



EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SEEDS AND BIODIVERSITY

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European Network of Seeds «Let's Release Diversity»

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Currently, European farmers and peasants have to deal with a great number of legislative barriers. Agricultural laws make difficult the management of biodiversity in farms. Several reports, at European and international level, conclude that seed legislation is responsible for the loss of biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, European Commission Action Plan on Agricultural Biodiversity, etc.) Main topics related to loss of biodiversity are:

- *THE CORRECT USE OF BIODIVERSITY AND PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES*
- *THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM TO IMPROVE LOCAL VARIETIES*
- *THE ACCESSES TO PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES*
- *THE USE OF ORGANIC SEEDS BY GROWERS*
- *THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS SYSTEMS AND THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF INFORMATION*
- *THE EFFECT THAT GENETIC MODIFIED ORGANISMS ARE CAUSING ON BIODIVERSITY*

In this way and taking advantage of the European Seminar "Let's Release Diversity", we propose an Action Plan to carry out in the European Union to face all the topic related to the seeds and the biodiversity, with the following general objectives:

- Use of local varieties, like strategy for the attainment of the organic equilibrium necessary to be able to produce without chemical processing and with sufficient productivity.
- Defend the recovery of the rural knowledge on the cultivation, that next to the utilization of local varieties involves a recovery of the culinary local culture and gastronomic, of uses of the land and of conformación of landscapes.
- Opposed to an agriculture of patents and genetically modified, that endanger the access of the farmers al knowledge and to the biodiversity.
- Demand the right of the farmers to participate in the fair and just distribution of the benefits that are derive from the use and conservation of the genetic resources.
- Require a legal framework, that fomente the sustainable use, distribution of benefits and conservation of the genetic resources, that permit the farmers the access and exchange free of seeds and the creation of small businesses for the production and commercialization of local varieties.
- Demand a determined support of the public administrations to the task of recovery of our genetic patrimony cultivated.

Objectives that need of the action, of all the agents related to the biodiversity, organizations of farmers and consumers, ONGs, conservationist groups, etc., of direct form and connected by means of a series of measures that agglutinates the European Action Plan on Seeds and Agriculture Biodiversity.



PROPOSALS

I. PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT THE CORRECT USE OF BIODIVERSITY AND PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

01.- THE PROBLEM: THE NEED TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL VARIETIES AND MAKE THEIR INTERCHANGE EASY.

HOW: The creation of databases available for consultation.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: All groups that are involved in the conservation of local varieties. The European Seed Network groups.

02.- THE PROBLEM: THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL VARIETIES REGISTRATION IN COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION LISTS.

HOW : By registering local varieties in commercial registration lists through the use of legal instruments as Directive 98/95. Workshops and meetings could be organised to explain the registration process to interested groups.

WHEN: At any time.

WHO: European groups working in the conservation of local varieties.

03.- THE PROBLEM: THE ABSENCE OF FARMERS AND CONSUMERS REPRESENTATION IN DECISION TAKING ORGANISMS ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF LOCAL VARIETIES IN THE COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION LISTS.

HOW: Through out the organisation of a public campaign. This necessity must be transmitting to the commission.

WHEN: As soon as possible.

WHO: agricultural organisation and consumer groups interested in their representation, as a group must take the initiative.

04.- THE PROBLEM: THE NEED TO CHANGE THE IDEA ABOUT CONSERVATION WORK AS AN ACTIVITY TO PROVIDE PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.

HOW: Changing the regulation mechanisms to access public seeds banks for lucrative corporations. The conservation and the sustainable use of communities right.

WHEN: At any time.

WHO: Any of the groups of the European Seeds network with the support of interested bodies in the recuperation and conservation of resources at local level.

05.- THE PROBLEM: TO INCREASE THE FARMERS AND CONSUMERS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIODIVERSITY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF HEALTHY FOOD.

