"Dear …,

**On 24 April your vote on the plant reproductive material (PRM) file will help determine what you and future generations grow and eat.** Will farmers have any alternatives to the large seed companies in their efforts to adapt to warmer temperatures and more extreme climatic conditions? Will local seed companies have a chance to flourish, supporting regional development and creating some independence from global supply chains? Will our grandchildren have the opportunity to enjoy traditional varieties and food cultures?

**To say yes, please support the COMAGRI report.**

Why? The current rules on the production and marketing of seeds and other PRM, which date back to the 1960s, have contributed to a loss in the diversity of plant species and varieties used in food production. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that in the last century some 75% of plant genetic diversity in agriculture was lost (see [here](https://www.fao.org/3/y5609e/y5609e02.htm)). **This lack of diversity is bad for our health, for the environment, for farmers who want to work with diversity, and** **for the resilience of our seed and food supply – by putting “all our eggs in one basket”.** Today, only four companies control 51% of global seed sales, and these same account for more than 62% of global agro-chemical sales (see [here](https://www.etcgroup.org/files/files/food_barons-summary-web.pdf)).

As an organisation... / As a citizen..., we are / I am deeply concerned that **the Commission’s proposal endangers the remaining diversity of cultivated plants**. While more could and should be done, the **COMAGRI report goes a good way in addressing key problems** with the Commission’s proposal, for example **by allowing gene banks to give seeds from their collections to farmers, and omitting local conservation initiatives from marketing rules designed with industry players in mind**.

Some industry stakeholders are opposing these small openings for diversity. Please take two minutes to read our arguments why these openings – and the COMAGRI report – are essential:

* **Marketing rules that are designed with the formal seed trade in mind should not apply to non-commercial activities aimed at biodiversity preservation.** Applying the new legislation to transfers of seeds for the purpose of the conservation of a variety would in practice make such transfers mostly impossible, endangering the survival of traditional local varieties and vital genetic diversity, going against EU obligations under international law (see [here](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13083-Plant-and-forest-reproductive-material-revised-rules-/F3446304_en)).
* **The exemptions from scope opposed by industry already exist!** The current directives (in contrast to the Commission proposal) only apply to the marketing of PRM with a view to its commercial exploitation, and so do not apply for example to the work of gene banks. In some member states such as Austria, Denmark and France there are also explicit, positive exemptions from the scope of the national legislation for conservation/gardening purposes. There is no evidence of any detriment or sanitary hazard arising from these exemptions.
* **The Commission proposal contains other exemptions, for industry!** The proposal – in Article 2 (4) (e) – exempts transfers of seeds for breeding (and other) purposes from scope, as requested by the industry. To not allow an analogous exemption for on-farm research or conservation work is illogical.
* **The exemptions pose no threat to the formal seed trade.** The proposed exemptions in COMAGRI do not apply to commercial activities, but rather to non-profit activities related to the conservation of plant genetic diversity and the dynamic management of farmers’ own seeds. Both are subject to quantity limitations, so pose no “competition” to the seed industry. For example, Annex VII allows a community seed bank network to give a farmer enough seeds to cultivate one hectare of an ancient wheat variety to ensure its survival without following seed marketing rules. In contrast, the commercial wheat variety RGT Reform was cultivated last year on 9,000 hectares in Germany alone.
* **Plant health is secured via separate legislation!** The EU Plant Health Regulation 2016/2031 regulates the movement of seed and plants to prevent the spread of the most harmful pests and diseases, and requires registration of professional operators, systematic traceability, and the use of plant passports on seed packages. Regulation 2016/2031 will continue to apply regardless of whether a transfer of seeds is subject to marketing rules or not.

Thank you for considering our arguments. We hope we can count on your support for plant diversity on our fields and tables on 24 April.

Yours Sincerely,"