



DECLARATION IN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, LIFE AND JUSTICE:

„Protect our natural heritage, biodiversity and resulting food security!“ – an urgent call to action

The fundamental human right to be able to grow plants is the foundation of human civilisation. Over centuries people have been growing their own plants for food, to sell and eat, to create beautiful gardens and parks and to create new habitats for wildlife.

This is all now seriously at risk by the introduction of a new EU Regulation controlling the production, marketing and sale of ALL Plant Reproductive Materials: seeds, bulbs and growing plants, even wildflowers. The proposed regulation will limit what people can grow and sell in the name of consumer protection.

There is considerable support among the negotiating parties to recognise farmers' rights. The Commission's proposal ⁽¹⁾ recognises the rights of gardeners and farmers to exchange and sell seeds and plants, making some concessions, although weak and poorly defined, to preserving biodiversity, choice and open access to plant material. However, the proposed rules do not adequately protect people's rights to grow, sell and exchange plants and are not strong enough to prevent that commercial interests restrict plant breeding activities, resulting in a threat to future food security and farmers', gardeners' and communities' rights to breed and grow their own plants.

We are concerned that the interests of large corporations appropriating our seeds as their own and preventing future breeding by people are taking precedence over the rights of small growers and farmers, and the need to protect our natural heritage, biodiversity and resulting food security in the face of a future of changing climate.

We are facing increasing pressures threatening the very future of our own food supply with diminishing resources, rising fuel costs, a rapidly changing climate, loss of habitats and a reduction of biodiversity. We need to preserve and develop our natural biodiversity.

We, as representatives of farmers' organisations, gardeners, smallholders, plant conservation, plant breeders and members of the European civil society, meeting in Vienna, Austria, 24 November 2013, are deeply concerned about the European Union's proposed REGULATION on Plant Reproductive Materials [2013/0137 (COD)] adopted on 6 May 2013 by the European Commission. We have serious concerns with respect to food sovereignty, preserving biodiversity, food security, and the health and freedom of European citizens.

We strongly demand:

1. People, whether they be farmers or gardeners must not be obliged to buy seeds or other "plant reproductive material" from commercial providers. Any regulation must guarantee the rights of farmers, gardeners and all collectives to use, exchange and sell their own seeds and plants, to respect all Human Rights Declarations and the International Plant Treaty (ITPGR-FA).

(1) Proposal for a regulation on the production and making available on the market of Plant Reproductive Material [2013/0137 (COD)], adopted on May 6th 2013 by the European Commission

2. The industry standard should not be the adopted standard for the seed and plant market. It implies a technical and legal definition that natural plants cannot comply with and it does not recognise the significance of biodiversity.
3. Freely reproducible plants should not be subject to compulsory registration for varieties or certification of seeds and plants. Biodiversity should take precedence over commercial interest, as it is a public good, just like water.
4. For all proposals which impact upon biodiversity consultations should take place with the public, and the decisions should be made by elected representatives. The protection of biodiversity is not a “technical detail” in the meaning of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU.
5. Labeling requirements should be truly transparent and reflect the technological developments, including new microbiological breeding methods, and any technical and legal restrictions of use.
6. Official controls governing seeds and plants shall remain a public service and shall be provided free of charge for small operators (micro-enterprises).

Signatories of the declaration:

AGROLINK Association (BUL) – www.agrolink.org

Arche Noah Verein (A) – www.arche-noah.at

Bese Nature Conservation Society (HU) – www.beseegyesulet.hu

Bifurcated Carrots – www.bifurcatedcarrots.eu

Campaign for Seed-Sovereignty (INT) – www.seed-sovereignty.org |

Kampagne für Saatgut-Souveränität – www.saatgutkampagne.org

Dachverband Kulturpflanzen- und Nutztiervielfalt e.V. (INT) – www.kulturpflanzen-nutztiervielfalt.org

Eco Ruralis - in support of traditional and organic farming (RO) – www.ecoruralis.ro

EKOTREND Slovakia – www.ecotrend.sk

Environmental Social Science Research Group (HU) – www.essrg.hu

Fundacja Rolniczej Różnorodności Biologicznej AgriNatura (PL) – www.agrinatura.pl

Föreningen Sesam (SV) – www.foreningenssesam.se

GAIA - Grupo de Acção e Intervenção Ambiental (PT) – www.sementeslivres.gaia.org.pt

Garden Organic (GB) – www.gardenorganic.org.uk

GLOBAL 2000 – Friends of the Earth Austria – www.global2000.at

InfOMG - GMO information centre in Romania (RO) – www.infomg.ro

Longo mai (INT) – www.prolongomai.ch

Peliti (GR) – www.peliti.gr

Plataforma Transgénicos Fora (Stop GMO Platform, PT) – www.stopogm.net

Red Andaluza de Semillas „Cultivando Biodiversidad“ (E) – www.redandaluzadesemillas.org

Red de Semillas „Resembrando e Intercambiando“ (E) – www.redsemillas.info

Rete Semi Rurali (I) – www.semirurali.net

Réseau Semences Paysannes (F) – www.semencespaysannes.org

Spółeczny Instytut Ekologiczny (PL) – www.sie.org.pl

Stowarzyszenie dla dawnych odmian i ras (PL) – www.ddoir.org.pl

Utopia (SK) – utopia.sk

Verein zur Erhaltung der Nutzpflanzenvielfalt e.V. (D) – www.nutzpflanzenvielfalt.de

ZMAG - Zelena mreza aktivističkih grupa (HR) |

GNAG - Green network of activist groups – www.zmag.hr