Equivalence of field inspections carried out in third countries on seed-producing crops and of seed produced in third countries. Codification

2024/0030(COD) - 06/02/2024 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to adopt a decision on the equivalence of field inspections carried out in third countries on seed-producing crops and on the equivalence of seed produced in third countries (codification).

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 has been substantially amended several times.

In the interests of clarity and rationality, the purpose of this proposal is to undertake a **codification** of Council Decision 2003/17/EC on the equivalence of field inspections carried out in third countries on seed-producing crops and on the equivalence of seed produced in third countries. The new Decision will supersede the various acts incorporated in it; it fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and hence does no more than bring them together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

CONTENT: the proposed decision states that, under certain conditions: (i) field inspections carried out on certain seed-producing crops in certain third countries should be considered equivalent to field inspections carried out in accordance with Union law; (ii) seed of certain species produced in those third countries should be considered equivalent to seed produced in accordance with Union law.

Equivalence has been granted to those third countries by relying on the multilateral framework for international trade of seeds.

The Commission has also carried out legislative assessments and audits in some of those third countries in order to verify whether they meet the requirements under Union law before granting equivalence for the first time. Annual testing and reporting within the OECD framework, periodical re-auditing of laboratories for ISTA accreditation, as well as official inspections in the context of Union law, indicate that field inspections carried out in those third countries continue to afford the same guarantees as field inspections carried out by Member States and that seed produced and certified in those third countries afford the same guarantees as seed produced and certified in Member States.

Those field inspections and seed should be considered equivalent to Union field inspections and seed.

The proposed decision lays down specific rules concerning relabelling and refastening in the Union. It also provides for detailed rules on the exact indications to be given on the label of certified seed imported under this Decision with regard to the obligation for seed, including not finally certified seed, marketed in the Union to indicate whether the seed is chemically treated or if the variety has been genetically modified.

In the future, the Annexes to this Decision should be updated in order to ensure that imported seed is subject to requirements equivalent to any new rules which may be introduced, especially for not finally certified seed.