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Press Release
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EU Seed Law Faces a Crucial Turning Point today

200 organizations warn of disastrous consequences for agrobiodiversity

Brussels, Vienna, Schiltern – Today in Brussels, negotiations on a new EU seed law are expected to hit a decisive hurdle. At a meeting of agricultural attachés, the Danish EU Council Presidency aims to test whether it has enough support to move forward with a trilogue mandate. The final mandate is expected to be adopted in mid-December at the Committee of Permanent Representatives—rather than by the Agriculture Ministers, who would normally be responsible. "*The clock is ticking for Europe's seed law. We urgently need a course correction — one that protects diversity and the future of our food systems,*" urges ARCHE NOAH seed policy expert Magdalena Prieler.

Just days ago, 200 organizations — including ARCHE NOAH, IFOAM Organics Europe, European Coordination Via Campesina, European Environmental Bureau, Oxfam, and many important national organizations from all over Europe — warned in a joint letter that the Council's current proposal would severely restrict the conservation and exchange of traditional and diverse crop varieties. **Existing rights that are recognized in several EU member states could be drastically curtailed.** "*If the Agriculture Council doesn't change course in the coming days, it risks undermining all those who safeguard agricultural diversity — and with that, the security of our food supply,*" Prieler warns.

Under the current plans, it could soon become illegal to market newly developed diverse varieties of cereals or oilseeds. An exemption allowing the marketing of locally adapted varieties that don't meet the rigid uniformity standards may be arbitrarily limited to only fruits and vegetables. "*Banning the breeding and marketing of diverse, locally adapted varieties of grains, potatoes, or oil crops would be a direct hit on innovation and on the work of countless farmers, breeders, and seed producers. It would leave local seed producers, farmers, and consumers out in the cold,*" says Prieler.

ARCHE NOAH recently collected over 200,000 signatures in support of its petition "*Raise our Forks – For Diversity*" (www.hochdiegabeln.at), which will be formally handed over to the EU institutions. "*We have spoken with many farmers, breeders, and small- and medium-sized enterprises affected by this proposal, and none of them can see any rationale behind the Council's current position.* ***The political establishment seems unable to grasp the far-reaching consequences of a new seed law*** *— or it is simply following the playbook of the agrochemical giants that dominate the market*", Prieler adds.

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