HOW: By organising and editing educational training activities for growers as well as consumers.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the groups represented in the European seeds network

06.- THE PROBLEM: TO GET MORE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL SOCIETY IN THE PRESERVATION AND USE OF AGRICULTURE BIODIVERSITY



HOW. Promoting direct market or short channels sales, fairs and local markets, consumers and growers co-operatives, as they guarantee the contact between growers and consumers and facilitate an space for local knowledge interchange.

WHEN. At any time

WHO. Any group or entity interested in the promotion of local culture could take the initiative. It could be very interested the elaboration of projects by local social action groups.

07.- THE PROBLEM: TO PROMOTE THE AUTONOMY OF GROWERS IN THE SELECTION OF THEIR SEEDS

HOW: Eliminating all kind of dependence of growers in the buy of certified or modified seed to receive public funding and grants.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative must be taken by agriculture organisations with the support of any other agricultural related entities.

II. THE PROBLEMS THAT STOP THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM TO IMPROVE LOCAL VARIETIES

08.- THE PROBLEM: THE RECUPERATION OF TRADITIONAL RURAL KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL BREEDERS ABOUT BREEDING PROGRAMMES

HOW: By compiling information of local breeder's methods. These systems are in extinction danger.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: Research groups public centres and universities European programmes should be check for this.

09.- THE PROBLEM: TO CHANGE THE PRODUCTIVITY CRITERIA FOR THE REGISTRATION OF CEREAL VARIETIES AND OTHER SPECIES OF THE COMMERCIAL VARIETIES LIST FOR CRITERIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL VARIETIES LIST FOR EXAMPLE THE TOLERANCE TO ADVENTITIOUS PLANTS, MINIMUM HOMOZYGOSIS AND LOCAL ADAPTATION

HOW: Through the creation of a special commission for the registration of commercial varieties.

WHEN: As soon as possible, as there is a demand of these variety seeds especially from organic growers.

WHO: The initiative should be taken by agriculture organisations with the support of representative organisms in development of directive 98/95.

10.- THE PROBLEM: THE INITIATION OF A PARTICIPATIVE PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL VARIETIES.

HOW: By changing experiences about participate breeding programmes at international level.

WHEN: At any time.

WHO: Any group from European seed network.

11.- THE PROBLEM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BREEDING PROGRAMMES BY FARMERS AT FIELD LEVEL.

HOW: By the experimentation of breeding programmes based on traditional knowledge.

WHEN: At any time.

WHO: Growers and research groups integrated en the European seed network.



12.- THE PROBLEM: THE ABSENCE OF COORDINATION BETWEEN FARMERS WHO USE AND CONSERVE LOCAL VARIETIES AND PUBLIC RESEARCH CENTRES.

HOW: Organising activities or workshops with research staffs and the centre managers.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: All groups integrated in European seed network.

13.- THE PROBLEM: THE NEED OF BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIFIC NEEDS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL VARIETIES.

HOW: By creating a mix commission between technicians, breeders and expert farmers.

WHEN: Medium term objective

WHO: The initiative must be taken by agricultural organisations with support from other agricultural entities.

III. PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT THE ACCESSES TO PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

14.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE EASY THE SEED INTERCHANGE BETWEEN FARMERS

HOW: By organising fairs and farmers meetings.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: All European seed network groups with the implication of other local rural organisations.

15.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE EASY THE ACCESS TO COMMERCIAL VARIETIES WITH PROTECTION PERIOD EXPIRED.

HOW: By putting up samples of these varieties in Seed Banks

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative must be taken by agricultural organisations with the support of interested entities.

16.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE EASY THE FARMER'S ACCESS TO SEED BANKS MATERIAL

HOW: In theory this access is already possible thus it will be necessary to follow some studies to improve the system.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: Any of the European Seed Network groups

17.- THE PROBLEM: THE ADJUSTMENT OF THE NORMATIVE FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF SPECIES MIXTURES AND VARIETALS MIXTURES

HOW: By making up the necessary rules for the mixtures packaging.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken in conjunction between any of the European Seed Network groups, agricultural organisations and farmers associations at national level.

