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**October**  
**2023**

**Final  
report**

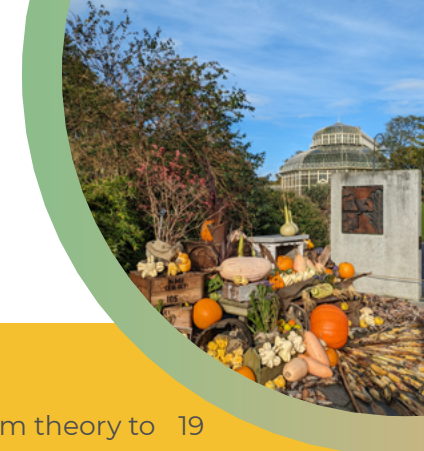
**#LLDIRELAND2023**



LET'S LIBERATE  
**DIVERSITY!**  
**12<sup>th</sup> FORUM**  
DUBLIN // 2023



# SUMMARY



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Bring Diversity back into our food system

Involvement of social actors dealing with agrobiodiversity: an EU on-farm network

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# INTRODUCTION

*The European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity! (EC-LLD) draws its origins and foundation from the annual gatherings on agricultural biodiversity known as the Let's Liberate Diversity! Forum.*

The first edition of the forum took place in 2005 in Poitiers, France, and since then 12 editions have been organised in different European countries.

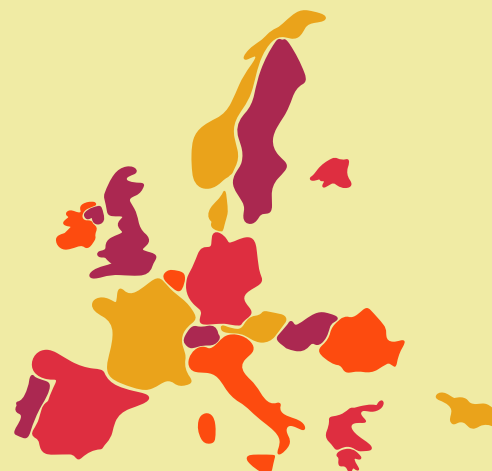
Since 2005, EC-LLD! has tirelessly championed the dynamic management of plant genetic resources to diversify our food systems and value chains and the Forum has gained increased recognition as a cornerstone event for those working on, passionate about, seeds and agrobiodiversity.

The LLD Forum emphasises a fundamental principle: **agrobiodiversity must not merely be preserved but actively utilised.** The dynamic management of cultivated diversity holds the key to ensuring its ongoing existence, ready to tackle the ever-evolving challenges of our world.

This 12th edition, hosted at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in collaboration with the Irish Seed Savers Association (ISSA), was a remarkable convergence of knowledge, experience, and expertise.

Held from October 26th to 28th, it brought together over 100 participants who shared a common vision of a diverse and resilient food system. Participants included farmers, breeders, scientists, civil society organizations, and citizens.

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## Who we are

The European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity (EC-LLD!) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the **dynamic management of plant genetic resources** for food and agriculture. Our core belief is that the **diversification** of our food systems can be achieved through the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders involved in **cultivated biodiversity.**

As an influential platform, EC-LLD! serves as a unique space for facilitating the **exchange of practices and information** among farmers, seed savers, NGO members, and emerging small enterprises, fostering local actions on agrobiodiversity and promoting participatory dialogues.

The Coordination boasts a robust network of **21 members** with a network of **170 national organizations** operating across 20 European countries with a membership base exceeding **35,000.**

In collaboration with approximately **15,000 farmers**, we actively engage in the conservation and management of around **40,000 plant varieties.**



# INTRODUCTION

The Forum was inaugurated by Pippa Hackett TD, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity in the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine.

