

no patents on seeds



Media Release

EU Council to discuss patents on plants and animals

The EU Commission, the European Parliament and several Member States are against patents on conventional breeding

25 November 2016 / At its next meeting in Brussels on 28 and 29 November, the EU Council for Competitiveness will discuss patents on plants and animals. The European Patent Office (EPO) is continuing to grant patents that are not based on methods of genetic engineering but on conventional breeding, such as those it granted on tomatoes and broccoli. The EPO justifies these patents by referring to an EU Directive. However, in a recent statement, the EU Commission explained that the EU does not allow patents on conventional breeding. At the Council meeting, EU Member States will be discussing further steps that can be taken to enforce this ruling. It will be incumbent on the Member States to start an initiative at the EPO to stop patents, such as those mentioned above.

“The EU governments have to make sure that prohibitions in patent law are enforced. Otherwise, the big corporates, such as Bayer, Monsanto, Dupont and Syngenta, will have even more control of our food production”, says Christoph Then for *No Patents on Seeds!*. “Traditional breeders, farmers and consumers will all suffer from the consequences.”

The EPO just recently confirmed a patent on varieties of lettuce that grow bigger and have more leaves (EP0942643). Further, the EPO granted three patents to Carlsberg, the beer brewing company, which claim barley and beer as inventions. Several EU Member States, such as Germany, France, The Netherlands and Austria, have already adopted national legislation to prohibit such patents. The EU Parliament is also demanding that these patents are stopped.

According to European patent law, patents on “essentially biological” breeding as well as on “plant and animal varieties” are prohibited. However, the EPO, which benefits financially from granting patents, has completely eroded these prohibitions.

Contact:

Christoph Then, Tel + 49 15154638040, info@no-patents-on-seeds.org

Further information:

The EU Commission statement:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC1108\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC1108(01)&from=EN)

Media release on Carlsberg patents:

<http://no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/information/news/no-patents-beer>

The patent on salad confirmed by the EPO:

<http://no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/information/patent-cases/multileaf-lettuce>