

Marketing of seeds, propagating and planting materials: Community comparative tests and trials

2002/0232(CNS) - 10/04/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report Danielle AUROI (Greens/EFA, F) subject to several amendments. The Parliament believes that the comparative tests funded by the Union must not be limited to the species and varieties of certified seed and plants included in the Union's common catalogue. Conservation varieties and seed originating in organic farming may also benefit from these tests. In addition, the Parliament is of the opinion that the issues surrounding GMO contamination must be addressed in the context of the directives on the marketing of plants and seeds and cannot be dealt with under the committee procedure, which excludes the European Parliament from all debate, and prevents it from making proposals, on this sensitive matter. Parliament believes that seed marketed for use in organic farming must be tested in an environment specific to that type of farming and be given more funding. Such seed must be free of all traces of GMOs and pesticides and therefore calls for special tests. Moreover, parliament states that the 'conservation' types and varieties referred to in Directive 98/95/EC must be defined and tested in order to be marketed in accordance with specific criteria and require an implementing regulation. In addition, the problem of farm seed must be resolved by giving flexibility to farmers and selectors in accordance with established contracts and needs of farmers. In order to support biodiversity, additional efforts should be made. These include: - Member States should increase their contributions and step up their long-term commitments as regards conservation of genetic resources at national and international levels; - Member States should step up their financial support and their commitment as regards all non-institutional agricultural research into enhancement of plants and genetic resource conservation on the farm; they should also step up their support for NGOs working in this area; - Member States should recognise the complementarity of ex situ and in situ conservation strategies. Both methods are essential for conservation of germoplasm for future generations; they need increased assistance, in particular for in situ or on-farm conservation; - Member States should lay down measures intended to promote and step up farmer-based and farmer-led science, including 'participatory plant breeding' as defined by the FAO; - Member States should give a legal undertaking to acknowledge the collective rights of communities and their knowledge concerning local genetic resources. They should acknowledge the traditional practices of those communities when they have developed certain genetic resources. Member States should ensure, in this connection, that there is effective application of Directive 98/95/EC, in respect of 'amateur' varieties.