

# THE LATEST IN THE BATTLE TO REFORM EU SEED LAWS

MARCH 2013 BY CAMPAIGN FOR SEED-SOVEREIGNTY

## **ALERT: Bad new EU-seed law ahead!**

The DG SANCO (Directorate General for Health and Consumers) of the EU-Commission is working on a revision of the EU Seed Laws, currently a series of directives interpreted under national law, to be replaced by a single regulation that will come into force directly in all the 27 EU member states without local interpretation. This would suit the needs of seed multinationals which want uniform laws in all their markets, but would harm the diverse structures of agriculture and the diverse use and production of seeds. If you want to act on behalf of seed-sovereignty, for farmers and seed-savers, you have to become active in the coming months!

## **Diversity under attack!**

The current draft of the proposed regulation, from Nov. 2012, contains some draconian measures for farm-based production seeds, and diversity of plant varieties. Farmers as seed producers would be subject to the same obligations of registration and regula-

tion as multinational seed company operators. Varieties of diversity and old varieties would be endangered, and the



free exchange of seeds and other propagation material could effectively be forbidden. If varieties have to be registered

and to pass extensive testing, this would put up unreasonably high barriers for farmers, consumers and the diversity in agriculture and horticulture.

The European Seed Association, lobby organisation of the seed multinationals, has two main aims. First to control the niche markets and make them unattractive, and second to register all producers of farm saved seed in order to collect royalties from them. They are also trying

to combine the testing and evaluation for plant variety protection (PVP) and the licensing for marketing, and to privatize the entire process. This would hit the small companies and farmers, who would face increasing and unreasonable testing and evaluation costs, for each single variety of seed they wish to use.

### What's next?

The current draft regulation was written by DG SANCO. Before it becomes an official proposal of the EU-Commission, DG AGRI (Directorate General of Agriculture and Rural Development) and the DG ENVI (Directorate General for the Environment) have to agree to it's contents. At the moment there are several points of disagreement.

This opens a window we should use to struggle for more diversity, for open pollinated varieties (versus "hybrid" varieties), and for more diverse seeds in the hands of farmers, gardeners and seed savers.



### Our demands for a new EU seed law:

- **No regulation of seed exchange** by seed savers and farmers!
- **No mandatory registration or certification for open pollinated varieties!**
- **No discrimination against organic varieties** by standards for registration, certification and plant health!
- **Transparency on breeding methods and intellectual property rights** (patents and/or plant variety protection) of registered varieties!
- **New definition of varieties:** not only homogeneous and stable varieties, but also open pollinated, selected from populations!
- **No privatization of registration and certification!**

In 2013 there will be the need to act for agricultural and horticultural diversity, and for farmers and gardeners rights on the saving, breeding, exchanging and marketing of seeds. For Seed Sovereignty!

For current information in English see: <http://www.seed-sovereignty.org/EN>.