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Press release | 29.01.2014

Seed market regulation

New study highlights concentration in seed market and implications for draft EU rules

The Greens/EFA group today presented a new study highlighting the concentration of the European seed market (1). In contrast with claims by the European Commission that market concentration is not a problem, the study revealed five companies (also producing agrochemical products) control more than 50% of the seed market, with major consequences for farmers, agro-biodiversity, innovation and food security. The Greens are calling for draft EU legislation on seeds and plant reproductive products to be rejected by the European Parliament and argue this study underlines the need for the European Commission's competition authorities to launch an antitrust investigation into the concentration of the seed market. Commenting on the study findings and the broader implications, Green agriculture spokesperson **Martin Häusling** said:

"This study reveals a clear inconsistency in the approach of the European Commission to the regulation of the seed market. The Commission's own impact assessment revealed that 95% of the vegetable seed sector is controlled by a mere 5 companies, yet in proposing draft seed legislation the Commission claimed there was no problem with market concentration. Against this background of flawed assumptions, the only pragmatic approach would be to send the Commission proposal on seed marketing back to the drawing board and we are calling on the European Parliament to unite and reject the draft legislation. There is also a clear case for launching an antitrust investigation of the sector, as was done in the US.

"Too much power in the hands of a few agrochemical seed companies has major consequences for farmers. Prices of seed and planting stock have increased rapidly in recent years: by an average of 30.2% between 2000 and 2008 for the EU. EU seed policies must be based on the principle of diversity, not corporate uniformity and tailoring seed to be dependent on agro-chemical inputs."

Green environment spokesperson **Satu Hassi** added:

"A concentrated sector is not a healthy sector in terms of competition and market openness, but it also negatively affects the biological, especially genetic, diversity of our crops. There has been a steady global decrease in agricultural and horticultural genetic diversity, both in terms of genetic variation within strains and also the absolute numbers available for farmers and gardeners. The UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) estimates the diversity of cultivated crops declined 75% during the 20th Century and that

a third of today's diversity could disappear by 2050. This trend must be reversed. We need this genetic diversity make our food systems resilient against climate change. "

(1) The study can be downloaded here

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Responsible MEPs



Martin Häusling

Member

Attached documents

Concentration of market power in the EU seed market

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