



Dachverband Kulturpflanzen- und Nutztiervielfalt e.V.  
Umbrella association for crop and livestock diversity in German-speaking countries  
<https://kulturpflanzen-nutztiervielfalt.org>

### **Press Release**

## ***Conservation of agricultural plant diversity faces massive cuts***

*Umbrella association calls for effective exceptions for biodiversity in EU seed legislation*

Bonn, 6 July 2023

“The EU Commission's aim to conserve agricultural plant diversity with the new seed legislation is welcome - however, the EU Commission's proposal contains such significant shortcomings that it is likely to even lead to the contrary, to a loss of biodiversity” comments Susanne Gura of the Umbrella Association for Crop and Livestock Diversity in German-speaking Countries.

Exemptions for diversity conservation would only apply to formal networks and organisations. But they must also apply to individuals. Without gardeners and farmers, the basis of agricultural diversity, the so-called “on farm-conservation” would break away. Gene banks serve mainly as emergency reserves and for research.

While unregistered varieties would indeed be allowed to be sold to hobby gardeners, however, this would be of little use to biodiversity: Because if hobby gardeners start saving and selling seeds themselves, they would have to register officially as operators. The operator registration introduced primarily for commercial production, and many other administrative duties are disproportionate and would thus discourage seed saving. Conservation of agricultural plant diversity in home gardens and small farms and could therefore face massive cuts. Instead, seed savers must be completely exempted from the scope of the regulation. They should not have to comply with administrative duties such as operator register, reporting or others.

Farmers could only exchange, not sell, their seeds of diversity varieties, and thus, new entries are not foreseen by the EU Commission proposal. Farmers' conservation of biodiversity would be phased out. It is dependent on the right to sell farm-saved seed, as part of the internationally agreed Farmers' Rights.

This proposed regulation would miss the objectives of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) that apply to all EU member states.

The umbrella organisation for crop and livestock diversity calls on the governments of the EU member states to ensure adequate legislation not to curtail farmers rights but encourage farmers and gardeners to continue their on farm conservation work. This cultural heritage of humanity, including the basis to adapt our agriculture to global warming is to be passed on to the coming generations.

EU Commission's draft: [https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/plant-reproductive-material/legislation/future-eu-rules-plant-and-forest-reproductive-material\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/plant-reproductive-material/legislation/future-eu-rules-plant-and-forest-reproductive-material_en)

Umbrella association for crop and livestock diversity in German-speaking countries:  
[http://kulturpflanzen-nutztiervielfalt.org /node/29](http://kulturpflanzen-nutztiervielfalt.org/node/29)

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