

Open letter to the European Commission on agri-business mergers

We, the undersigned organisations, call on the European Commission to reject the impending mergers of the world's biggest agrochemical and seed companies.

In an already concentrated market, the world's largest agri-business companies are proposing mergers – of Dow Chemical with DuPont, Monsanto with Bayer AG, and Syngenta with ChemChina. These mergers would exacerbate the problems caused by industrial farming – with negative consequences for the public, farmers and farm workers, consumers, the environment, and food security.

These mergers risk major monopoly outcomes that would further:

Increase corporate control of agriculture

The three resulting companies could control around 70% of the world's agro-chemicals and more than 60% of commercial seeds. Through dominant market share and sheer political power, they would unduly influence our agriculture and food system.

Restrict farmers' choices

Reduced competition and increased market dominance would further restrict the diversity of seeds, harm farmers' freedom of choice and their rights to save their seeds, and increase their reliance on chemical inputs. These companies are moving to promote technology packages and management systems that increase farmer dependence. The three resulting giants would be able to strengthen their intellectual property control, squeeze out the remaining small seed companies, and raise prices for farmers – hurting rural economies and food businesses.

Curb consumer choice

More market control would reduce Europeans' food choices; and reduce the ability for farmers to meet consumer demand for diverse, healthy, cost-effective, quality food produced in an ecologically sound manner. Any costs passed on to the public could hit the most vulnerable hardest.

Increase chemical use and harm the environment

Reduced diversity of farming, and greater dominance of monoculture farming highly reliant on chemical inputs including hazardous pesticides, would further harm the environment, biodiversity, and human health – including that of farmers and workers. We urgently need to increase crop and landscape diversity, also making our food system more resilient to climate change.

Damage Europe's food sovereignty

A growing movement of farmers, consumers and businesses are building new vibrant, fairer and greener food and farming systems. Corporate giants increasing their control over farming would endanger the future of these businesses and initiatives, and with it the diversified and multi-functional farms which are a cornerstone of the European style of farming.

Harm countries in the Global South and the right to food

The impact on farmers, rural communities and consumers of concentrating power would impede the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goal 2, to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. These impacts would be especially severe in the Global South, where the right to food is already under threat.

We urge the European Commission to reject the mergers, prevent the damage caused by these corporations, and urgently take steps to support just and sustainable food systems less dependent on agri-business, by:

- Considering the impact of all three proposed mergers together;
- Addressing the existing concentration in the food and farming sector and setting clear limits to the market share a corporation can control;
- Shifting support and subsidies away from agri-business towards rewarding and incentivising small-scale and sustainable agroecological farming;
- Increasing environmental and social safeguards to ensure agri-business reduces its impact on citizens, farmers, workers, and the environment.

Yours sincerely,

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On behalf of the undersigned :

International & EU

ACT Alliance EU

ActionAid

Avaaz

Bee Life European Beekeeping Coordination

BirdLife Europe

CIDSE

Compassion in World Farming

CONCORD

Dachverband Kulturpflanzen- und Nutztiervielfalt e.V.

ECOAR)))

EFFAT (European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions)

European Coordination Via Campesina

European Environmental Bureau

European Secretariat of the World March of Women

Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO)

Food & Water Europe

Friends of the Earth Europe

GRAIN

Greenpeace

IFOAM EU

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe

SAVE Foundation

Slow Food

SumOfUs

Transnational Institute (TNI)

WeMove.EU

Austria

Get Active - for a Sustainable Planet

GLOBAL 20000

Welthaus Diözese Graz-Seckau

ZIMD

Belgium

Aardewerk

Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN)

CADTM Belgique

Climaxi

CNCD-11.11.11

Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA)

FUGEA (Fédération Unie de Groupements d'Éleveurs et d'Agriculteurs)

Inter-Environnement Wallonie

Les Amis de la Terre Belgique

Mouvement d'Action Paysanne (MAP)

Mouvement politique des objecteurs de croissance (mpOC)

Netwerk Zelf Zaden Telen

Quinoa

SOS Faim Belgique

Woningen123Logements

“Cense équi’voc” asbl

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Center for Environment

Bulgaria

Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy

Za Zemiata

Croatia

Brod Ecological Society-BED

Centar za mirovne studije

Centar za zdravo odrastanje Mali Losinj

Code for Croatia

EKO Ekološko društvo Oroslavje

Eko-Eko

GONG

Udruga za samozastupanje

UOKOLO udruga za građanstvo okoliša

Zelena akcija/FoE Croatia

Zeleni dan

Zeleni Osijek

Ženska mreža Hrvatske

Cyprus

Friends of the Earth Cyprus

Czech Republic

AREA viva, z.s. - spolek pro ekologii a zemědělství

Asociace Místních Potravinových Inicativ, o.p.s.

Ekumenická akademie, z. s.

