

Euroseeds welcomes trilogue result on new EU seed law

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Euroseeds welcomes the political agreement reached late Monday night by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament on the revision and simplification of EU rules for plant reproductive material (PRM). More than 12 years after a failed first attempt to streamline the various EU Seed Marketing Directives into a single Regulation, institutions agreed on a new framework that will provide more legal clarity and coherence for both operators and public authorities and modernise rules to enable breeders and producer to benefit from latest innovations, technology and digitalisation. The new seed law will also introduce new derogations from specific rules for specific operators, material and markets, facilitating their market access and allowing for more diverse products, in particular for non-professional users, for conservation purposes or to meet specific local needs.

The agreement clearly preserves the long-standing successful system for placing plant reproductive products on the EU market with a compulsory identification of seed products for registration of new varieties, as well as performance assessment of new varieties and seed quality requirements differentiated by species. Principle obligations for all operators to comply with the EU's plant health legislation and for all seed products maintains consistency of the overall EU policy approach to plants and seed.

"This agreement is another important element of the modernisation of plant breeding and seed-related legislation in the EU" said Garlich von Essen, Secretary General and CEO of Euroseeds. "It is a conservative approach in the true meaning of the word: it maintains the successful and internationally aligned principles of the established system. But it modernises processes and procedures, drives digitalisation, and provides more options for a stronger involvement of operators to speed up product release and cut costs for companies and authorities alike."

Von Essen specifically thanked the European Parliament's rapporteur Herbert Dorfmann and the Cypriot presidency for driving discussions towards conclusion in trilogue. *"Many were sceptical that an agreement could be achieved in just these few months. But both Herbert Dorfmann and his team and the Cypriot presidency injected a lot of positive energy and strong commitment into the negotiations. And got the necessary support from EP and Member States in the end."*

While most of the complex technical elements of the legislation received little public attention, some groups strongly criticised the proposed legislation as still too rigid and prohibitive for farmers or certain conservation groups. *"Euroseeds and COPA-COGECA, so Europe's breeders and farmers, were pretty aligned on the need to ensure the identity and quality of all seed, for all users. The new derogations for specific operators, material and markets respond to the political demand for a more flexibility framework; but they also recognise the need for some minimum quality assurance and oversight in a Common Market. The agreement strikes a good balance between the overarching objective of safeguarding seed quality and security on the one hand and the wish to provide for lighter and dedicated rules for niches on the other."*

Once fully adopted and supplemented with various delegated and implementing acts, the revised framework will start applying 4 years after the new Regulation enters into force.

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