



European Association representing the trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs,  
oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply  
Comité du commerce des céréales, aliments du bétail,  
oléagineux, huile d'olive, huiles et graisses et agrofournitures

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## COCERAL Views on the Review of the Plant Reproductive Material Proposal

COCERAL is the European Association representing European traders of agrosupply, cereals, rice, feedstuffs, oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats.

In particular, the agrosupply membership represents commercial distributors of plant reproductive material, grain seeds amongst others<sup>1</sup>, and is therefore located in the centre of the seed supply chain providing farmers with the products to ensure sustainable food production. It is therefore our key interest to ensure the quality and health of the material distributed.

In general, COCERAL is of the opinion that the current legal framework for seed marketing legislation has proven to work satisfyingly in the market.

However, COCERAL members have some reservations in relation to the exercise aimed at simplifying the seed legislation. It is certainly acknowledgeable that some simplification may be achieved by creating one single base regulation; nevertheless, we understand that there would be the need for several annexes, secondary legislation or delegated acts. Eventually, there may be as many legislative acts as before.

For the above mentioned reason, COCERAL is of the opinion that any new proposal should include all relevant stipulations to allow stakeholders to assess what is intended with it. For the sake of clarity it seems advisable to not include provisions for delegated acts where no revision is foreseen in the five to ten years to come.

More specifically, COCERAL would like to comment on the following items:

### ➤ **Scope**

COCERAL recommends keeping the scope as it is in the current legislation; the concept of niche market material and material for amateurs should not be introduced.

However, as **fall-back option, in the case** that the concept of niche market material would be introduced, niche market material needs to be further defined along the following suggestions:

- COCERAL believes that a geographic terminology would not be adequate to define the scope of niche market material. Instead, a definition could be based either on value or volume of the product marketed. It would also be necessary to debate which operators would be permitted to utilise the derogation.

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<sup>1</sup> Agrosupply membership represents also distributors of plant protection products and fertilisers.

- If the scope of “niche material” is limited to appropriate cases, COCERAL can accept that there are limited requirements regarding certification and registration for such material (for example an official description).

➤ **Registration of varieties (VCU - Value for Cultivation and/or Use)**

The Commission proposal from March 2013 foresaw the possibility to register varieties not only under the system of Satisfactory value for cultivation and/or use regulated by Member States, but also under an additional testing system - *Sustainable* value for cultivation and/or use - the rules for which would be determined by the Commission via delegated acts. COCERAL would prefer keeping one single independent Value for Cultivation and/or Use (VCU) testing system – which already enshrines sustainability considerations and therefore makes an additional system superfluous.

➤ **Heterogeneous material**

COCERAL has reservations towards the introduction of the possibility to produce and make available on the market plant reproductive material which does not belong to a variety ('heterogeneous material'). COCERAL is concerned about a potential disturbance of the market if such material can enter the market without having to comply with the requirements on distinctiveness, uniformity and stability and satisfactory value for cultivation. If the concept of heterogeneous material is introduced, it needs to be carefully defined and subject to clearly established restrictions.

➤ **Certification: Materials to be subject to obligatory certification or to be excepted from certification**

COCERAL supports a system of mandatory certification as in the current legislation as it represents a validation of secured quality of the material. This obligation should apply to all operators under the scope of the regulation. Therefore, an exemption for micro-enterprises should not be foreseen. However, COCERAL accepts that vegetable seeds can continue to stay out of the certification obligation.

**COCERAL** is the European association of cereals, rice, feedstuffs oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply trade. It represents the interest of the European collectors, traders, importers, exporters and port silo storekeepers of the above mentioned agricultural products. COCERAL's full members are **30 national associations in 19 countries** [Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxemburg, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK] and **1** European association [Unistock] With about **2700 companies** as part of COCERAL national members, the sector trades agricultural raw materials destined to the supply of the food and feed chains, as well as for technical and energy uses. COCERAL has two associated members in Switzerland and Serbia.