Equivalence of field inspections carried out and equivalence of seed produced: period of application; in Bolivia on cereal and oil and fibre plant seed-producing crops, and of cereal seed and oil and fibre plant seed

2022/0016(COD) - 27/01/2022 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Council Decision 2003/17/EC as regards its period of application and to add Bolivia to the list of third countries for which field inspections of seed producing crops and seed produced in those countries are considered equivalent to EU field inspections and seed production, respectively, in respect of sorghum, maize and sunflower.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: Council Decision 2003/17/EC provides that, under certain conditions, field inspections carried out in the third countries listed in its Annex I on certain seed-producing crops are to be considered equivalent to field inspections carried out in accordance with Union law and that, under certain conditions, seed of certain cereal species produced in those countries is to be considered equivalent to seed produced in accordance with Union law. Decision 2003/17/EC expires on 31 December 2022.

On 29 January 2016, Bolivia submitted a request to the Commission to consider seed of sorghum, maize and sunflower produced in Bolivia as offering the same assurances as regards identity, health and quality as seed produced in the EU on the basis of official controls carried out by the competent authorities of that country.

Following this request, the Commission assessed the relevant Bolivian legislation and carried out an audit of the Bolivian seed production and certification system. The Commission identified shortcomings and made recommendations to Bolivia. As Bolivia addressed these shortcomings by 30 November 2018, the Commission recognised that the Bolivian system in place offered the same assurance as the EU system.

CONTENT: the proposed Decision aims to **grant equivalence** in respect of field inspections of seed producing crops of sorghum, maize and sunflower carried out in **Bolivia** and in respect of seed of **sorghum, maize and sunflower** produced in Bolivia and officially certified by its authorities.

As Decision 2003/17/EC expires on 31 December 2022, it is proposed to **extend by 7 years** (until 31 December 2029) the period for which equivalence is recognised under that Decision, in order to avoid any risk of disruption of seed imports into the Union.

The proposal will stimulate seed trade between Bolivia and the EU. Granting the EU equivalence would therefore contribute to the maintenance of the continuous supply of high quality seed in the EU. It could also make it more attractive for EU-based companies to invest in the agricultural development of Bolivia given that the EU would become an export market.