

Mr. Benedikt Haerlin

Genetic Engineering Coordinator
Greenpeace
Chausseestr.131
D-10115 Berlin
Germany



Benedikt Haerlin has served as the international coordinator of Greenpeace International's Genetic Engineering Campaign since the campaign began in 1996. Previous to assuming this responsibility, Mr. Haerlin was the Toxics Coordinator for Greenpeace, as well as a Greenfreeze Campaigner, and the magazine editor of *Greenpeace Germany*. Before joining Greenpeace in 1990, he served as Member of the European Parliament. During this period, he specialized in genetic engineering issues and participated in framing the present EU regulation on the deliberate release of GMOs. He also helped form the Parliament's position on the Human Genome Project. Mr. Haerlin was the founder of the Gen-ethic Network in Germany in 1987. Other accomplishments include work as journalist in Berlin for *Die Tageszeitung*, publishing a variety of books and essays, and operating a small printing and publishing company. Mr. Haerlin's academic background focused on the study of philosophy and psychology in Tübingen and Berlin.

Why GMOs Should Not be Released into the Environment

Release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment pose qualitatively new ecological risks of global dimensions because they are potentially irreversible. At this point in time, the implications of these releases cannot be properly assessed on the basis of scientific knowledge developed in the fields of microbiology or evolutionary ecology. This is especially true for long-term evolutionary effects. Therefore, the only sound scientific approach is a strict application of the precautionary principle. This approach is further validated by the fact that present applications of genetically engineered crops, as well as the circumstances of their introduction to the market, cast substantial doubts about the agricultural concepts on which they are based. To some extent, the necessary development of sustainable and ultimately organic agricultural practices is thwarted, if not actively attacked, by the false promises and untenable choices induced by genetic engineering in agriculture.