18.- THE PROBLEM: TO IMPROVE THE FARMERS TRAINING POSSIBILITIES IN MATTERS DIRECTLY RELATED WITH SEEDS MULTIPLICATION AND THE OBTAINING OF SEEDLINGS AND CUTTINGS.



HOW: Organising specialised training courses and specific seminars

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the European Seed Network groups. The courses could be organised by local public administration bodies with competence in agricultural training or the educational department of agricultural entities.

19.- THE PROBLEM: TO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF SMALL CORPORATIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF LOCAL VARIETIES SEEDS.

HOW: By promoting and helping to develop and create small projects, cooperatives, etc., for the production of local varieties seeds

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the group of the European Seed Network groups, especially by local agricultural organisations and community groups.

IV. PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT THE USE OF ORGANIC SEEDS BY GROWERS

20.- THE PROBLEM: THE EUROPEAN ORGANIC SEED REGULATIONS (CE N° 1452/2003) DO NOT REFLECT THE EGALITARIAN USE OF LOCAL VARIETIES.

HOW: It's necessary to recognise the status of local varieties as growing varieties. This has not been taken up in the actual moratorium despite the calls made by different groups of the European Seed Network groups. Nevertheless there is still legislation margin to promulgate a definitive legislation about organic seeds. The use of local varieties is only contemplated as an exception of those authorised for organic growing.

WHEN: This is medium term objective. Actions must be taken to raise public conscience and claim to the Commission and every State member the use of these varieties as a right. The next moratorium revision in July 2006 could be taken as an orienteering date limit

WHO: Agricultural organisations with the support of the European Seed Network groups and conservationist organisations could take the initiative for the public campaign.

21.- THE PROBLEM: THERE ISN'T A FOLLOWING STUDY OF THE REPERCUSSIONS THAT THE NEW SYSTEM OF THE ORGANIC SEED MORATORIUM IS HAVING ON AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY.

HOW: It's necessary to initiate a study about agro-biodiversity erosion (growing systems and local markets) that the moratorium of organic seed in the European Union is causing at local levels.

WHEN: As soon as possible

WHO: The authorities directly related with the development of the moratorium and the management of databases must take the initiative. As this assumption it is not predictable this could be taken as a step forward for the next European Strategic Plan for Organic Agriculture.

22.- THE PROBLEM: THE INSCRIPTION OF LOCAL VARIETIES SEEDS IN ORGANIC SEEDS DATA BASES

HOW: Due to the absence of clarity in the moratorium about this aspect, the inscription of local varieties could be requested to observe the answer of the databases managers and the Commission. Actually this possibility only exists for seed commercial companies.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: Conservationist organisations, community groups or agricultural organisations with special interest in taking part of this action could take the initiative. It is obviously necessary for



these groups to have at the disposal the necessary genetic plant resources and its characterisation.

23.- THE PROBLEM: TO RECUPERATE THOSE VARIETIES FORGOTTEN IN SEED BANKS COLLECTIONS WHICH COULD BE OF INTEREST FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE.

HOW: This needs of various steps, the first of them consisting in the identification, characterisation and evaluation of the varieties and the next consisting in the public rehabilitation of these varieties, registration and growing. The identification and evaluation stages could be funded by the Plant Genetic Resources Conservation Programmes of the Commission and the next stages, growing and registration may need additional financial aid or funding from Rural Development Programmes or any other.

WHEN: At any time. Depending on the availability of the Plant Genetic Resources Conservation Programmes and the annual projects summons.

WHO: This needs a co-ordination action between local bodies interested in the management of agricultural diversity and seed banks. To access the funds of the Plant Genetic Resources Conservation Programmes a qualified work team would be necessary.

