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EU seed legislation

MEPs vote to send Commission back to the drawing board, as half-baked proposal rejected

The European Parliament's agriculture committee today voted in favour of a resolution rejecting draft EU legislation on seeds and seed marketing. The Greens have been pushing for the proposal to be rejected and welcomed the outcome, with agriculture spokesperson Martin Häusling stating:

"In voting to reject this half-baked proposal from the Commission, MEPs have voted to put the interests of farmers, long term food security and agro-biodiversity first. We hope today's vote will be confirmed when Parliament votes as a whole and that the Commission will be sent back to the drawing board.

"By moving from 12 directives to a single regulation, the Commission's proposal would seriously restrict the freedom of operators working in specific sectors. Only seeds produced and sold for commercial use should be covered by any future legislation and this implies a narrower scope than what is now on the table. Most importantly, the legislation needs to truly accommodate high diversity seeds, like wind-pollinated and heterogeneous varieties and other locally-adapted seeds.

"EU seed legislation, notably the common seed catalogue, has had a negative impact genetic diversity: the uniformity and stability that the EU seed catalogue insists on are simply not natural characteristics of living things. The global and European decline in genetic diversity in crops is totally at odds with long-term food security. We need a broad range of genetic diversity in our crop populations to enable us to adapt to the tougher environmental conditions that climate change is already bringing. This is compounded by the domination of the sector by a handful of multinational agro-chemical corporations, which design seeds to be tailor-made for use with their own agro-chemicals (1). EU seed policies must be based on the principle of diversity, not corporate uniformity and agro-chemical inputs. We hope the Commission will come forward with new legislation to reflect this."

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Opinion

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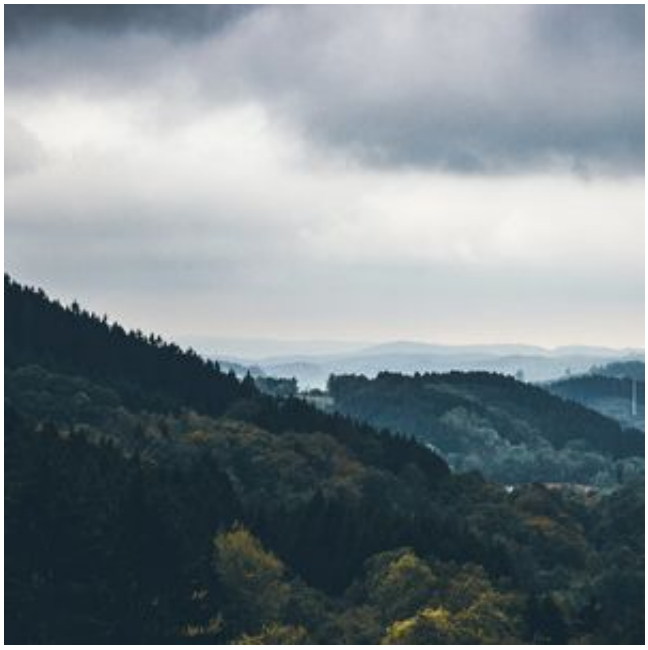


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Martin Häusling

Member

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