NO PATENTS ON SEEDS!

20 October 2021, Conference call NPOS

Minutes

Participants

1. Martha Mertens / FOE Germany (BUND, BN)
2. Dagmar Urban / ARCHE NOAH
3. Magdalena Prieler / ARCHE NOAH
4. Gabi Pichlhofer / Biorespect
5. Ruth Tippe / No patents on life
6. Christoph Then / No patents on seeds!
7. Johanna Eckhardt / No patents on seeds!

excused

- Anne-Charlotte
- François

Chair: Christoph
Minutes: Johanna

Agenda

1. Updates

1.1. from countries / member organisations

1.2. Austria

- Dagmar: We held another workshop on patents for Southern Europe. Unfortunately, no participants from Portugal or Spain, but participant from *Let's liberate diversity* who is from Italy. Greece was very interested. Their feedback was that people, including experts, often don't believe them if they tell them about the problems patents cause.
- crisis in AT government, difficult to get other issues across
- We still didn't get feedback from the ministry on our meeting request. So even though we wanted to work on the political level, we will go back to the technical level and have a talk with the Austrian Patent Office. We can ask them for updates (Committee on Patent Law, Administrative Council) and as well about the Conference of Ministers (is anything planned, what is the process, etc.).
- We had a meeting with an Austrian brewery (Hirter) that is very well connected with other breweries and on a political level. They founded a new association of private breweries that are 100% Austrian (production, value chain, owners, etc.). They already have around 10 members and expect to have around 40 at the beginning of next year. They are willing to cooperate with us on our campaign. As NPOS we will have general demands on patents, they will focus on beer, but still communicate in line with our general demands and support them. He said that it is very difficult for him and his

brewery colleagues to understand the issue. And it is as well difficult for journalists he has been talking to to understand it. So we drafted a two-pager to help the communication.
- The breweries are very well connected to policy makers, which could be very helpful for us.

1.3. Meeting with free breweries in Germany

- Johanna: Christoph and I met with the Free brewers (Freie Brauer). It is an association of mostly German private breweries, some from Austria and Luxemburg. And apparently as well good connections to Switzerland.
- We met with their representative and their communication agency. They want to start their own campaign against patents on beer. They will closely cooperate with us, will be guided by us, will support our general demands. They want to start a petition, too.
- This is very good news since these 39 breweries can use their channels of communication to get the message across. We'll have a concrete example of what effects patents can have and may make our complicated issue more easy to understand. Plus, it is good if not only environmental organisations but as well SMEs call on politicians asking for solutions.

1.4. Activity EPO 13 October

- Johanna: Even though we changed last minute from the picture with the barley plants to the empty beer bottles everything went very well. The colleagues in Munich supported us a lot.
- EPO representatives (Mr. Rainer Osterwalder, Press spokesperson and Mr. Luis Berenguer Gimenez, spokesperson of the EPO) met us outside. They said that they are very well aware of the issue and our demands, but that the EPO can not do anything. – So the initiative has to come from the Contracting States.
- WeMove shot two videos that will soon be available. They might ask people to forward the video to the representatives of the Administrative Council. We could include (a link to) the video as well in our next press release – and of course use it on social media.

1.5. Germany

- Martha: Should we use the coalition negotiations in Germany?
- Christoph: Probably not ideal if it comes from an European organisation, but better from German organisations. Several German organisations (including IG Saatgut, Save our seeds, etc.) sent a letter to Annalena Baerbock, etc. demanding to regulate CRISPR and to stop patents on conventional breeding. – The demands are the same as those from NPOS.
- Our demands should be included in the coalition agreement, maybe a bit more detailed than the old one.

2. Next steps

2.1. Petition Conference of Ministers

- Dagmar: We could start with 24 November, Committee on Patent Law, we would still have 1 month for preparation, but could get active quite soon, which would help us to use the pressure on national level (in Austria, but maybe other countries) in regards to national patent law, the timeline with Unitary Patent has been pushed back, so we have a bit more time. Or use 16 November hearing Salmon patent as a starting point?
- Johanna: Umweltinstitut and WeMove could only start the petition next year. "Freie Brauer" want to start now, would be good if we started together with them so that our strategy / our demands are in line, etc.

- Gabi: Start in November would be good. We send out a big newsletter in November and could activate people.
- Martha: I'll ask BUND. If they just have to support the petition, but don't have a lot of work with it, I guess they would support the petition. I'll ask as well Friends of the Earth Europe, they probably won't have the resources to do a lot, but they could share our petition.

