*Starting with* Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, which states, inter alia, that the Croatian Parliament and people shall directly, independently, and in compliance with the Constitution and law, decide upon, the preservation of natural and cultural wealth and use of the same,

*having regard to* the provisions of Article 52 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia which stipulates that the sea, seashore, islands, waters, air space, mineral resources, and other natural assets, as well as land, forests, flora and fauna, other components of the natural environment, real estate and items of particular cultural, historical, economic or ecological significance which are specified by law to be of interest to the Republic of Croatia shall enjoy its special protection,

*having regard to* the Declaration on Environmental Protection in the Republic of Croatia adopted in 1992 and the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity ratified by the Croatian Parliament in 1996, and the Republic of Croatia has been a full party to the Convention since 1997,

*recalling* the provisions of the Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Cartagena Protocol) ratified by the Croatian Parliament in 2002,

*recalling* the Lošinj Declaration on Biological Sovereignty adopted at the 3rd Lošinj Days of Bioethics on 16 June 2004, which defines the bioethical reasons and principles of sovereignty,

*starting with* the principle of precaution in case of threat of serious or irreparable damage to nature, as one of the basic principles deriving from the Nature Protection Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2017-2025,

*recalling* the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, confirmed by the Act on Ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of 1997, on the basis of which from 2003 to 2010, in accordance with the Constitution and law, decisions were adopted by all the counties in the Republic of Croatia to declare their areas GMO-free zones and to ban the release of living genetically modified organisms into the environment on their territory, even for experimental purposes,

*starting with* the main elements of the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which plans to establish protected areas on 30% of Europe's land and restore degraded terrestrial and marine ecosystems across Europe, which will be achieved, inter alia, by increasing organic agriculture and landscape features of high biodiversity on agricultural land and stopping the reduction in the number of pollinators and its conversion into growth,

*having regard to* the provisions of Directive (EU) 2015/412 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2015 amending Directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their territory which provides the possibility for Member States to prohibit the cultivation in all or part of their territory of a GMO, or of a group of GMOs,

*having regard to* the fact that 36 resolutions were adopted during the 8th European Parliament (2014 - 2019) in which Parliament opposed the European Commission's implementing decisions approving or extending the authorization for placing the products containing genetically modified organisms on the market,

*having regard in particular to* the European Parliament resolution of January 2020 on the European Green Deal calling for the implementation of a major strategic European vegetable protein production and supply plan based on the sustainable development of all crops grown throughout the Union, enabling the Union to less dependence on imports of genetically modified soybeans, with priority given to the creation of shorter food supply chains and regional markets, while valuing the agricultural, environmental, climate and economic benefits of non-genetically modified protein crops listed in the Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the development of plant proteins in the European Union from November 2018,

*starting with* the Ministry of Agriculture 2019 Green Report, which shows a significant increase in areas under organic production where the total recorded areas under organic production in 2019 account for 7.2% of total utilized agricultural area; starting also with the European Commission's recommendations for designing the future National Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plans which recognized the growth of organic agricultural production in the Republic of Croatia and pointed out the importance of its further growth and market creation for organic agricultural products,

*reminding* that the Republic of Croatia is a signatory to the 2017 Alps Adriatic Danube Soya Declaration, which aims to monitor current European trends in increasing production and demand for GMO-free soybeans, reduce dependence on imports of genetically modified soybeans and actively support producers and processors of soybeans to label GMO-free soybeans,

*having regard to* the fact that in October 2011 the Environmental Protection Committee submitted to the adoption procedure in the Croatian Parliament a Proposal for a Declaration in Support of the Initiative to Declare the Alps-Adriatic Region a GMO-free zone; recalling also the Joint Statement on the initiative to establish the entire Alps-Adriatic region as a GMO-free zone, co-signed in 2015 by 34 Members of the European Parliament from Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Austria and Hungary, addressed to the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament; taking into account the discussions held on this Initiative during the 7th Croatian Parliament at the sessions of the Agriculture Committee, Environmental and Nature Conservation Committee, Health and Social Policy Committee and the European Affairs Committee,

pursuant to Article 159 of the Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament (“Official Gazette“, No. 81/13, 113/16, 69/17, 29/18, 53/20, 119/20 - Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia and 123/20) the Croatian Parliament at its session on 25 March 2022 adopts

D E CLARATION

ON THE ALPS-ADRIATIC-DANUBE REGION GMO-FREE ZONE

1. The Croatian Parliament gives its full support to the Initiative of the Agriculture Committee of the Croatian Parliament to declare the Alps-Adriatic-Danube region a GMO-free zone.

2. We recognize the natural wealth of the Republic of Croatia in all its diversity and uniqueness as a national treasure of immeasurable value, and its preservation as the highest values for which we must constantly strive.

3. The territory of the Republic of Croatia, and with it the conditionality of high quality food production, based on the daily efforts of family farms and their efforts to preserve the autochthonous Croatian village and customs, imposes the necessary recognition of various possibilities of its rational use as well as the need of its special protection for the benefit, preservation and strengthening of rural local communities and residents.

4. Recognizing the importance of preserving agricultural production within protected nature areas as a potential for the development of compatible economic and tourist activities in their environment, we emphasize the importance of harmonious and sustainable coexistence with nature throughout Croatia, besides this Declaration supports environmentally sensitive organic farming of agriculture products, aquaculture products, as well as the preservation of biodiversity as a guarantee of a secure future for this generation, but also for generations to come.

5. In order to further encourage domestic agricultural production, promote and strengthen the connection between agriculture and tourism based on sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation of the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia, this Declaration supports the decisions of all counties in the Republic of Croatia that declared their areas GMO-free zones.

6. The Republic of Croatia should continue to promote and brand itself as a country of domestic and quality food, aimed at organic agricultural production and cultivation of non-genetically modified products in order to support the position and competitiveness of GMO-free products on the Croatian market through quality systems and appropriate labelling of GMO-free products.

7. In order to further support the position and competitiveness of GMO-free products, the competent state bodies are invited to establish clear criteria in the Republic of Croatia regarding the labelling of GMO-free products and to strengthen control bodies, official and reference laboratories for genetically modified organisms.

8. We consider it necessary to draw attention to the importance of encouraging various forms of financing projects aimed at environmentally sensitive and organic agricultural production in accordance with nature so that protected values ​​would not be a "hindrance" to development but live and complement each other with space and people.

9. International partners (especially those from the Alps-Adriatic-Danube region) are invited to join the Initiative and make the necessary effort to ensure that support for GMO-free zones is accepted and supported in Croatia's neighbouring countries in order to preserve biodiversity, environmentally sensitive and ecological cultivation of agricultural products inherent in the heritage of this area of Central Europe, valuing and taking into account the activities that Croatia's neighbouring countries have already carried out or are carrying out on their national territory.

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Zagreb, 25 March 2022

CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

SPEAKER

 OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

 Gordan Jandroković