

To promoters of biodiversity of seeds in Belgium and international organisations in Brussels

Dear friends,

On 11/12 October 2014 Brussels celebrated jointly with London, Amsterdam, Warsaw and Athens the seed festival at the Free University Brussels including a successful seed exchanges, creative workshops, two symposiums, fantastic cultural events in music, film, dancing and theatre. We know now a man who planted trees, we danced with Frisse Folk, listened to the big PANG! and we discussed to create local markets for seeds and farming as well as we understood better seeds and food systems. Positive and exciting and the 6 nightingales at the festival end gave us the message “let us continue”.

The big five seed companies have still not given up to lobby politicians and administrative institution to control the seed market on their behalf. Many ecological farmers are giving up due to increasing costs for land and soil even if the demand of organic food is growing. The European Commission is still trying to pressure with a new seeds and organic farming legislation and the loss of biodiversity has not yet been stopped. Seeds are the basis of life and everybody is asked to take care of them, to grow, to store and to develop, to free the soil for seeds and ecological farming, to create more local values as much as we can. “We will continue positioning our positive life and fraternity for the seeds and society”.

Therefore we want to invite for **further discussion** about ecological seed saving and to **celebrate the seeds also in 2015**. Let’s get up, let us cry out and create a movement, securing the future for our children, getting back the common, rescuing the moss, the moor and the tree just planted. After the big cities and urban farming it would be lovely to move to the countryside where the seeds come from, to get fresh air, touching and connecting with the soil and our souls.

As one activity we would like to propose a joint **seed festival on the 25th July 2015**, the day of Saint Jacob to pilgrimage or biking in a convoy or both to a place with a unique spirit that lies around 30-40km from Brussels alongside the border of Wallone and Flanders (location to be defined) where we will camp or stay with families, farm or guest houses to celebrate the local and ecological seeds, compost and food jointly with music, art and reflections.

One main purpose to achieve is improving our network of activists and groups and to strengthen our coordination and teamwork. There are many activities and networks around the seeds which are not very well-known to each other. Creating connections between the activists and network organisations will increase our power to save the seeds.

Three topics need to be improved:

- To bundle the work of the different groups and networks to mobilise joint activities
- To continue to improve the production of the seeds of the different gardeners and farmers

- To educate and to sensitise continuously and jointly the importance and pleasure of seeds for humanity

During the festival let us discuss the challenges, define a joint resolution and actions to save the seeds in our own hands to give biodiversity, get rid off patents of seeds, “create a new art of living” (that's a bit too much). The idea will be to integrate a workshop or a speech of all attending activist groups into the festival.

To prepare this seed event we would like to invite all interested groups and people to discuss and coordinate to make it happen. So let us meet **Thursday 22nd January 2015 at 5 pm** at the Urban Ecology Centre Brussels' new location. This meeting will be the occasion to answer jointly the following questions:

- Who are the actors that we want to gather jointly at the festival?
- Which goals we would like to give at current circumstances?
- What kind of festival do you want? What types of activities?
- Is a festival the right answer or should we concentrate on alternative activities?
- What are the most pressing issues and solutions regarding seed biodiversity in Belgium?
- Where should we organise the meeting on bigger scale?
- How to fund the festival?
- How can we strengthen our network?
- How can we reach more people outside of our network?

If you cannot attend the meeting, why not sending us a quick feedback on the above questions by email?

Best wishes and a lot of seeds

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Urban Ecology Centre, Demeter International, Le début des haricots...

Please confirm your attendance

Name and organisation in case