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Press Release

EU faces crucial week: Three decisions will shape the future of European agriculture

ARCHE NOAH calls for clear commitment from MEPs and ministers

Strasbourg, Vienna, Schiltern – Next week, three key decisions on the future of agriculture in Europe will be taken in Strasbourg. On Monday evening (June 15, 2026), the trilogue negotiations on the new EU seed legislation will conclude. Simultaneously, the European Parliament's Environmental Committee will vote on a far-reaching carte blanche for New Genomic Techniques (NGT), followed two days later, on June 17, 2026, by the final vote in the plenary session of Parliament. *"We are facing fundamental decisions: do we want a strong, diverse agricultural sector, or do we want to give global corporations even more control over our food?"* asks Paul Grabenberger, seed policy expert at ARCHE NOAH, the Austrian Association for the Conservation and Dissemination of Cultivated Plant Diversity.

NGT: Risks for farmers, markets, and transparency

A broad deregulation of genetically modified plants would have far-reaching and unpredictable consequences for organic and GMO-free agriculture. All rules protecting against GMO contamination would be eliminated in the new "EU NGT Regulation," and NGT plants could end up on our plates without labelling or risk assessment. At the same time, the regulation would strengthen the market power of large agrochemical corporations. *"**New genomic techniques** are also a tool used to acquire control over important plant traits through patents. Corporations are increasingly pushing medium-sized breeding companies out of the market and gaining even greater control over our food,"* warns Grabenberger.

Recent research by the international alliance "No Patents on Seeds!" reveals an alarming trend towards the monopolisation of naturally occurring gene variants that confer resistance to fungal or viral diseases. By restricting access to these essential traits, such patents effectively prevent small and medium-sized enterprises from using them in their breeding programmes. *"With the new regulation, patented seeds in Europe could become the rule rather than the exception – with serious consequences for competition, innovation, and biodiversity,"* warns Paul Grabenberger.

New EU Seed Law: Bureaucracy vs. Biodiversity

Next week, the final round of negotiations on EU seed law will determine the key points of the "Production and marketing of plant reproductive material (PRM)", including whether farmers' seed exchange will be severely restricted or whether local seed companies will be burdened with unnecessary bureaucracy. *"While EU agriculture ministers are willing to give corporations a free hand when it comes to plant patents and genetically modified seeds, they are at the same time pushing for the strictest possible rules for farmers and producers of diverse seeds,"* says ARCHE NOAH. *"Our agriculture needs fair and balanced framework conditions instead of such double standards. Especially in times of climate crisis, local seed production must be strengthened."*

The ball is now in the EU Parliament's court. *"We call on all MEPs to actively participate in the votes on new genetic engineering and the new seed law – for freedom of choice and against patents on seeds,"* demands ARCHE NOAH. In the trilogue negotiations on the new EU seed law, the Parliament's lead negotiator, Herbert Dorfmann (EPP), must insist on protecting farmers' rights and limiting unnecessary bureaucracy. The

Parliament should not accept any outcome that restricts the exchange of seed potatoes or grapevines between farmers or makes small-scale, local seed production more difficult. *"The influence of the agrochemical lobby is enormous. Our politicians must withstand this pressure and clearly advocate for farmers' rights, independence, and diversity,"* says Paul Grabenberger of ARCHE NOAH.

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