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## The EU has the chance to make the seed legislation fit for the future

Paul Severin

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ARCHE NOAH was founded 26 years ago. The careful, protective handling of seeds and the protection of the diversity of agricultural crop has been the focus of the charitable association ever since. More than 15,000 members, patrons, and partners who invest money and ideas in the mission of maintaining the diversity of agricultural crop support ARCHE NOAH.

How does ARCHE NOAH see the issue genetically modified organisms and patents on food and seeds?

### How does ARCHE NOAH see the issue GMOs (genetically modified organisms)?

ARCHE NOAH acts as part of the NGO coalition of IG-Saatgut\* (community of interests for seeds), which advocates for seeds that are free of gene modifications. Genetically unmodified seeds tend to be under threat, given that the EU Commission has tried to weaken the zero-tolerance stance with regard to GMO contamination. The so-called new cultivation techniques (such as agro-infiltration, CRISPR/Cas, ODM etc) constitute another risk, because unless they are classified as gene technology, they are not traceable. This would gradually lead to a situation where seeds could not be kept free of gene modifications any longer.

ARCHE NOAH focuses on a participatory approach to cultivation and cooperates with organic businesses, both when it comes to keeping and developing "old species". This is important, because the better these plants are suited for cultivation today, the higher their chance of survival. These businesses grow selected plants on their fields in agreement with the seed archive and other project partners. The plants are documented, evaluated, and seed bearers are selected and multiplied on the basis of certain features such as robustness, taste, and colour. This approach helps develop and strengthen distinctive features of species over the years. At the moment the main focus is on tomatoes, beans, pumpkins, peppers, as well as on the revival of very rare crops such as the bulbous chervil and the rampion bellflower.

More answers can be found in our interview:

[ESG-Letter: Interview with ARCHE NOAH](#)

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### Paul Severin

Paul Severin has worked at Erste Asset Management since April 2008. Until 2012 he was responsible for the company's product management; he has directed communications and PR activities since April 2012. From 1992 to 2008, he was director of equity fund management and deputy director for institutional funds at Pioneer Investments Austria in Vienna.

His career in the securities business began in 1992 at Constantia Privatbank as a portfolio manager and analyst. He worked as primary analyst at Creditanstalt Investmentbank in Vienna from 1994 to 1999.

He studied international business at Innsbruck University and Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI, USA. Before his university studies, he worked at Dornbirner Sparkasse in letters of credit and export financing.

Paul Severin is a member of the board at ÖVFA (Austrian Association for Financial Analysis and Asset Management) and a CEFA charter holder.