



# PRESS RELEASE

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## A Better Regulation for Plant Protection

**The European seed industry is pleased with the improved provisions for seed treatment and minor uses but remains wary on possible loss of important crop protection solutions due to strict cut-off criteria. Innovation and practical implementation will be key to maintain competitiveness.**

The European Parliament today in Strasburg adopted the compromise reached with Member States on the new Regulation for the authorisation of plant protection products and the related Framework Directive for their sustainable use by large majority. With that, the legislative process that has lasted for more than two years is finally concluded, despite some differences that persisted to the last moment.

*"ESA is glad that this important legislative package could be concluded within the term of this Parliament. And we are proud of what we have achieved for our industry in our discussions with Member States and Members of Parliament.",* Garlich v. Essen, Secretary, General of ESA, sums up his appreciation of the outcome. For many years, Europe's plant breeders and seed producers had faced a growing disintegration of the common market for seed where the seed is treated with a crop protection product, today the most modern and advanced form of application. To align seed marketing Directives and crop protection product legislation had thus been the major aim of ESA. *"At the beginning, seed treatment was not at all considered as an issue by Commission, Council and Parliament. This was the more astonishing as this technology actually can be instrumental in achieving the much debated reduction of overall use of chemicals in agriculture.",* Garlich von Essen recalls. *"The new Regulation now allows for a free marketing of treated seed throughout the EU and effectively implements and EU-wide mutual recognition of authorisations for such seed treatment applications in the whole Community. We are convinced that this will hugely benefit both seed industry and farmers, specifically in the smaller Member States."*

Another issue of specific concern for the seed business was to improve the availability of crop protection solutions for minor crops and minor uses. Often, the lack of economic interest for crop protection companies to extend existing authorisations to such niche markets threatened the sustainable production of these crops. *"ESA has always placed specific importance on the issue of minor uses."* von Essen points out. *"We see that markets are becoming increasingly specialised as well as regional. This means that authorisations are now required in much more crops and in many more countries than in the past. We are very positive about the new provisions and convinced that both the facilitated authorisation and the new EU fund will help to foster innovation and improve the availability of suitable products for all crop-pest combinations in the total EU."*

At the same time, the seed industry maintains its reservations as regards the cut-off criteria for the authorisation of new pesticides. With the introduction of new hazard instead of risk based criteria the seed industry sees the EU to move away from a strictly science based evaluation and authorisation concept. However, ESA calls upon Member States and Commission to make use of the different flexibility clauses and emergency authorisations wherever no alternative crop protection solutions are available. Garlich von Essen considers this practical implementation to be decisive specifically for the first phase of the new legislation. *"We have fought hard to introduce such flexibility provisions in the new Regulation. It is now up to Member States to make use of them in the appropriate way to bridge the phasing out of old pesticides and the authorisation of the next generation of crop protection products."*

Generally, von Essen is content with the new legislation and sees major improvements for the seed industry but maintains reservations as regards the non-science based cut-off criteria. *"I think, in the end we have achieved a balanced compromise. And we have*

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*achieved major improvements for our members. Specifically for our many small and medium sized enterprises, the EU-wide marketing authorisation for treated seed is a precondition for their future competitiveness. I am quite proud that the joint work of European and national seed associations together with our many members all over Europe has helped to bring about this result."*