMOs” is therefore bogus.

2. Concern about GMOs has more than halved in nine years

The level of reported concern has decreased enormously from 66% in 2010 to 27% in 2019². A very significant reduction occurred in each of the 28 Member States, and in nine, there was even a reduction by a factor of three or more³. The most concerned countries in 2019 (up to 45%) are less concerned even than the least concerned countries in 2010 (at least 46%).

3. Genome Editing is the least of all concerns in the survey

Out of the 15 topics in the survey, genome editing is the one people are clearly the least concerned about (4%), and it is also the topic that people are least aware of (22%).
















¹ Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The maximum is 45% (in Lithuania).

² Eurobarometer notes that the questions are not directly comparable but does indicate that the trend is significant nonetheless.

³ Threefold reduction or more in: Italy, Spain, Belgium, Czech Republic, Portugal, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg and Malta

Detailed Results by Country

		AWARENESS 2019 ⁴		CONCERN 2019 ⁵		CONCERN 2010 ⁶
		GM ingredients in food or drinks	Genome Editing	GM ingredients in food or drinks	Genome Editing	GM ingredients in food or drinks
 EU 28		60 % 9 th of 15 listed topics	21 % last of 15 topics	27 % 8 th of 15 topics	4 % last of 15 topics	66 % (EU 27) 4 th of 17 topics
1	 Germany	72	19	30	3	71
2	 France	65	19	28	3	64
3	 United Kingdom	70	30	25	4	48
4	 Italy	41	08	24	4	80
5	 Spain	51	30	17	5	62
6	 Poland	58	16	39	5	73
7	 Romania	38	09	22	4	63
8	 Netherlands	76	30	21	4	50
9	 Belgium	51	15	16	3	60
10	 Greece	60	19	42	7	81
11	 Czech Republic	44	22	18	5	58
12	 Portugal	45	10	15	1	67
13	Sweden	73	50	21	7	48
14	Hungary	50	28	32	6	70
15	Austria	61	22	37	7	67
16	Bulgaria	57	14	42	6	80
17	Denmark	66	36	14	4	59
18	Finland	62	62	13	11	50
19	Slovakia	62	08	25	3	61
20	Ireland	62	24	25	3	46
21	Croatia	52	24	32	8	-
22	Lithuania	70	18	45	4	81
23	Slovenia	77	25	36	3	71
24	Latvia	71	16	41	3	81
25	Estonia	69	57	23	6	56
26	Cyprus	59	22	31	5	77
27	Luxembourg	57	31	25	8	75
28	Malta	38	12	12	4	48

Additional Observations

- In 2019, only six of the 28 member states cite GMOs as their top three most frequently mentioned concerns.
- The 2010 survey also contained an open question⁷. A mere 8% mentioned GMOs in their reply.
- In most EU countries, the level of concern about GMOs was clearly lower in 2005 than in 2010, but it is even much lower in 2019 than in 2005. The UK is a notable exception, where concern decreased both between 2005-10 and 2010-19⁸.

⁴ [Eurobarometer 2019](#), QD3, p. 33: Please tell me which of the following topics you have heard about? (multiple answers possible, %, first topic mentioned in the detailed question is GMO!)

⁵ [Eurobarometer 2019](#), QD4T, p. 46: Please tell me which of these topics you have heard about concerns you most when it comes to food? Firstly? And then? (multiple answers possible, %)

⁶ [Eurobarometer 2010](#), QF4.2, p. 20: Please tell me to what extent you are worried or not about the following issues. Genetically modified organisms found in food or drinks.

⁷ [Eurobarometer 2010](#), QF3, p. 14: Could you tell me in your own words, what are all the things that come to your mind when thinking about possible problems or risks associated with food and eating? (OPEN QUESTION – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

⁸ A short overview of 2005-10 trends can be found in the [2010 survey, p. 30](#). The full 2005 survey is available [here](#).

Resources

- Full [Eurobarometer 91.3: Report on food safety in the EU](#)
- [Factsheets by country \(in English and local languages\)](#)
- Interactive [Maps of food safety concerns across EU countries](#)
- The [2010 survey in various languages](#)