

Press Release

**Seed legislation: Reject the EU Council of Ministers' proposal for now and amend it for seed diversity!**

Bonn, 9 December 2025 – Numerous amateur gardeners and seed nurseries today called on European agriculture ministers and their representatives in Brussels to take into account the diversity of cultivated plants in amateur gardens and local value chains in the planned seed regulation. This diversity is threatened by new bureaucracy.

On 10 December, the EU Council of Ministers intends to adopt its position on the planned EU seed regulation. The draft position does not do justice to the need to preserve the biological diversity of cultivated plant varieties.

Diversity is often preserved in hobby gardens. The needs there are different from those in commercial agriculture. For example, hobby gardeners attach great importance to taste and to pesticide-free cultivation, so that gardens also provide a refuge for a variety of pollinators, birds and other biodiversity. Hobby gardeners often obtain the necessary seeds at seed festivals and educational events, usually from seed nurseries or, in the case of tree scions, from experts in fruit diversity.

Amateur gardeners also support the need to preserve diversity for future generations, a goal of the United Nations. This involves continuously adapting plants to regional and climatic challenges – something that gene banks cannot do, but can be achieved in seed nurseries. From them, amateur gardeners and small local commercial nurseries often obtain diversity seeds and relevant experience and knowledge.

Seed nurseries are very often run part-time and are also involved in educational work. The planned exemptions for gene banks and concessions for non-profit organisations would not apply to seed nurseries and would therefore be ineffective for large parts of diversity conservation efforts.

New bureaucracy would place a particular burden on small seed nurseries. For hundreds of varieties, of which they only put small quantities into circulation for the purpose of variety conservation, they would have to meet the same requirements as the large seed companies, which sell tonnes of seed. For example, they would have to notify the quantities planned to be produced and sold with the authorities at the beginning of each season, report afterwards and document production and sales for three years for tracking purposes. This would even apply to micro-enterprises and part-time seed gardeners! Also, standardized labels would be prescribed for diversity seeds in the whole EU.

These new bureaucratic burdens would particularly affect hobby gardeners, because they like to source their diverse seeds from precisely these small businesses, for example at local seed and educational events. These diversity varieties are particularly well suited to hobby gardens and local commercial nurseries, as not everything ripens at the same time, for example.

It should also not be mandatory to register varieties with the authorities even for the smallest quantities that local diversity nurseries would like to try out. This hinders innovation and local value creation, for example for community-supported agriculture schemes, restaurants and local markets.

Many seed gardeners would have to reduce their activities, perhaps even give them up altogether. They do not make a large profit, but they must be able to make a living from preserving diversity. This is not possible in the long term through donations alone. The additional bureaucratic requirements envisaged in the Council's proposal would make this increasingly impossible. The report 'Bureaucracy Against Biodiversity' has made it very clear: the proposed legislation is disproportionate and would jeopardise cultivated plant diversity.

We demand to exclude all activities related to the preservation of traditional plant varieties or diversity varieties from the scope of the planned EU seed regulation, including micro-enterprises, for example those with an annual turnover of less than €100,000 from seeds and seedlings. This is well below the EU definition of a micro-enterprise, which is €2 million in annual turnover.

What is possible under the new Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive – namely to exempt companies with fewer than 5,000 employees – should also be possible when it comes to preserving diversity, which mostly involves one-person businesses!

The proposed legislation also runs completely counter to the EU's goal of reducing bureaucracy by 35 per cent.

Arche Noah Report „Bureaucracy against Biodiversity“ (30 pages)

[https://www.arche-noah.at/media/bureaucracy\\_against\\_biodiversity\\_report\\_may\\_2025\\_3.pdf](https://www.arche-noah.at/media/bureaucracy_against_biodiversity_report_may_2025_3.pdf)

About the Umbrella Association for cultivated plant and livestock diversity conservation in German speaking countries <https://kulturpflanzen-nutztiervielfalt.org/node/29> (English information)

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