Press release | 06.05.2013

EU food rules and seeds

Commission plans would threaten seed diversity

The European Commission today presented its food safety package, with proposals for new EU rules in a number of areas, including for seeds and plant reproductive products. The Greens expressed concern that the proposals on seeds would play into the hands of the agro-chemical industry and threaten seed diversity in Europe. Commenting on the plans, Green MEP and co-chair of the European Parliament's agriculture committee **José Bové** said:

"The proposed new EU rules on seeds would seriously threaten seed diversity in Europe and play directly into the hands of the bigger players in the agro-chemical industry. The proposals are a slap in the face to those who have pushed for greater diversity in farming and plant cultivation, and highlighted the social and environmental benefits of such diversity.

"The creation of a unified EU regulation, with the principle of mutual recognition replacing national systems, will create a cumbersome and expensive European authorisation procedure. This costly process would clearly hit medium-sized seed producing companies, and lead to a concentration in the variety of authorised seeds available. The plans play directly into the hands of larger corporations that prioritise mass-production of monoculture seed varieties, at the expense of diversity. The Commission is supporting these businesses to market their products on the global market as an all-in-one, together with the fertilisers and pesticides they also produce.

"While small companies (with less than 10 employees or €2 million in turnover) will be exempted from the authorisation process, the plans will push these regional and organic producers into a niche market and restrict them to being hobby breeders, denying them full market access."

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Responsible MEPs

José Bové

Member

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