

## EPP VICE CHAIRMAN JOHN BRUTON: ♦ MORE DEVELOPMENT AID NEEDED FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ♦



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♦ We should set aside more development aid for agricultural research, with particular emphasis on the agricultural research needs of the very poorest and the very hungriest countries. The European Union can and should give a lead here. ♦ said EPP Vice-Chairman John Bruton in the EPP Working Group Agriculture Policy meeting in the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, 6 October.

♦ There is enormous potential for the use of biotechnology, even without using GMO ♦s, for reducing world hunger using technologies like tissue culture, and molecular markers and genomics for the poorest countries. Very little research is being done on how biotechnology can help increase yields of rice, wheat, white maize, cassava, millets, or sorgum ♦ the foods of the poor. ♦

♦ Benefits and risks of these technologies should be explained in an honest way. We need to study thoroughly environmental and health risks of all new technologies, and in particular risks in regard to biotechnology. We must establish an agreed worldwide system for systematically assessing the risks and the benefits of each individual technology for each individual plant or species, in each set of human and climatic conditions, and ask ourselves whether the benefits outweigh the risks in each case. ♦ concluded Mr. Bruton.

The EPP Working Group Agriculture Policy, chaired by Mr. Bruton, had its first visit to FAO. The Working Group discussed with various FAO experts about the solutions for famine in Africa, the future of agriculture in temperate and Mediterranean climates, in light of the evolving WTO negotiations and about the application of advances in biotechnology to agriculture and its implications for the economics of farming in Europe.