



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

## **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL LEGISLATION - Working Group on Vegetable Seed Equivalence**

**26 November 2013**

Chairperson: T. Weber

Experts from the following Member States were present: BG, CR, DE, EE, ES, FR, GR, LT, LV, NL, MT, PL, RO, SL, UK.

### **1) Review of the existing legislation on equivalence of vegetable seed and exchange of views**

COM presented the existing rules on equivalence pertaining to vegetable seeds. A short discussion followed concerning the implementation of these rules in Member States.

### **2) Review of the OECD scheme for vegetable standard seed and exchange of views**

COM presented the OECD scheme for vegetable seeds. The majority of the experts agreed that this scheme does not offer innovative solutions and that the existing EU rules and requirements are working well.

### **3) Exchange of views concerning the memorandum prepared by the Netherlands**

NL presented a detailed document outlining the production process and quality assurance schemes of vegetable seeds for the professional market. The presentation shows the complex and distributed process of vegetable seed production. For example, varieties are bred in the EU, but multiplied in 3<sup>rd</sup> countries and then imported back into the EU in order to be cleaned, processed, health-checked and packaged. All value-adding activities thus take place in the EU. According to the experts, these production processes make the introduction of a equivalence scheme as it exists for vegetable crops unnecessary.

#### **4) Conclusions**

The Member States' experts concluded that stricter requirements for vegetable seed equivalence are not necessary. In the professional market, relationships between seed producers and buyers are so close that a very high quality of vegetable seeds is guaranteed. Any vegetable seed company not producing according to the highest standards would not be able to maintain its position and standing on the market. Member States' experts also emphasized that the amateur market for vegetable seeds functions differently and that a wide choice of varieties is of utmost importance to amateur gardeners.