

## Declaration of the 5th European Seed Meeting, „Let’s liberate diversity!“

From March 25. to 27, 2010, 160 representatives of the European seed networks gathered in Graz, Austria, for the 5<sup>th</sup> European Seed Meeting “Let’s Liberate Diversity!”. They included groups that work on the conservation, use and distribution of plant diversity, civil society organizations, gardeners, breeders, and men and woman farmers from over 20 countries. For the first time, the conservation of livestock diversity was discussed in the context of this meeting, since diversity loss is also very advanced within animal husbandry. A declaration on livestock diversity is annexed to this text.

### Graz Declaration: Freedom for Diversity

Each human being has the right to live without hunger and to eat adequately. This human right includes access to productive resources, in particular seeds.

In the long term, Food Sovereignty can only be achieved through a culturally rich, ecological food production, based on locally-adapted varieties and on the collective care and development of this diversity.

For thousands of years, people all over the world have been creating livestock and crop diversity. This bio-cultural diversity emerged on our planet as a reciprocal process between human beings and nature, in many localities, through pastoralist grazing and over long periods. The fact that people all over the world have access to it is fundamental for our daily bread and for the food sovereignty of all peoples and communities. This diversity is an elemental part of the human right to food; it must remain a common good, belonging to everyone.

***We defend farmers’ rights to obtain seeds from their own harvests, to breed them and to distribute them.***

Farmers’ Rights<sup>1</sup> are not respected and run the very serious risk of being further curtailed through current revisions of European seed legislation.

Ten companies already control 67% of the international commercial seed market and are demanding that their intellectual property rights be expanded in order to increase their profits and to impose industry varieties throughout the world. Varieties capable of being re-sown are systematically displaced from the market. But it is not these companies’ varieties that will best feed the world in the future. A diversity of small farming practices is needed, including locally-adapted varieties.<sup>2</sup>

We recall that three-quarters of men and women peasants all over the world produce their own seeds, exchange and sell them.

Yet European laws seek to relegate these heirloom and regional varieties to a small and controlled niche.

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<sup>1</sup> In referring to „Farmers’ Rights“, we include gardeners and all those who in one way or another cultivate plants.

<sup>2</sup> Conclusion of the IAASTD report (International Assessment of Agriculture, Science and Technology for Development).

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We demand that patents on plants and animals, their traits and genes, as well as patents on breeding methods be prohibited without exception and that the control of companies on biodiversity be constrained. The continuing plunder of the foundations of world food production must be stopped. A true change can only take place when in Europe a fundamental change in food, trade, and agricultural policies, as well as farmers' rights, as defined in the UN international seed treaty, are implemented.

We demand:

- the right to obtain seeds from our own harvest, to re-sow, distribute and sell them;
- the promotion of diversity in all regions by supporting conservers and breeders of varieties that can be re-sown;
- the prohibition of genetic modification technologies in agriculture;
- the prohibition, without exceptions, of patents on plants and animals, their traits and genes, as well as patents on breeding methods;
- a new agrarian policy, which, instead of supporting energy-intensive industrial production and monocultures, promotes biodiverse and ecological production.

**These demands are directed toward Member States and the European Institutions.**

The participants of the 5th European Meeting in Graz, March 2010.