

no patents on seeds



Opposition: Stop Monsanto “patent on severed broccoli”

Broad coalition against the monopolisation of food plants

Munich 12.3.2014 An opposition against the European patent EP 1597965 granted to Monsanto-owned Seminis has been filed by a broad coalition of organisations. The patent claims plants derived from conventional breeding which grow in such a way as to allow mechanical harvesting. The patent covers the plants, the seeds and the “severed broccoli head” as an invention. It additionally covers a “plurality of broccoli plants grown in a field of broccoli.” In protest, opponents of the patent today set up 'the largest broccoli in the world' in front of the European Patent Office (EPO) building in Munich. The protesters also handed over around 75.000 signatures supporting the opposition. The organisations are calling for “free broccoli!”.

“Our opposition sends a clear signal that we will not let our food be monopolised”, says Christoph Then for the coalition of *No Patents On Seeds!*. “In granting such patents, the EPO is breaking the law. We now need joint action from civil society and politics to stop this.”

Some of the organisations involved in the opposition are: Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL), Arche Noah, Bingenheimer Saatgut AG, Bionext, BioForum Vlaanderen, Bund Naturschutz in Bayern (BUND), Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW), Bündnis für gentechnikfreie Landwirtschaft, FIAN e.V., Grupo de Acção e Intervenção Ambiental (GAIA), Gen-ethisches Netzwerk (GeN), Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung, Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz, Greenpeace Ungarn, IG FÜR, IG Nachbau, IG Saatgut, Katholisches Landvolk Bewegung (KLB), Navdanya International, Réseau Semences Paysannes, Umweltinstitut München, Verband Katholisches Landvolk und Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft.

In May 2012, a resolution was adopted by the European Parliament, which “calls on the EPO to exclude from patenting products derived from conventional breeding and all conventional breeding methods.” However, this resolution has so far been widely ignored by the EPO. A political decision to stop these patents could be taken by the Administrative Council of the EPO, which is made up of representatives of the European governments. The German government has already announced a European initiative. In January 2014, the French Senate asked the government of France to become actively involved.

The international coalition of *No Patents on Seeds!* is organising the opposition. Part of the coalition are Bionext (Netherlands), The Berne Declaration (Switzerland), GeneWatch (UK), Greenpeace, 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). The organisations behind the No Patents on Seeds! coalition 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. *No Patents on Seeds!* is 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.

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Text of the patent:

www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/information/patent-cases/patent-severed-broccoli

Text of the opposition:

www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/information/news/opposition-patent-ep-1-597-965

For more information: www.no-patents-on-seeds.org