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Committee rejects draft seed regulation

1st positive signal for seed diversity and food security



Today the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development sent a positive signal in support of seed diversity and food security by voting in favour of a resolution calling for the rejection of the draft regulation on Seed production and marketing. The resolution will be voted by the whole Parliament in plenary in April. The proposal for a regulation on Plant Reproductive Material concerns the marketing of plant reproductive material and its production, but not just for commercial use. It also covers the exchange of material between farmers and other so called "professional operators" engaged in production or breeding. Since its publication by the European Commission in May 2013, the Greens/EFA Group has raised the serious threats posed by the proposal to biodiversity and long term food production. The proposed regulation as it stands now is not favourable to genetic diversity, farmers' rights, and the interests of small and organic breeders. Rather, it was created to serve the needs of the multinational seed industry, which is intricately linked with the use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers, and will further push farmers into industrial-scale, input dependent agricultural systems. In rejecting the whole proposal via a resolution which includes the motives for the rejection, MEPs can send it back to the Commission to re-draft it and come back with a better proposal taking into account the demands in the resolution. Therefore, following a positive vote in plenary the content of the proposal will need to be seriously revised. Changes must be made where the Commission is making a sovereignty grab or simply going too far, and it must make space in the law for diversity and sustainable agricultural systems. Indeed that is the goal behind Greens/EFA Group's demands - we need genetically diverse seeds to fuel the growth of a dominant agro-ecological production system. What is more, by engaging critically on the content, if the whole proposal is rejected based on a resolution it gives the Commission a blueprint for how it should redraft its proposal. As part of its Food campaign the Greens/EFA group will keep pushing for this decisive outcome until the final vote in April.

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