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Press release

Environment/Agriculture/Seeds/Economy/EU

## **EU Seed Legislation: European Parliament Plenary Vote on 24 April**

*Diversity and farmers' rights remain under threat*

**Brussels, Vienna, Schiltern - The future of seed diversity is at stake: On 24 April 2024, the plenary of the European Parliament will vote on the European Commission's proposal for a new seed law. "Just a few weeks ago, on 19 March, the lead Agriculture Committee spoke out in favour of the conservation and circulation of seed diversity by regional producers", says Magdalena Prieler, seed policy expert at ARCHE NOAH, ahead of the plenary vote. The Committee report corrected key points of the European Commission's legislative proposal. "The seed industry is now trying to torpedo these small openings for more diversity with false claims and scaremongering!", says Prieler.**

Owing to industry lobbying against the decision of the Agriculture Committee (AGRI), there is still a risk that conservation organisations such as ARCHE NOAH or even public gene banks in future will no longer be allowed to pass on even small quantities of seeds to farmers. The right of farmers to sell or even exchange their own seeds and planting material also remains controversial. ARCHE NOAH is calling for the transfer of open pollinated, traditional seeds to be made significantly easier, and for the human right of farmers to their own seeds, which is enshrined in international law, to be implemented. "The European Parliament must not give in to pressure from the agro-industry but must protect and promote seed diversity! We need more diversity in our fields and on our plates to counteract the climate and biodiversity crises, and to produce tasty and healthy food," Prieler emphasises.

From the perspective of ARCHE NOAH, there is still more that could be done. Proposals put forward to prevent patents on conventional plant breeding were not adopted at Committee level. This problem therefore remains unresolved. The opportunity to set clear incentives for the development of future-proof varieties that are not dependent on the application of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers was also missed. Instead, the European Commission's proposal will make it possible to label NGT plants and herbicide-tolerant varieties as "sustainable". Before the vote in plenary, the political groups in the European Parliament have until 17 April to table new amendments.

Meanwhile, the European petition "Raise our forks for diversity!", which was launched by numerous organisations in the European seed movement, has clearly surpassed the 100,000 signatures mark. Supporters from all over Europe are calling for legislation that enables the legal transfer of diverse seeds, promotes crop diversity, respects farmers' rights, and creates the basis for a sustainable, resilient and diverse food system.

Parallel to the votes in the European Parliament, the negotiations in the Council are ongoing, but at a slower pace. National representatives on the Council Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources will meet in Brussels this week (19 April 2024) to continue their discussions on the draft text. Trialogue negotiations are therefore only likely to start at the end of the year or in early 2025.

**To the petition: [www.raiseourforks.org](http://www.raiseourforks.org)**

**Queries:**

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