



ECVC training – Seeds (plant reproductive material) marketing reform
1st August 2024, 9:00 – 11:00

ECVC will be organizing a training session on the ongoing reform of EU seeds (plant reproductive material (PRM)) marketing rules to inform all its members about the stakes of this reform, as well as the possibilities to do advocacy at national level in the coming months. More information on the context, timeline and stakes of the proposal can be found below.

During the training session, we will cover the main elements present in the Commission proposal, as well as the significant modifications that have been adopted by the European Parliament in April 2024. Finally, we will present ECVC demands and possibilities for national advocacy in the coming months. **This invitation is addressed to all ECVC members, beyond the members already active in the Seeds & GMOs working group.**

We invite all ECVC members to participate and mobilize their members on this essential issue. Without a strong mobilisation on this dossier, Member States are likely to approve a text that restricts peasants' rights on seeds, while allowing biopiracy and a facilitated entry on the market of patented genetically-modified seeds.

If you are interested to follow this training session, I invite you to register using [this link](#).

The training will be organized in EN-FR-ES. It may be possible to have additional languages depending on the needs of the participants. For any question, please contact Cloé Mathurin at cloe@eurovia.org.

Context : the reform started last year when the European Commission published its proposal to update current PRM production and marketing rules. These rules had been in force since the 1960s and have structurally favoured the development of a seed market dominated by distinct, homogeneous and stable varieties marketed by industrial seed companies. While benefiting to large seed companies, these rules have marginalized peasant seed breeding, and in several countries peasant seed exchanges have been criminalized, resulting a clear violation of peasants' rights on seeds. This also led to an enormous loss of agro-biodiversity, and the impossibility for farmers to access varieties that are well-suited for their local conditions.

Timeline: The European Commission published its proposal in July 2023, and the [European Parliament adopted in position in first reading in April 2024](#). The negotiations in the Council are still ongoing, and an agreement between member States is expected for end of 2024. Trilogue negotiations between the three institutions should start beginning of 2025.

What are the main stakes?

- This reform represents an opportunity to move away from rules that are designed for industrial seed marketing only, and to finally implement peasants' rights on seeds in the EU. Unfortunately, the proposal in its current form violates these rights, while setting the perfect conditions to allow the privatisation of seeds by a few multinational companies. It also doesn't include any protection of peasants against biopiracy.
- One of ECVC main demands is to enforce the right of peasants to exchange their seeds with other peasants. To achieve this, we demand for peasant seeds exchanges to be considered as mutual aid in the framework of agricultural production, and not as marketing. Peasants who exchange seeds should not be subjected to the same rules as the ones applying to large seed companies. This also applies to plant health rules, which must be adapted for seeds exchange in the context of agricultural production. The proposal as it stands doesn't enforce this right, and for some countries, it constitutes a clear setback compared to what has been won thanks to peasants' organisations mobilisation.
- This reform is also directly linked to the proposal to deregulate GMOs obtained with new genomic techniques (NGTs). Indeed, some new commercial categories introduced in the seeds marketing reform (non-organic heterogenous material, new conservation varieties, etc.) could facilitate the entry into the market of patented NGTs. The marketing of patented NGTs in these categories could lead to farmers losing their right to re-use farm-saved seeds. ECVC is not opposed to these new categories, which will allow to bring more diversity in the commercial seed offer, but we demand a full transparency on intellectual property rights, a prohibition of GMOs/NGTs and patents in these new categories. At the same time, we also off course remain mobilized to obtain the rejection of the NGT proposal.

For more information, you can consult [ECVC general position on the proposal](#) (November 2023). An updated position on the proposal will be published soon and communicated to ECVC members.