24.- THE PROBLEM: CONTROL AND CERTIFICATION OF SEEDS PRODUCED BY GROWERS ON THEIR OWN FARM.

HOW: Is necessary the development of protocols and technical rules for the certification as organic seeds of seeds produced by farmers at field level.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken together between any of the groups interested in the promotion of organic agriculture, headed by agricultural organisations and other agricultural associations at local, European and national levels.

25.- THE PROBLEM: CONTROL AND CERTIFICATION OF THE SEEDS INTERCHANGED BY FARMERS.

HOW: Is necessary to develop protocols and technical rules for the certification of these seeds

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken together between any of the groups or entities interested in the promotion of organic agriculture, headed by agricultural organisations and any other agricultural associations at local or national level.

26.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE BETTER THE ACCESS OF FARMERS TO THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF ORGANIC SEEDS.

HOW: This could be achieved through out the creation of a virtual market for organic seeds.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the groups or entities interested in the promotion of the organic seed use.

27.- THE PROBLEM: TO EXTEND THE DISCUSSION ABOUT ORGANIC SEEDS TO THE REST OF THE SECTOR.

HOW: Organising educational training activities for growers as well as consumers and making up explicative information material.

WHEN: This is a medium term objective. The revision of the July 2006 moratorium could be taken as an orienteering limit period.

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the groups or entities interested in the promotion of the organic seed use.



28.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE BETTER THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ORGANIC SEEDS DEMANDS.

HOW: Through out the development of general, group of species or species studies at local level.

WHEN: As soon as possible, as this is an important step for the evaluation of viability of other initiatives for seed production.

WHO: The initiative could be taken by any of the groups or individuals interested in the promotion of organic agriculture.

29.- THE PROBLEM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFIC TECHNICAL RULES FOR ORGANIC SEEDS

HOW: By creating a commission formed by technicians and expert farmers. The seed labels should contain more useful information for farmers about the grade of genetic homogeneity, if the material is hybrid or any other description. The impurity grade, seed diseases and other characters requirements are not appropriate for organic seed production. The Directive 98/95 as well as the technical regulations make possible to open the standards for more appropriated rules for this production.

WHEN: This is a medium term objective. The next moratorium revision could be taken as an orienteering limit period.

WHO: The initiative could be taken by agricultural organisations with the support of other interested agricultural associations.

30.- THE PROBLEM: THE ADAPTATION OF RULE LEGISLATION FOR OBTAINING QUALIFICATION AS A MULTIPLIER TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE.

HOW: Creating commissions formed by technicians as well as breeders and expert growers.

WHEN: This is a medium term objective. The next July 2006 revision of the moratorium could be taken as an orienteering period limit.

WHO: The initiative could be taken by agricultural organisations with the support of other interested agricultural associations.

31.- THE PROBLEM: TO MAKE EASY THE FARMERS ACCESS TO ORGANIC CERTIFIED PLANT MATERIAL.

HOW: Making changes in the regulations to promote the creation of collective nurseries as well as assisting this with the development of financial aid programmes.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative could be taken together between the groups interested in the promotion of organic agriculture and local farmers associations.

32.- THE PROBLEM: THE USE OF METHOD WHICH ARE NO COMPATIBLE WITH THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE LEGISLATION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF NEW VARIETIES.

HOW: It is necessary to create a special commission for the evaluation of methods, which are more, appropriated for the production of organic food.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: consumers groups with the support of agricultural organisations and representative groups of the organic production sector could assume the initiative.



V. PROBLEMS RELATED WITH THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS SYSTEMS AND THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF INFORMATION

33.- THE PROBLEM: TO AVOID THE PRIVATE MISAPPROPRIATION OF THE “PUBLIC HERITAGE PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES”

HOW: It is necessary to identify the plant material even through the use of molecular markers and make registrations of local varieties available in public seed banks.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: The initiative should be taken by the central administrations with competence in seed intellectual property rights and the management of the genetic resources in seed banks. Conservationist groups could assume the campaign initiative in general and especially those groups concerned about the problems caused by the patents of living creatures.

