



Public event

New GMOs, seed marketing: two reforms threaten peasants' rights

28 March 2023, 10am-12.30pm - Brussels

The European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) has the pleasure to invite you to join us at the occasion of this event, where we will dig deeper into the consequences of a potential deregulation of new GMOs¹ on peasants' rights and on the GMO-free agricultural sector as a whole.

As two legislative proposals aiming to exclude certain GMOs from the current GMO regulation and modify seed marketing rules will be on the agenda of the College of European Commissioners on 7 June, this event proposes to address the shortcomings of the impact assessments of these two initiatives carried out by the European Commission. In particular, we will address the impacts on the application of European patent law, crop biodiversity, peasants' rights and the right to food, factors which were explicitly excluded from the impact assessments. These two legislative proposals must not move forward without considering all potential consequences.

Mobilising both our expertise and the knowledge from the field experience of our members, ECVC will present the results of its analysis on **the impact of a potential change in GMO regulation on the application of European patent law**. In particular, we will address **the risks of abusive extension of the scope of patents to seeds obtained through peasant or conventional breeding**. The patent model and the privatisation of life that it entails are the main concerns of European farmers, peasants and small seed producers with regard to this deregulation project. This event therefore aims to put this crucial issue back at the centre of the debate.

ECVC will also analyse how a **potential deregulation of GMOs derived from "new genomic techniques" will impact the ongoing seed marketing reform**, and in particular the risks of a new catastrophic restriction of crop diversity. **These two legislative processes are closely linked and will have very concrete consequences on the rights of peasants and the right to food in the European Union.**

The deregulation of new GMOs and the generalisation of the patent model represent an unprecedented attack on peasants' rights, the survival of small and medium-sized European seed companies, the right of peoples to food sovereignty, and a further step towards the control of the food chain by a handful of multinationals.

This event is an opportunity to engage in a dialogue between European peasants' organisations, the different Commission services concerned by these initiatives, the European Patent Office, and MEPs committed to this essential issue.

¹ i.e., new techniques of genetic modification, directed mutagenesis and cisgenesis, called "new genomic techniques" by the European Commission.

All practical information can be found after the programme below.

Agenda :

- . 10:00: Welcome and introduction - Ms. Tove Sundström, member of ECVC Coordinating Committee.
- . 10:10-11:00: Deregulation of new GMOs and reform of seed marketing legislation: How will this impact peasants' rights and the European GMO-free agricultural sector?
 - *The impacts of a potential deregulation of new GMOs on the application of European patent law, seeds marketing, peasants' rights to seeds, small and medium-sized European seed companies and food sovereignty* - Presentation by M. Guy Kastler, member of ECVC Seeds & GMOs Working group (20 minutes)
 - *Plant breeders' associations and seed companies claim to oppose patents on new GMOs, but there's a catch* - Presentation by Claire Robinson (GM Watch) and Dr. Michael Antoniou (King's College London) (15 minutes).
 - *What impact would these two reform proposals have on the European GMO-free agricultural sector and on organic farming* - Presentation by José Manuel Benitez Castaño, member of ECVC Seeds & GMOs Working group (20 minutes).
- . 11:10 : Statements by MEPs : M. Eric Andrieu (S&D), M. Benoit Biteau (Les Verts/ALE).
- . 11.20: Panel discussion with the presence of representatives of the European Commission :
 - Ms. Irene Sacristán Sanchez, Head of Unit Biotechnology, Health and Food Safety Directorate-General (DG SANTE)
 - M. Jean Ferrière and Ms. Haude Blanc, Social sustainability Unit, Directorate General Agriculture (DG AGRI)
 - Ms. Paivi Mannerkorpi, Plant health Unit, Health and Food Safety Directorate-General (DG SANTE)

12pm: Questions and answers

12.20 pm: Conclusion - Ms. Alessandra Turco, member of the ECVC Coordinating Committee

Moderation : Cloé Mathurin, Seeds and GMOs Policy Officer at ECVC

Coffee and tea will be served after the event.

Practical information:

Date: 28 March 2023, 10am-12:30pm.

Venue : Maison des organisations internationales, rue Washington 40, 1050 Ixelles.

The welcome will start at 9.30 am.

Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish will be available. It will also be possible to follow the conference online.

Registration is mandatory, following [this link](#).

If you have any questions about the event, you can contact Cloé Mathurin at cloe@eurovia.org

ECVC positions and analysis:

Report: Report : [Impacts of the Commission's initiative to amend GMO regulation on the application of European patent law](#), 2022 (available in FR, EN, ES, IT).

Publication: [Incorporating Peasants' Rights to Seeds in European Law](#), 2021 (available in FR, EN, ES, RO, DE)

Factsheet: [New GMOs, patents on seeds and peasants' rights to seeds](#), 2020 (available in FR, EN, ES)