



## Public event

### **New GMOs, Patents and Peasants' Rights to Seeds in Europe**

*How are patents on seeds negatively impacting small and medium seed enterprises and Peasants Rights to seeds: will the European Union take advantage of the lessons learnt in the past?*

**20 February 2020  
10:00 – 13:00**

**European Economic and Social Committee - Room JDE 63  
Jacques Delors Building**

**Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99-101  
Brussels**

In December 2018, the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in New York by a very large majority of countries. This text, which includes specific provision on peasants' rights to seeds, recalls the primacy of human rights over commercial interests protected by intellectual property rights, including patents.

Despite patents on seeds bringing a numerous of ethical, human rights, social and economical concerns, the biotech-industry and certain members States are now pushing for a review of EU GM legislation in order to allow products coming from new Genetic modification techniques to escape the current regulatory framework.

If this happens it will probably mean that the EU biotech-industry will introduce a mass of new genetically modified seed varieties protected by patents, irreversibly changing the EU seed market landscape, with the possibility of an exclusive control of "native traits" themselves. Moreover, with the progress of the digitalization of genetic resources (DSI), concentration within the seed market is further reinforced.

This conference will explore how patents on seeds is incompatible with basic farmers' rights to seeds and why this economic model of patents on seeds is also detrimental to small and medium seed enterprises.

This event, organized by the European Coordination Via Campesina in collaboration with the European Economical Social Committee, aims to bring together academics, experts from the European patent office and most importantly peasants from Europe in an exchange of views to discuss the impacts of patents on the seed markets and the management of agro-biodiversity by peasants as well as the potential impacts in Europe if the legislative framework on GMOs could be changed. The event is also an opportunity to analyze the development of human rights to seeds specifically referring to the Peasants rights declaration.

## ***Agenda***

### ***10:00 Registration***

### ***10:30-11:00 Welcome and introduction***

- Geneviève Savigny, member of the Diversity Europe Group (Group III) of the European Economical Social Committee (EESC)
- Alessandra Turco, member of the coordinating committee of the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)

### ***11:00 – 12:00 Panel: New GMOs, Patents and the Peasants' Rights to Seeds in Europe***

Moderation by *Fulya Batur*, Kybele

Presentations:

Patents in Europe, the evolution of the patent on genetic information at European level – *Jean-Luc Gal*, European Patent office.

Why the regulation of gene editing will not hurt small and medium size companies – *Claire Robinson*, GMWatch and *Michael Antoniou*, King's College London

How patents on seeds have been impacting the global seed market increasing market share concentrations and the patent model of GM seeds. – *Mohammad Torshizi*, University of Alberta

Patents and Peasants Rights to seeds, what type of European regulation? – *Guy Kastler*, member of the European Coordination Via Campesina working group on seeds

### ***12:00-13:00 Roundtable of reactions from European Commission representatives and debate***

*Sirkku Heinimaa*, EC-DG SANTE, Unit E3, Biotechnology

*Thomas Weber*, EC-DG SANTE, Unit G1, Plant Health

*Alfonso Calles Sanchez*, EC-DG GROWTH, Unit F3, Intellectual Property

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*Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish.*

Registration is required. Click [here](#) to register. *Registration is closing on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February.*

*For any other information or if you have any problem in registering, please write to [feb2019-seedsrights@eurovia.org](mailto:feb2019-seedsrights@eurovia.org)*

[Click here to read the UN Declaration for the Rights of Peasants \(UNDROP\) in the different UN languages](#)

More info on Peasants' Rights in Europe available online at <https://www.eurovia.org/main-issue/farmers-rights/> and at <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/research/our-project/detail/13-the-rights-of-peasants>

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