

no patents on seeds



German Parliament prohibits patents on plants and animals from conventional breeding

Important success for civil society

Berlin, 27.6.2013 Today German Parliament will change German patent law to prohibit patents on plants and animals derived from conventional breeding. This is in line with demands from many civil society organisations which request changes in patent law to prevent patents such as the recently granted “patent on severed broccoli” from Monsanto (EP 1597965). Nevertheless the new patent law will still leave substantive loopholes for similar patents. It is unlikely that other more comprehensive proposals put forward by the opposition parties in the German Parliament (Social Democrats and Green Party) will find a majority of support. Furthermore, the European Patent Office (EPO) is also not bound by this vote.

“Today’s vote sends an important signal on a European level. There is a common understanding of all political parties in German Parliament that we need clear boundaries to stop big companies from grabbing our resources for daily life. Nevertheless, the struggle about the wording of patent laws will continue – in Germany as well as on a European Level“, Christoph Then says for „*No Patents on Seeds!*“.

Wanting to achieve further action, the organisations behind “*No Patents On Seeds!*” are urging for a European Initiative on this issue: The Administrative Council of the EPO which is the assembly of the Member States should change the interpretation of the current patent law to exclude all patents on conventional breeding. By doing so a resolution of the European Parliament from May 2012 shall be implemented.

Meanwhile many organisations have started to collect signatures against the Monsanto’s “patent on severed broccoli”. This campaign also aims to increase the pressure on patent offices and governments in Europe to end current practices in patent law.

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 in the food supply chain even more dependent on just a few big international companies, thus ultimately reducing 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), Red de Semillas (Spain), Rete Semi Rurali (Italy), Réseau Semences Paysannes (France) and Swissaid (Switzerland). These organisation are all calling for a revision of the 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).

Contact: Christoph Then, Tel: +49 (0) 15154638040, 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>