

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Seed legislation must be fit for agro- biodiversity

EU Parliament and Council need to significantly revise draft legislation on seed

Brussels, 06/05/2013 – The Commission failed to deliver a proposal that clearly favours agro-biodiversity today on the marketing of seed and plant propagating material, regrets the IFOAM EU Group. Council and Parliament must improve the text in the legislative process during coming months.

"It is high time to end seed legislation that favours the global seed industry and corporations before the interests of consumers and farmers. Modern seed legislation must support agro-biodiversity and enable the locally adapted use and development of genetic resources to tackle climate change and future food security," said Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group. "Despite some derogations introduced, the Commission proposal fails to deliver a clear and simple commitment to allow breeders and farmers to work with varieties adapted to a diverse range of local climatic conditions by building upon genetic heterogeneity." Industrial plant varieties are very homogeneous, in contrast genetic diversity is an important feature of varieties bred for organic and low input farming systems.

"The Commission proposal sticks to a bureaucratic approach where all operators including farmers and gardeners who sell seed for non-commercial purposes would have to register. This hinders small producers' ability to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of agro-biodiversity.", added Andrea Ferrante, Vice President of the IFOAM EU Group. "It is now time for farmers and citizens to mobilise and demand that their politicians put agro-biodiversity at the heart of the seed legislation."

"The legislative process on the seed legislation that has now started should help to tackle other seed related problems," outlined Antje Kölling, Policy Manager IFOAM EU Group. "Full transparency of breeding methods should apply to all seed and plant propagating material. Moreover, seed and propagating material must be guaranteed GMO free if not labelled as GMO. Robust EU legislation must be provided to protect quality food production from GMO contamination. Any patents on plants and plant breeding must be banned."

The Commission legislative proposal is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/pressroom/animal-plant-health_en.htm

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NOTES:

- (1) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations include consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organizations.