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Press release

EU seed legislation: Final trilogue begins today in Brussels

ARCHE NOAH warns: Oligopolies weaken the resilience of our food production

Today, 3 February 2026, the final trilogue negotiations on the new EU seed law begin in Brussels. Already, just three corporations – Bayer, Corteva and Syngenta – control more than half of the global seed market. The new EU seed legislation could further increase this concentration of power, also to the detriment of consumers. *„The big agrochemical corporations want to expand their control over seeds and food“*, says Paul Grabenberger, seed law expert at ARCHE NOAH in Brussels. *„The EU Agriculture ministers must oppose this: the new seed legislation must ensure the diversification of the seed market! Diversity makes our food system more resilient and increases our independence.“*

The global commercial seed market is worth around 50 billion US dollars, dominated by maize, soya and cereals. The narrow focus on just a few varieties and species makes our food system vulnerable to crises. The new EU regulation on the production and marketing of plant reproductive material could make the work of local producers impossible and exacerbate the worrying situation with oligopolies in key areas of agriculture.

The Cypriot Presidency wants to conclude the trilogue negotiations, which begin today, by mid-April 2026. *„This timetable of just a few weeks is hardly feasible given the differing positions,“* explains Paul Grabenberger. On important fundamental issues – local seed production or farmers' rights – the EU Parliament and the Council of Agriculture Ministers are far apart.

Only more fruit and vegetables? No grain or potatoes?

An example: If the EU agriculture ministers have their way, breeders will only be allowed to sell new diverse varieties of fruit and vegetables in future. New diverse varieties of grain or potatoes would be banned – to the detriment of rural regions and human health. The Council also wants to ban one of the fundamental roots of today's existing crop diversity: in future, farmers will no longer be allowed to pass on seeds across regional borders. Even the exchange of small quantities of local varieties between Tyrol and South Tyrol or between Salzburg and Bavaria would thus be illegal. In contrast, the European Parliament wants to allow farmers to pass on seeds and limit the scope of the regulation to commercial activities.

„The European Parliament has spoken out in favour of a local seed economy and farmer-led seed systems. Both are important for protecting our traditions and strengthening our agriculture,“ says Paul Grabenberger of ARCHE NOAH.

Crucial weeks for food security and nutrition

In the coming weeks, the negotiating teams from the European Commission, Parliament and Council of Agriculture Ministers will meet almost weekly to negotiate the final regulations. ARCHE NOAH is calling for exemptions for the transfer of seeds for the purpose of preserving agricultural diversity, as well as reasonable regulations for smaller farms.

Once the trilogue has been concluded, the text of the legislation must be confirmed by the Council of Agriculture Ministers and the European Parliament before the new seed law comes into force three years later. *„After the Council included absurd restrictions on farmers and local seed production in its negotiating position*

in December, the EU Agriculture Ministers must accept a reasonable and fair compromise," demands Paul Grabenberger of ARCHE NOAH. „*We need seed legislation that protects agricultural diversity, secures our right to healthy and diverse food, and respects the rights of farmers – throughout Europe!*"

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