



End the legal chaos at the European Patent Office!

No Patents on Seeds! publishes new report and invites the public to a joint protest at the European Patent Office in Munich

25 March 2019 / Today the coalition *No Patents on Seeds!* published a new report on plant patents granted by the European Patent Office (EPO) in 2018 and at the beginning of 2019. Despite a prohibition on the granting of patents on conventional breeding, the EPO has nevertheless granted patents on melons, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, garden parsley and cucumber, all of which were produced without using genetic engineering. At the same time, oppositions against patents on barley were rejected. Faced with these developments, around 30 organisations have called for a joint protest in front of the EPO on 27 March. This is the day on which the Administrative Council representing the 38 contracting states of the EPO will meet. The assembly is requested to take measures to ensure that prohibitions are effective.

It is especially difficult for the meeting that in June 2017, after public protests, the Administrative Council together with backup from EU institutions, already took a decision to prohibit patents on plants and animals that are not derived from techniques of genetic engineering. However, in December 2018, the Technical Board of the EPO decided that the decision of the Administrative Council would not be legally binding. Therefore, from beginning of 2019, much higher numbers of these patents could be granted.

Consequently, there is a legally chaotic situation at the EPO: the Administrative Council decision is neither legally enforceable nor sufficient. This situation is especially advantageous to large companies, such as Bayer (Monsanto), Syngenta and BASF, who are aiming to monopolise seeds and plants and thereby take control of basic resources for producing our daily food. Some of these companies are even demanding that patents that were revoked are now reinstated.

The call for public demonstration is supported by: Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL), Arche Noah, agu – Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Umweltbeauftragten der Gliedkirchen der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, BUND Naturschutz in Bayern e.V., Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND), Bundesverband Deutscher Milchviehhalter, Campact!, Die Freien Bäcker, EDL – Evangelischer Dienst auf dem Lande, FIAN, Gää e.V.- Vereinigung ökologischer Landbau, Gen-ethisches Netzwerk, Genussgemeinschaft Städter und Bauern e.V., Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung, IG Nachbau – Gegen Nachbau-Gebühren, IG Saatgut, Katholische Landvolkbewegung Deutschland (KLB), Kein Patent auf Leben!, Keine Patente auf Saatgut!, Kultursaat e.V., Sambucus e.V., Verband Katholisches Landvolk (VKL), Plataforma Transgénicos Fora, ProSpecieRara, Save our Seeds!, Slow Food München, SwissAid, Umweltinstitut München and WeMove Europe.

The public protest will start on 27 March at 11 a.m. and end at around 2 p.m. There is an opportunity to take pictures or have access to pictures taken by *No Patents on Seeds!*.

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