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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 23 February 2026: Concerns regarding the European Commission's proposal to include the sowing of treated seeds within the definition of the use of plant protection products <i>- Information from Poland, supported by Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Sweden</i>

The use of certified plant reproductive material (PRM) treated with plant protection products constitutes an important element of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy, as seed treatment significantly reduces the overall use of plant protection products. The quantity of active substances applied per hectare through treated seeds is substantially lower than in the case of conventional spraying. Moreover, the development of modern sowing technologies enables precise application, thereby reducing the quantity of treated seeds used per hectare and limiting risks associated with sowing.

One of the key measures to encourage farmers to use certified treated PRM is the reduction of administrative burdens and regulatory obstacles.

In this context, the European Commission's proposal to extend the definition of the use of plant protection products to include the sowing of treated PRM, as presented in the Omnibus simplification package on food and feed safety, raises serious concerns with regard to its legal and practical consequences.

Under the Commission's proposal:

- farmers would be required to register the sowing of PRM treated with plant protection products;
- persons sowing PRM treated with plant protection products would be obliged to undergo training on the use of plant protection products. This requirement is particularly problematic in light of labour shortages in the agricultural sector, which increasingly demand the employment of foreign workers.

Consequently, the Commission's proposal is inconsistent with the main objective of the Omnibus package, namely the reduction of administrative burdens.

Contrary to the Commission's declarations, the proposal does not reduce but rather increases legal and interpretative uncertainty. Although the Commission indicates that treated PRM does not constitute a plant protection product, the proposed extension of the definition of the use of plant protection products rises doubts regarding its relation with Article 28 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.

In light of the above, we ask the European Commission to reconsider its proposal to amend the definition of the use of plant protection products. We firmly believe that the use of plant protection products should be understood as the treatment of seeds, and not the sowing of seeds that have already been treated.

It should be emphasised that farmers expect a reduction in bureaucratic requirements. The Omnibus initiative should not be used as a justification for increasing obligations imposed on farmers.