Conclusions:

- We prepare the text for the petition asap and have it ready mid-November. Christoph will draft a text.
- We need a text that all NPOS members agree on. Breweries, WeMove, etc. can adapt the text. But the text should already be drafted with breweries and as well EU groups in mind. We ask them to take a decision in 2022 to have a conference and to organise the conference in 2023.
- ARCHE NOAH and NPOS will start the petition still this year, other organisations can join whenever it is possible. It is ok if organisations start at different times, but the end point should be the same.
- The petition could run until June. We can ask the Ministries to meet us for the hand-over of the petition (after June), but we can as well ask for meetings right away and hope to manage some meeting during the months the petition is running.
- Hand-overs of the petition can be organised by the national organisations, f.e. the members of NPOS. And we can as well try to find organisations in other countries that want to cooperate with us. We can support them, come to meetings / hand-overs if they need an expert. We can have pictures of the hand over, maybe with a common theme.
- The petition will address the Ministers. NPOS will send out letters to the Ministers starting with the launch of the petition and then at other occasions throughout the campaign. We will ask for meetings and a hand-over of the petition.
- It will take us quite some time to get in touch with national organisations, establish the contact to the ministries, achieve meetings, etc. So it is good, if the petition runs longer.
- There will be a simple petition on the NPOS homepage. We collect the signatures and will then hand it over to the ministers. People will not directly address the ministers. We will know how many people / organisations signed from which country. If useful, we can publish that information /communicate it to ministries.
- Johanna will send out a doodle for a meeting for everyone interested to plan the petition in more detail and to coordinate the timeline, etc.

2.2. EU Resolution

- Christoph: In contact with Green MEP, they commented on our draft for a resolution, we made small changes, they are happy now.
- Once the Greens agree, we can find more support from other groups.
- Christoph will share the draft resolution.

2.3. Opposition Bushy melon

- granted on 7.4.21, opposition until 7.1.22
- Christoph drafted an opposition, lawyers didn't have time to look at it, yet.

- We will now not use the melon as a big mobilisation tool, but we can still use it for communication, a press release.

2.4. Salmon patent (hearing 16 November 2021)

- lawyers have consulted Christoph very well, but Christoph will represent the case at the hearing himself.
- We will not prepare a report on patents on animals for the hearing, since the timeline is too short. But we can include some information in our press release.
- We might include more detail on patents on animals in our next annual research report.

2.5. Unitary Patent

- The date of the Unitary Patent coming into force has been postponed again. This may give us more time to change national patent laws. But this is very difficult to do. In Austria and Germany it is very difficult to make progress.
- Johanna will research the state of the ratification process.

3. Other

3.1. Draft report 2021, Draft budget 2022

- Christoph prepared the application for the funding of Gen-ethical foundation. For that we drafted a first report 2021 and planning 2022 that Johanna will send via Proton to the group.

3.2. "Disclaimer": Explain and discuss

- postponed to next conference call

3.3. Use a tool to work on documents together? (F.e. drafts for press releases)

- For the drafts of future press releases, etc. we will try to use google docs. Everyone can comment until a certain deadline and Christoph will then receive one document with all comments and can incorporate them in the final text.

3.4. Next conference call

- Mid November

Calender 2021 / 2022

Date		Type	Comments
13.10.2021	Administrative Council	EPO	
13.10.2021	Handover beer bottles EPO Munich	NPOS	
11.11.2021	Meeting of German Ministers of Justice (Bundesjustizminister)	DE	
16.11.2021	Hearing Salmon patent	Hearing	
24.11.2021	Committee on Patent Law	EPO	
November?	Start petition Conference of Ministers?	NPOS	
14.12.2021	Administrative Council	EPO	14./15.12.
2022			
07.01.2022	Deadline opposition bushy melon (granted on 7.4.21)	Opposition	
15.02.2022	Committee on Patent Law	EPO	
22.03.2022	Administrative Council	EPO	
10.05.2022	Hearing 3rd beer patent (EP2575433)	Hearing	
12.05.2022	Committee on Patent Law	EPO	
07.06.2022	Hearing 1st beer patent (EP2384110)	Hearing	
29.06.2022	Administrative Council	EPO	29./30.6.
13.10.2022	Administrative Council	EPO	
15.11.2022	Committee on Patent Law	EPO	
13.12.2022	Administrative Council	EPO	13./14.12.