

# Euroseeds concerned over viability of EU sugar beet after court ruling on pesticide emergency authorisations

Brussels, 31 January 2023

**In its recent ruling<sup>1</sup>, the EU Court of Justice took a very restrictive approach to a provision in the current pesticide legislation that allows so-called emergency authorisations in cases where no alternative plant protection solutions are available. The full legal analysis of the ruling is still on-going; but it is generally interpreted to mean that authorisations may not be granted for specific applications that have been actively removed from the market due to environmental or other concerns. This interpretation was not shared by the European Commission during the proceedings and seems contrary to what has been specifically provided as an option by European Parliament and Council through Article 53 of the Regulation in question (1107/2009).**

Belgium had granted such an emergency authorisation before the background of massive phytosanitary challenges for sugar beet production caused by different virus and insects that lead to production losses of up to 30%. While the plant breeding industry is making considerable efforts to compensate the losses caused by the non-availability of effective crop protection products through new and improved varieties, this requires significant development time during which emergency authorisations can serve as effective mitigation tools.

The European seed sector still needs time to further analyse the ruling and its consequences in all detail: *"Euroseeds shares the concerns expressed by sugar beet growers, processors and other parts of the EU sugar beet value chain", Garlich v. Essen, Secretary General of Euroseeds says. "Without an effective protection against pests and diseases in emergency situations, it will be very difficult to maintain the crop in areas with high pest and disease pressure and continue to produce European sugar from European sugar beet. Instead, Europe risks importing more sugarcane-based sugar from abroad, with the associated impacts of increased water use and CO2 footprint."*

The new restriction could therefore not only negatively impact the cultivation of sugar beet in the EU with significant financial losses to farmers and the sugar supply chain, but also have negative consequences for consumers due to higher commodity prices and for the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> ECJ press release n. 12/23: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2023-01/cp230012fr.pdf>



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