



PRESS RELEASE

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ESA is the voice of the European seed sector. ESA's members are national associations and individual companies active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural and ornamental plant species. ESA represents more than 7000 seed businesses in the EU and beyond.

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS REPORT ON TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN EU AGRICULTURE

The European Parliament's vote of 7.6.2016 on an initiative put forward by its Committee for Agriculture and drafted by MEP Anthea McIntyre (ECR, UK) disappoints the European plant breeding sector.

While the report, titled "Technological solutions for sustainable agriculture in the EU", received broad backing from the COMAGRI, the plenary vote significantly altered the final text by specifically suppressing many proposals related to a more supportive and enabling political and regulatory framework for plant breeding and crop protection innovations.

"It is fair to say that we are rather disappointed," Garlich v. Essen, Secretary General of ESA European Seed Association commented on the vote. *"We very much welcomed the holistic approach that both the rapporteur Mrs McIntyre and the Committee for Agriculture took with this innovation initiative. But now, the text has lost a good part of just that."*

The plenary voted down a number of elements that had called upon the EU to facilitate the development and deployment of innovative plant breeding techniques by a supportive and enabling regulatory framework. While Europe is still a world leader in the research of these techniques, their practical use in the EU is held up by continued legal uncertainty, as the Commission is constantly postponing a clarifying communication. At the same time, other parts of the world are not only catching up but have already overtaken the EU when it comes to product development and field use.

"To some extent the EP has missed the point and an important opportunity here. Plant breeding innovation is recognised as a key driver of productivity and sustainability of farmers and the entire food chain. A [recent study](#) shows that more than 80% of current and future productivity and sustainability gains are derived from plant breeding. We would therefore have considered a more concrete pro-innovation message from the EP more appropriate in sending a strong signal of policy support to the public and private plant breeding sector, as well as to the European Commission."*

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* S. Noleppa (2016) The economic, social and environmental value of plantbreeding in the European Union. HFFA Research Paper <http://bit.do/plantetp-HFFAResearch>