



## Stop 'Baysanto' from monopolising seeds!

International call against patents on seeds

**14 June 2018 / Prompted by the Bayer takeover of Monsanto, around 40 institutions active in plant breeding, agriculture and environmental protection are calling for effective measures to stop the patenting of conventionally bred plants and animals in Europe. The European Patent Office (EPO) continues to grant such patents despite all the institutions of the EU having spoken out against them, and the adoption of new rules for the interpretation of European patent law in 2017. Patents granted by the EPO cover seeds, plants, the harvest and the food derived thereof.**

Just recently, the EPO granted several patents to the Dutch company ENZA Zaden, claiming melons, grapes, cucumber, soybeans, onions, tomatoes and potatoes. All of these patents are based on random mutations of the genome. Similar patents have previously been granted to Bayer and Monsanto.

“No more plants or animals should be patented as 'products'. Living beings are not an invention of industry,” says Christoph Then, coordinator of “No Patents on Seeds!”. “The big companies are those profiting from this development. They are gaining more and more control over the resources needed to produce our daily food.”

The takeover of Monsanto by Bayer makes 'Baysanto' the largest seed company. Despite parts of its business being sold to BASF, Baysanto will still control around 25 percent of the international seed markets. The second largest seed giant, the US company DowDuPont has a market share of around 20 percent. The third largest company in this sector is Syngenta, which was bought up by ChemChina and owns a further approximately 10 percent of the trade in seeds. Consequently, only three companies control more than 50 percent of the international seed trade.

“Baysanto & Co are increasingly in a position to decide which plants will be bred, grown and harvested in future; as well as how much seeds will cost and how our food will be produced. To a large extent, this powerful market position is based on seed monopolies acquired through a continually increasing number of patents that cover seeds, plants and their harvest,” says Katherine Dolan from Arche Noah, which is one of the signatory organisations.

To stop the increasing monopolisation of seeds needed for conventional breeding and food production, the signatory organisations are calling for effective measures to be taken now: patents on conventional breeding should be prohibited and no exemptions allowed. If patents are granted on

genetic engineering, including genome editing, the scope of the patents must be limited to specific technical processes.

**The international call is currently supported by around 40 organisations from Austria, Belgium (Brussels), Denmark, Germany, Portugal and Switzerland:** Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL), Arche Noah, Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch Hall, Bundesverband Deutscher Milchviehhalter (BDM), BUND Naturschutz in Bayern, Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW), Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Danish Seed Savers (Frøsamlerne), Die Freien Bäcker, FIAN, GAIA-Environmental Action and Intervention Group, Gäa, Vereinigung ökologischer Landbau, Gen-ethisches Netzwerk (GeN), Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung (GOEF), Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz (GZPK), IG Nachbau, IG Saatgut, Katholische Landvolkbewegung Deutschland (KLB), Kein Patent auf Leben!, No Patents on Seeds!, Kultursaat, KLB Freiburg, Praktisk Økologi, ProSpecieRara, Public Eye, Sativa Rheinau AG, Swissaid, Slow Food, Slow Food Deutschland, Slow Food Sjælland (Denmark), Save our Seeds (SOS), Plataforma Transgénicos Fora, Umweltinstitut München, Verband Katholisches Landvolk, Verein zur Erhaltung der Nutzpflanzenvielfalt (VEN), WeMove, Zivilcourage Miesbach, Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft (ZSL).

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