

Press Release

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Donau Soja welcomes Austrian initiative to protect European soya production

From the very beginning, Donau Soja has been working to prevent the misclassification of European soybean oil as a high-risk indirect land-use change (iLUC) feedstock under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED). At the Agrifish in Brussels on 26 May 2026, Austrian Agriculture Minister Norbert Totschnig formally challenged the European Commission's proposal – and we are glad to finally see this reflected at the political level. We now urge the Commission to act before the Delegated Act enters into force.

Aurélie Tournan, General Manager of Donau Soja, stated: "We have been making this case since the very beginning – and we will keep doing so. European soya is grown deforestation-free, on existing arable land, under verified sustainability standards. It is a key pillar of Europe's protein self-sufficiency, food security and supply resilience. European policy must reflect that."

European soya crushing at risk: 15 million tonnes processed, 8% self-sufficiency in the EU

The European Commission adopted its Delegated Act on 10 April 2026, proposing to classify soybean oil as a raw material with a high risk of indirect land-use change (iLUC). Soybean oil is a key co-product of soybean crushing – and some EU facilities sell up to 80% of their output into the biofuels market.

The EU currently crushes around 15 million tonnes of soybeans annually. Only a fraction, roughly 3 million tonnes, reflecting a self-sufficiency rate of just 8%, is grown in the EU. Losing this outlet makes crushing in the EU economically unviable. That removes buyers for European farmers and accelerates a shift towards soymeal imports from regions with far weaker sustainability standards. A blanket high-iLUC classification puts that supply base – and Europe's broader food sovereignty – further at risk.

Austria speaks up – Donau Soja stands with it

Minister Totschnig called on the Commission to reassess the classification, treat European soya according to its demonstrably high standards, and align its climate, energy and agricultural policies.

Donau Soja has been making this case since the very beginning. Since February 2026, we have engaged directly with EU institutions, submitted formal positions, and mobilised our network of members and partners across more than 27 countries to push back against a classification that simply does not reflect the reality of European soya production. European soya is grown deforestation-free, on existing arable land, under verified sustainability standards. It is non-GM, origin-controlled and certified. A blanket high-iLUC classification ignores all of that – and risks undermining the very farmers and value chains that are delivering what European policy says it wants. It also puts Europe's food sovereignty and supply security at risk at a time when resilience matters more than ever.

Our call to the European Commission

Time is short. The Delegated Act enters into force on 10 August 2026 – and the timing could not be more contradictory. A new Protein Strategy is expected to be announced in the coming weeks, and with it, an acknowledgement of the pioneer work Donau Soja has done over the past decade in building Europe's soya value chains and processing infrastructure. We urge the European Commission to revise the Delegated Act and introduce an origin-based differentiation for soybean oil under the RED, ensuring that European soybean oil, derived from sustainably grown, certified soya, remains eligible as a renewable energy feedstock and to clarify, alongside the Protein Strategy, how it plans to remove the obstacles it is simultaneously creating for European soya production.

About Donau Soja

Donau Soja is a non-profit, independent association who supports its partners and members in progressing change to address social, environmental, and economic challenges in soya, legumes and protein production and consumption. This will increase efficiency, fairness and sustainability in European food and feed protein value chains.

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