



Appeal of Poitiers (France)

We, citizens, farmers, representatives of civil society organisations, assembled today in Poitiers for the convention «Bees, Seeds and Biodiversity», launch a solemn appeal to the whole society to get involved urgently in saving biodiversity!

The dominant farming model corresponds to a short period (more or less a century) of the long history of agriculture (about 10,000 years). It is built on a vision in which the earth is only seen as an inert support being « drip-fed » by the fertilizers and chemical pesticides - and the ecosystems seen as resources to exploit and not as living organisms, which we are part of.

Today, this model has reached a point of no return in massive pollution, the destruction of biodiversity and the threats to public health with the depletion of non-renewable energies that fuel them.

This situation is forcing us to take immediately urgent decisions!

We request:

1) To save bees, the other pollinators and biodiversity:

- the banning of GMOs (in the fields and in the human and animal food), starting with the reinforcement of the moratorium on Mon 810;
- the banning of the whole group of neonicotinoid and phenyl pyrazole insecticides (Cruiser, Gaucho, Régent,...);
- the refusal of any European guideline that would weaken further the risk assessments of GMOs;
- the banning of the « pesticide plants », particularly the new rape and sunflower varieties, mutated to tolerate the ALS inhibitor herbicides;
- the complete overhaul of the risk assessment procedures of pesticides (MA,...), based on the report of the European Food Safety Authority recommending the overhaul of the protocol of pesticides risk assessments on bees, especially by making public the firms' toxicity studies that cannot be covered by the industrial secret;
- a strong criminalisation of any kind of pollution and threat to biodiversity, an obligation to repair and the exclusion of any type of compensation which leads to allowing the pollution and the destruction of biodiversity.

2) For the recognition of farmers' rights:

- the banning of any kind of patenting and industrial ownership on life, which are the tools of financial speculation on biodiversity and nature;
- the repeal of the (French) law of December 2011 on the « COV »: Certificat d'Obtention Végétale (Proprietary Variety Certificate);
- the adoption of a law for the positive recognition of the farmers, gardeners and seed makers' rights, to use, resow, exchange, spread their seeds and protect them from genetic contamination and biopiracy;
- the access to earth and water, controlled and fairly shared, while respecting the needs of the aquatic environment.

3) For a change of farming methods:

- strong measures (within the context of the CAP: Common Agricultural Policy), to encourage alternative practices to the use of pesticides, to foster other practices to protect the soil, water, human health by restoring biodiversity;
- the recognition of the alternatives to pesticides, starting with the immediate authorization of the « PNPP »: Préparations Naturelles Peu Préoccupantes (natural preparations).

Biodiversity: a wealth of solutions

Seeds are the first link of the farming and food chain. The traditional and organic agricultures that society strongly encourages, can't be satisfied with industrial seeds, they need traditional seeds. They give a meaning to the farmers' work with life. They are life in opposition to the technologies manipulating living things. The diversity of varieties or the diversity within the varieties allows the adaptation to the diversity of lands and to the climate variability and evolutions to come.

The farm seeds allow:

- the farmers and consumers' freedom of choice;
- independence from the agro-chemical industry (fertilizers, pesticides, F1 hybrid seeds, GMOs,...);
- a better nutritional and tasty quality (antioxidants, trace elements,...);
- an answer to the problems of water: less pollution, less consumption, less ground erosion;
- a nourishing agriculture that ensures food sovereignty both in the North and the South.

We commit to:

- **taking back our role and our rights in the direction of political choices** because a political debate only concerned by nature doesn't care about social and economic issues, just like a political debate only concerned by economic and social issues doesn't care about nature and considers it as a resource or a good that can be exploited freely;
- **getting out of the technician and productionist society** which allows private appropriation of nature by standardizing the products that come from it;
- **getting back the inalienable collective rights** of the use of earth, water, seeds and knowledge;
- **respecting and managing together the wild and agricultural biodiversity**, first and foremost on a local scale. Wild biodiversity must not be commercialized, agricultural biodiversity must not be standardised. It's a prerequisite to building food sovereignty;
- **putting the popular and professional know-hows on the same level** of legitimacy as the scientific knowledge;
- **respecting the citizen expression** and contradictory debate;
- **refusing the public-private partnerships** which pervert public research, so as to put it back at its right place within our society;
- **regaining an ethical approach of social issues and nature**, making ours an overall paradigm that replaces the human being at the heart of nature and not above it, especially in the context of « citizen research » based on common interest.

Another world is not only possible, it is necessary!

We, citizens, farmers, representatives of civil society organisations, assembled today in Poitiers for the convention « Bees, Seeds and Biodiversity », are building it together now!

Poitiers, 24 June 2012