

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY  
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT  
POLICY

Voluntary    Public

**Date:** 2/8/2013

**GAIN Report Number:** RO1304

## Romania

**Post:** Bucharest

### **Romania's Farmers Ignored, Agriculture Minister Endorses the Danube Soya Declaration**

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

**Approved By:**

Michael Henney, Agricultural Attaché

**Prepared By:**

Monica Dobrescu, Agricultural Specialist

**Report Highlights:**

Contrary to farmers' recommendation, on February 6 Romania's Agricultural Minister signed the Danube Soya Declaration, garnering quickly publicly-expressed disappointment by producer organizations. The Romania reputation, built on a science-based attitude towards technology in agriculture, is compromised by the public review process.

**General Information:**

On February 6, contrary to farmers' recommendation, Romania signed the Danube Soya Declaration, the initiative of the Austrian-based Association „Danube Soya.” Romania became the ninth country signing the declaration which promotes the expansion of areas cultivated with GM-free soybean in effort to fill domestic demand of the livestock industry at European Union level. Other signatory countries include Austria, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Bavaria.

In mid-January, during the Green Week held in Berlin, Romania did not sign the declaration. At that time the Agricultural Minister, Daniel Constantin, explained to the press that it was necessary to seek solutions for the EU livestock sector's lack of competitiveness, but that Romanian academia and producers had to be part of the decision making process when pondering the proposal to sign the declaration.

The academic group consulted by the Agricultural Ministry provided its support for the declaration, as they viewed it as an opportunity to enhance their research capacity for non-bioengineered soybeans and to benefit by incentives offered for enlarging soybean production in country. The academic group noted its endorsement was provided with recognition that in the event a bio-engineered soybean is approved for cultivation at EU level, Romanian farmers will not be prohibited from using the technology.

The farmers' group that consulted with the Agriculture Ministry purportedly expressed their opposition towards the Danube Soya Declaration. A few days later, the group expressed disappointment when learning the Minister did not take their view into account when he signed the declaration.

The Farmers' Association LAPAR – whose leaders were not invited to the consultation, considers that the Agricultural Minister took a very stern decision for the Romanian farmers, to commit Romania to prohibit the genetically modified organisms, with severe and long-term consequences on the Romanian agriculture progress. In their view, the Minister only mimed the consultation with the farmers and even if producer and trade experts had sent a warning regarding the danger of signing this document, the Minister would not have take such advice into consideration.

Information regarding obligations assumed by signing the declaration is limited. The Agricultural Minister emphasized that by signing the declaration, Romania is not committed in any way in the event of any future decision regarding the soybean cultivation (currently only conventional soybeans are authorized for cultivation within the European Union).

Romania has always displayed a science-based attitude towards newer technologies in agriculture, opposing attempts of various anti-technology organizations from across Europe to impose bans on cultivation, fully relying on the scientific opinions issued by domestic or EU scientific bodies. This action taken by the Minister to sign the declaration is perceived by key-stakeholders in Romania's agriculture and academia as a signal that this attitude has changed and that other politically driven factors may now be the new norm for the country's decisions.