34.- THE PROBLEM: TO AVOID THE PRIVATE APPROPRIATION OF LOCAL PLANT MATERIAL.

HOW: This is a complimentary measure to the last mentioned. It is absolutely necessary to demand information about the plant material used before the concession of a patent.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: It is necessary an understanding between conservationists agents and farmers. The agricultural organisations could have a principal rule mediating between administrations and associations.

35.- THE PROBLEM: TO CREATE A PAYMENT RIGHT FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF THOSE VARIETIES DEVELOPED FROM LOCAL VARIETIES PLANT MATERIAL.

HOW: It is necessary to make a study about the benefit that commercial companies make throughout the use of local plant material as a base for the development of new varieties. The evaluation of the study could make possible the creation of a payment right for the commercialisation of protected varieties.

WHEN: At any time

WHO: It is necessary an understanding between conservationists agents and farmers. The agricultural organisations could have a principal rule mediating between administrations and associations.

36.- THE PROBLEM: TO AVOID THE BIOPIRACY AND THE UNLAWFUL TRAFFIC OF GENETIC RESOURCES AT A GLOBAL LEVEL.

HOW. This measure is based in the transposition to every Member State of the International Plant Genetic Resources Treat for Food production and Agriculture and the adequate dispositions for it effective development.

WHEN .At any time

WHO. The central administrations with competence about intellectual property rights could take the initiative. The campaign could be organised by conservationists groups especially those groups concerned about the patent of living creatures.

37.THE PROBLEM: TO RESTABLISHMENT THE FARMERS RIGHTS FOR THE MULTIPLICATION OF ALL SEED SPECIES IN THEIR OWN FARM.

HOW. The derogation of measures taken up in last revisions of the protective Legislation for the development of new plant material.

WHEN. At any time



WHO. Agricultural organisations with the support of any other interested entities could take the initiative.

38. THE PROBLEM: TO AVOID THE USE OF PATENTS ABOUT LIFE IN AGRICULTURE.

HOW. By prohibiting its use in the future EU Regulations of organic seed as a first action.

WHEN. At any time

WHO. Conservationists groups could take the initiative and especially those groups concerned about the patent of life and genetic modified organisms.

39. THE PROBLEM: TO ENSURE THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION IN THOSE FORUMS DIRECTLY RELATED IN TAKING DECISIONS ABOUT THE PROPERTY OF THE GENETIC RESOURCES AND LIVING CREATURES.

HOW. By having representation of social groups in the commissions that take decisions about the concession of patents of life and the development of new plant material.

WHEN. At any time

WHO. It is necessary to organise a campaign at European level. Conservationist groups and especially those groups with experience in the opposition to patenting life could take the initiative

VI PROBLEMS RELATED WITH THE EFFECT THAT GENETIC MODIFIED ORGANISMS ARE CAUSING ON BIODIVERSITY.

40. THE PROBLEM: TRANSGENIC CONTAMINATION

HOW. Action must be taken about the coexistence decrees approved or in development phase in the different Member States. The information should pass to the public through the organisations of public talks.

WHEN. At any time

WHO. Consumers and conservationists groups could take the initiative.

41. THE PROBLEM. THE IMPLICATION OF CONSUMERS IN THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT GENETIC MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

HOW. By organising diffusion talks to the public

WHEN. At any time

WHO. Consumers could take the initiative with the support of agricultural organisations and other representatives groups from the organic production sector.

42. THE PROBLEM: TO AVOID THE AUTHORIZATION OF TERMINATOR TECHNOLOGY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.

HOW. By putting pressure on European and National Authorities and giving information to farmers about the consequences of the use that this technology may have.

WHEN. At any time

WHO. Agricultural organisations and other associations could assume this.