

no patents on seeds



Monsanto granted “patent on severed broccoli”

European Patent Office once again grants a patent on plant breeding

Munich 12.6.2013 Today the European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich granted a patent on conventional breeding. Seminis, a company owned by Monsanto, received the patent (EP 1597965) on broccoli derived from conventional breeding. The plants, which are supposed to make harvesting easier, are derived from conventional cross-breeding and selection. The patent covers the plants, the seeds and the “severed broccoli head”. It additionally covers a “plurality of broccoli plants .. . grown in a field of broccoli.” The European Parliament as well as the German Parliament have both been highly critical of such patents. Just recently, two millions of signatures were collected in a petition calling for a prohibition of patents on conventional breeding. *No Patents on Seeds!* is initiating an opposition against this latest Monsanto patent.

“We are calling for broad support of our opposition against the patent on 'severed broccoli'. The EPO and Monsanto are on a confrontation course with European society”, says Christoph Then for *No Patents on Seeds!* “We intend to send a clear signal that we will not let our food be monopolised.”

All the organisations involved are also making demands on European politicians. They are urging them to take over control of the EPO in order to change the interpretation of the current patent law through the Administrative Council of the EPO, which is the assembly of the Member States.

As is evident from a working document issued by the World Food Organisation FAO, industry is currently planning to exploit patents on conventional breeding to further big business. According to the figures, the global sales of patented plants derived from conventional breeding will increase from currently around 700 million US Dollars to 3 billion US Dollars in 2020. These figures are also based on patents granted by the EPO.

The organisations behind the coalition of *No Patents on Seeds!* are extremely concerned that such patents will foster further market concentration, making farmers and other stakeholders of the food supply chain even more dependent on just a few big international companies and ultimately reduce consumer choice. The coalition, *No Patents on Seeds!*, is organised by Bionext (Netherlands), The Berne Declaration (Switzerland), GeneWatch (UK), Greenpeace (Germany), Misereor (Germany), Development Fund (Norway), No Patents on Life (Germany), Rete Semi Rurali (Italy), Réseau Semences Paysannes (France) and Swissaid (Switzerland). They are all calling for a revision of European Patent Law to exclude breeding material, plants and animals and food derived thereof from patentability. The coalition is supported by several hundred other organisations (www.no-patents-on-seeds.org).

Contacts: Christoph Then, phone: 004915154638040, info@no-patents-on-seeds.org

Signatures to support the opposition: <http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/recent-activities/opposition-against-monsanto-patent-on-severed-broccoli>

The patent EP 1597965: <http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/information/patent-cases/severed-broccoli>

The FAO working document: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/ACFS-7b_Report%20FINAL.pdf