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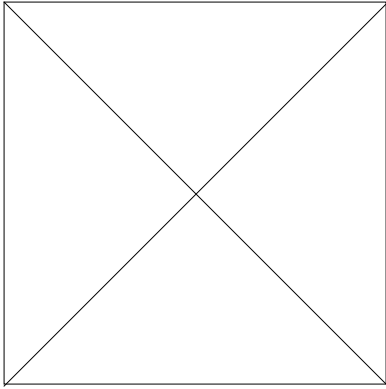
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH ON PLANT BREEDING
EUROPÄISCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR ZÜCHTUNGSFORSCHUNG
ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE POUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES PLANTES

INVENTIONS AND PLANT BREEDERS RIGHTS (PBR) REMAIN THE UNDERPINNING FOR PLANT BREEDING

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PBR are a good stimulus for global improvement of crops. Another basis for plant breeding are the inventions that continuously proceed at technological and biological level. Inventions are radically new ideas and technologies promoting change. In the past, such inventions were available, free of charge, for plant breeding, fixed in varieties and after release available as crossing parent. This so-called open innovation system has guaranteed the quick implementation of important inventions within crops.

All changed since the Bayh-Dole Act in 1980 has ensured that universities could patent inventions and make available exclusively to individual companies. This change coincided with the rise of biotechnology leading to gene cloning, genetic transformation, marker-assisted breeding and whole genome sequencing, in crops. Biotechnology needed new regulations such as GMO Directive 2001/18/EC in Europe. Because of this, the linear model of innovation via basic, strategic and applied research was replaced by non-linear, more complex”, innovation steps involving also society members, like NGO's. Besides the hardware (technical) elements of innovations, orgware (institutional conditions) and software (new skills (tacit) knowledge) elements are important.



This means that in new varieties, protected by PBR, patented traits increasingly will play a role. There is the claim that such varieties are not freely available as crossing parent. Last year, in the Netherlands, this problem was put on the political agenda by arguing that PBR stands over the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The free availability of protected properties for breeding is, therefore, advocated. An interesting new ruling has been made recently in the USA which concludes that natural genes are not an invention and not patentable.

It may be said that in life sciences both IPR and PBR are stimulating innovation. The question is whether this is also the case in the agricultural life sciences where PBR has put the tone. These new developments will have an effect on agro-biodiversity and world food security.

EUCARPIA greets the CIOPORA breeding community

Both, EUCARPIA and CIOPORA are organizations that serve the interests of plant breeding. Eucarpia greets CIOPORA on the occasion of the 50th



anniversary of its foundation. Never before in history of plant breeding has there been such a major change in attitudes and methodology as we were witnessing last half century. All the scientists and breeders in the 11 scientific sections of EUCARPIA, including the Ornamentals section, wish the CIOPORA breeding community a successful future in which open innovation, cooperation and competition will remain optimal for plant breeding.

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