PRESS RELEASE
EU PARLIAMENT ADVANCES ORGANIC PLANT BREEDING WITH NEW PRM LEGISLATION VOTE

BRUSSELS, 24 APRIL 2024 – Today’s vote on the Plant Reproductive Material Regulation (PRM) legislation could contribute to a balanced regulation and a conducive environment for organic plant breeding. Members of the European Parliament have endorsed most of the amendments proposed in the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI), recognising the important role seeds and seed diversity play for a healthy food and farming system.

Eric Gall, IFOAM Organics Europe’s Deputy Director, said: “Our food system should be resilient. This review of the EU seed legislation has the potential to re-introduce much needed genetic diversity and could be a first step to make sure organic breeders and farmers have access to plant biodiversity – specifically allowing the adaptation of seed variety registration rules. This will enable agrobiodiversity and ensure that plant genetic resources are not concentrated in the hands of only a few big actors.”

As organic farmers do not use synthetic pesticides and only a limited amount of fertilisers, they need Plant Reproductive Material (PRM), such as seeds and seedlings, specifically bred to perform well under organic conditions. This also allows all other farmers access to a wide range of PRM.

The regulation on production and marketing of plant reproductive material is an important piece of legislation within the EU Green Deal. It is specifically important in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy’s objective to boost organic production and to reach 25% of the EU’s agricultural land under organic management by 2030.

Ends.

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Background information
European Union official documents
- Plant Reproductive Material Regulation (PRM) legislation
- The European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development’s opinion will be available on its website

European organic movement’s official position
- Position paper on the review of EU rules on Plant Reproductive Material (2022)

Other
- Sustainability in organic breeding. Improving the entire system or adjusting some genes?
- IFOAM Organics Europe’s work on organic seeds
- Infographic: New genomic techniques & patents, a ticking time bomb
- Video: Organic plant breeding and its contribution to food production
- Research project: LIVESEEDing, promoting growth of organic seed and plant breeding for the transition to more sustainable local food systems

IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. With almost 200 members in 34 European countries, our work spans the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders, and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

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