Hnutí DUHA

PRO-BIO LIGA, pobočný spolek

Záhony Pro Školky (Gardens for Schools)

Denmark

NOAH

Estonia

Estonian Green Movement

France

ActionAid France - Peuples Solidaires

Amis de la Terre France

Attac France

CCFD-Terre Solidaire

Comité pour l'Abolition des Dettes illégitimes (CADTM)

Confédération paysanne

Germany

Agrar Koordination

AGRECOL (Verein zur Förderung standortgerechter Nutzung in Afrika, Asien, Lateinamerika und Osteuropa)

Aktion Agrar

Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL) e.V.

BI lebenswertes Korbach e.V.

Biosicht Redaktionsbüro
Bluepingu e.V., Nürnberg
Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND)
Bündnis für gentechnikfreie Landwirtschaft Niedersachsen, Bremen, Hamburg
FDCL - Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V.
Förderverein Trostberger Rosengarten e.V.
Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung / NGO Forum on Environment and Development
Gen-ethisches Netzwerk e.V.
INKOTA-netzwerk e.V.
Interessengemeinschaft gegen Nachbaugebühren (IG-Nachbau)
Kampagne Meine Landwirtschaft / Wir haben es satt!
Klimagarten Tübingen
Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU) e.V.
Obst- und Gartenbauverein Bengel e.V.
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V. (PAN Germany)
Querbeet Leipzig
Rebsortenarchiv Südpfalzweinberg
Rettet den Regenwald e. V.
Rosa Rose Gemeinschaftsgarten
Save Our Seeds
Slow Food Deutschland e. V.
Ton, Steine, Gärten e.V.
Umweltinstitut München e. V.
Verein zur Erhaltung der Nutzpflanzenvielfalt e.V.
Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft

Hungary

Beklen a Nagykunsági Civil Társadalomért Alapítvány
Beretzk Péter Természetvédelmi Klub
Bodrog Association
Bors Foundation
Börzsöny - Ipoly-mente Polgári Természetőrség
Cserhát Értékeiért Alapítvány
EcoOne Hungary

E-misszió Természet- és Környezetvédelmi Egyesület

Energia és Környezet Alapítvány

Fauna Foundation for Animal Welfare and Nature Protection

Forrásvíz Természetbarát Egyesület

Giligán Egyesület

Göcsej Természetvédelmi Alapítvány

Green Island Circle Nature Examining Public Association

Herman Ottó Természetvédő Kör

Holocén Természetvédelmi Egyesület

Hungarian Climate Alliance

Kalocsakörnyéki Környezetvédelmi Egyesület

Magosfa Foundation for Environmental Education and Eco-tourism

Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége (MTVSZ) / National Society of Conservationists

Ökorégió Alapítvány a Fenntartható Fejlődésért

Polyán Egyesület

Reflex Environmental Association

Small Communities Programme (Kisközösségi Program)

Tanácsadók a Fenntartható Fejlődésért -

Towards Sustainability Association

Zöld Akció Egyesület

Zöld Kapcsolat Egyesület

Zöld Kör

Green Women

Közép-magyarországi Zöld Kör

Ireland

Friends of the Earth Ireland

Italy

FOCSIV (Federazione Organismi Cristiani di Servizio Internazionale Volontario)

Legambiente

Mani Tese

Navdanya International

Latvia

Green Liberty (Zala briviba)

Malta

Friends of the Earth Malta

Netherlands

ASEED Europe

Both ENDS

Hivos

ICCO Cooperation

Milieudefensie

Slow Food Nederland

SOMO, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations

Norway

Naturvernforbundet

Poland

Polski Klub Ekologiczny

Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczno-Kulturalne ZIARNO

Portugal

Campo Aberto - Associação de Defesa do Ambiente

Portuguese GM Free Coalition (Plataforma Transgénicos Fora)

Russia

The Russian Social-Ecological Union

Spain

AEA-Madrid asociación educación ambiental de Madrid

Aicar-Adicae, Organización de consumidores críticos, responsables y solidarios

Amigos de la Tierra

ASiA-Associació Salut i Agroecologia

Asociación Marisatsa

Asociación Vida Sana

ATTAC España

AUPA

BioAlai

Centro de Estudios Rurales y de Agricultura Internacional

Colectivo Asamblea del Bien Común

Ecologistas en Acción

Ekoactivo educación ambiental

EQUO

ESPEM

Garua S. Coop. Mad

Germinando Coc Coop Mad

La Garbancita Ecológica S. Coop. Mad. de Consumo Responsable Agroecológico

Plataforma contra la especulación de Candeleda

Plataforma Rural

Red de semillas de Aragon

ReHd Mad! Red huertos urbanos comunitarios de Madrid

Butroi Bizirik-en Transicion (BBT)

Lur Gozo

Sweden

Solidarity Sweden - Latin America (SAL)

Switzerland

Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz Kolumbien ask!

Brot für alle

MultiWatch

ProNatura

Public Eye

SAG Schweizer Allianz Gentechfrei

SOLIFONDS

SWISSAID

UK

Biofuelwatch

Ethical Consumer Research Association

Friends of the Earth England, Wales, Northern Ireland

Global Justice Now

GMWatch

Landworkers Alliance

Nuclear Consulting Group

Permaculture Association

Slow Food in the UK

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, UK

Sustainable Food Trust

The Ecological Land Co-operative

The Kindling Trust