

EUROPE NEEDS MORE FARMERS

FARMERS NEED RIGHTS TO SEEDS

THE PROBLEM

DE-REGULATING GMOS: A RECIPE FOR A DISASTER

Through years of biased research, **the biotech industry has been orchestrating an unprecedented communication campaign** in the EU **to exempt a new generation of GMOs from any regulation and labelling**. This has been supported via confusing statements and lies around the nature of those techniques, such as the claim that organisms produced by these new genetic techniques replicate nature, just at an increased speed. In reality, **this is an attempt to dismantle the precautionary principle and the climate change goals of the EU**. More than a solution for climate change, new GMOs could be a recipe for disaster for European farmers, the environment, and the EU citizens.



NEW GMOS = FAKE SOLUTION

Industry claims that the EU needs to deregulate those techniques in order to tackle climate change. This is particularly concerning as **the technology does not represent agricultural research based on adaptation and agroecology**, but instead on increasing profits through patents and the market power of genes. Those techniques do not aim to correct agronomical approaches that disrupt the climate such as **large-scale monocultures, the dependence on nitrogen fertilisers and long supply chains, etc.**

They instead maintain these approaches without any environmental and health assessments. It is a false promise that they will reduce the use of pesticides, since the monocultural application of **these techniques pushes plant pathogens to mutate rapidly** and become even more dangerous, **thus increasing the use of pesticides** instead of decreasing it.

Most concerning is the comparison of these techniques to natural breeding, since the 'editing' process causes unintended and undesirable mutations and genetic recombination, as proven by many studies. This is the reason **the techniques are banned or highly regulated in human applications**. Does it make sense then deregulate them in plants and not provide any health and environment assessments, traceability and labelling? EU peasants say no to new GMOs.



ECHOING INEQUALITIES Control over the seed market has been increased in the recent decades by investment in biotech products protected by patents. Seed companies are interested in GMOs because Intellectual Property Rights on a genetic modification introduced into multiple varieties and species grown around the world grants unfair profits. Patent legislation clearly ignores and violates peasants' rights to seeds as recognised in article 19 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP). Deregulation of new GMOs and a lack of traceability will inevitably bring a lot of litigation, with farmers and small-scale, local seed breeders on the one hand and the large seeds companies on the other. This will burden EU farmers who barely receive a fair income with an additional cost and cause a huge loss in seed biodiversity. GMOs are not allowed in organic farming and the majority of EU citizens are against those techniques. To not regulate them using current legislation will irreversibly impact the organic sector and agriculture in general in GMO-free countries, and will destroy transparency for EU consumer. Was this the intention behind the F2F strategy that the EU will use to build sustainable food systems?

WHO CONTROLS THE SEED MARKET?



IN THE 1980'S, THE MARKET SHARE OF THE 10 LARGEST COMPANIES WAS LESS THAN 15%



TODAY, THE 10 LARGEST COMPANIES CONTROL 70% OF THE MARKET, AND PATENTS AND GMOS HAVE BEEN THE KEY TO EXPANDING THEIR CONTROL OF THE MARKET



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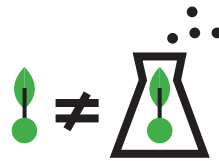
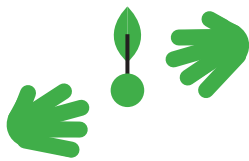
THE SOLUTION

PEASANT SEEDS SYSTEMS

To adapt to climate change, **plants need first to be adapted to the local natural environment** and be able to survive without steadily increasing amounts of toxic pesticides and fertilisers. **Peasants Seeds System, if recognized by EU law, can provide the locally adapted biodiversity needed** to reach the EU climate objectives and restore biodiversity. The production of peasant seeds is defined by the collective rights of the peasants who produce them and is **based on internationally recognised peasant rights**.



OUR DEMANDS



The upcoming EU reform of the seed marketing regulation should recognise the **right for peasant farmers to freely save, use, exchange and sell farmed-saved seeds or propagating material** in law without any restrictions, in order to implement international obligations deriving from Art.9 of ITPGRFA and art. 19 of the UNDROP.

The seed marketing reform should recognise **two distinct seed systems**, and **two distinct regulations** adapted to each of these systems must be proposed: an industrial system (companies or farmers whose main activity is the production of seeds for the commercial market, separate from agricultural production) and **a peasant farmers' system** (a system that integrates the reproduction of seeds and plants into agricultural production; exchanges seeds in quantities that correspond to what a farmer, and not a seed company, can produce; is outside the legal framework of the commercialisation of seeds; does not treat any farmer who exchanges and sells his seed surplus like a seed company).

Organisms derived from the new GM techniques should not be deregulated, but subject to current EU GMO regulation, which requires: comprehensive case-by-case risk assessment; methods for detecting, identifying, and quantifying the GMO that are publicly available in an EU database; traceability to track the GMOs and GMO products at all stages of the supply chain; consumer labelling of GMO products; post-market monitoring; and GMO location register. ECVV also demands that mandatory information is provided on the **breeding, selection and multiplication techniques** of any seed or variety marketed.



WHAT ARE PEASANT SEED SYSTEMS?

Peasants or farmers' seeds are ALL seeds obtained after sowing on the farm, either with seeds of their own origin, from exchanges between farmers, or from re-seeding of non-GMO commercial varieties.

By necessity, they evolve and diversify over time in farmers' fields, as farmers select the seeds which best adapt to local growing conditions. Those peasant seeds systems develop seeds which are locally adapted without the use of chemicals and are permanently evolving to tackle the challenges of climate change. For this reason are not compatible with industrial seed regulations, as they have a higher degree of diversity and do not comply with the commercial seeds criteria of uniformity, stability, and distinctiveness.

2.1 MILLION
FARMERS' SEED VARIETIES AND
7000 CROP SPECIES
HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN
PUBLIC SEED BANKS, AND
THERE ARE MANY OTHERS
THAT ARE UNRECORDED

TODAY 80% OF FARMERS

USE FARMERS' SEEDS
AND PRODUCE

70% OF THE FOOD
AVAILABLE WORLDWIDE,
ENSURING A MAJOR PART OF
FOOD SECURITY WITHOUT USING
PATENTED VARIETIES OR GMOS

INFO + DOCS: <https://www.eurovia.org/fr/theme/semences-ogm> SOURCES: ECVV, 'New GMOs, Patents on Seeds and Peasants' Rights to Seeds in Europe', 2020 / Public Eye, 'Semences: La dangereuse concentration du marché', s.d. / Réseau semences paysannes, '10 idées recues sur les semences', 2013 / ETC group, 'Qui-nous-nourrira ? Réflexions sur les crises alimentaire et climatique', 2010