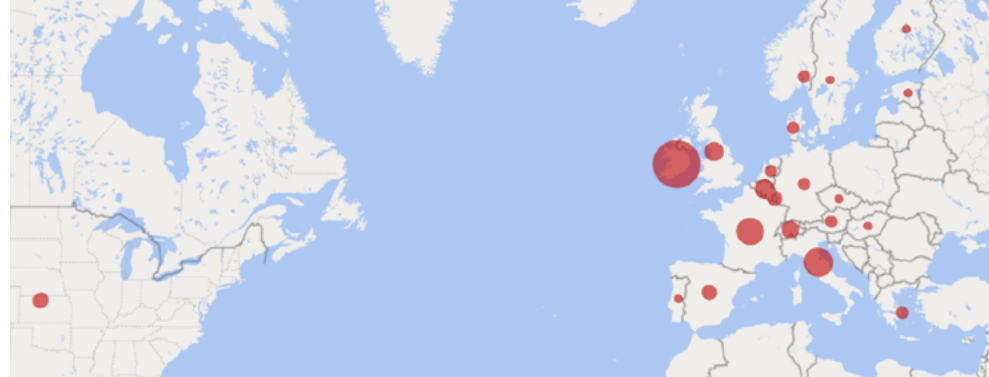
The forum's collaborative spirit, along with its diverse participant base, fosters an ideal setting for individuals and organisations to unite, exchange knowledge, and take actions towards a future where diversity isn't only celebrated but also managed and utilised in a sustainable way to benefit us all. Accordingly, the program was rich and diverse, featuring 15 workshops and plenary sessions covering a wide array of topics, ranging from key issues on policy and legislations, including New Breeding Techniques (NBTs), the critical aspects of Seed Marketing Reform, and Farmers' Rights, to sessions dedicated to Culinary Breeding and Seed Quality. But the forum went beyond intellectual exchanges and workshops.

Following the spirit of EC-LLD to serve as a platform to foster exchange and promote action, it provided ample opportunities for networking, collaboration, and relationship building.

Attendees had the chance to connect during social dinners and explore firsthand the practical applications of dynamic seed management through field visits and seeds exchange.

The full program of the 2023 forum in Ireland can be found and downloaded at this link: [https://liberatediversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/DUBLIN\\_2030\\_Program\\_PRINT\\_3mm.pdf](https://liberatediversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/DUBLIN_2030_Program_PRINT_3mm.pdf)

This 12th edition of the forum was another significant step toward cultivating a more diverse and resilient food system, and we look forward to the continued efforts and progress in this vital field.



## Number of the Forum:

Participating in the Forum in Dublin were 100 people from 59 organisations from 29 different countries across the globe. Among them we have Farmers, Breeders, Gardeners, Advisors and consultants, Professors, Researchers, Students, Volunteers and Policymakers.



# Bring Diversity back into our food system

*“Through the promotion of the dynamic management of agrobiodiversity, we not only weather the storms of crises but also lay the foundation for a flourishing and sustainable agrifood system.”*

Within a complex and multifaceted crisis, encompassing both social and environmental challenges, the agricultural landscape and communities stand at a critical juncture. From climate uncertainties to social inequities, the array of challenges underscores the pressing need for transformative solutions, particularly within the food system. Firm in our belief that diversity is not merely a choice but a powerful strategy, we navigate these challenges with the conviction, grounded in an increasing wealth of evidence, that bringing diversity back into our food system holds the key to positive transformation.

Our view of diversity as a catalyst for transformation extends beyond

its ecological and agricultural elements. As a platform we represent an opportunity for social cohesion and cultural enrichment, shifting away from monocultural norms. We are convinced that diversity is the cornerstone for shaping a food system that is not only robust and resilient but also inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. This belief finds expression in the slogan of the 12th Edition of the LLD Forum: “Let’s bring Diversity back into our Food System”

Within the complex dynamics of our food systems, the European Coordination and the Let’s Liberate Diversity Forum emerge as catalysts for this positive transformation. The platforms we promote – such as the LLD forum - facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective action, actively contributing to the dynamic management of cultivated diversity, and emphasizing that diversity should not be merely preserved but actively utilized.



# Involvement of social actors dealing with agrobiodiversity: an EU on-farm network

*The involvement of social actors is essential for the development of a dynamic and collective management and use of agrobiodiversity!*

It has been seen how there are many more realities than expected that collectively manage seeds and genetic resources, and these must become central again to the management of genetic resources and minimise genetic erosion.

During the [DYNAVERSITY project](#), EC-LLD in collaboration with the CIRAD partner, conducted a Let's Liberate Diversity! (LLD) and Let's Cultivate Diversity! (LCD) events-based analysis. This analysis made it possible to study past events and therefore understand how to **involve social actors** more closely in future events with the aim to **promote socio-environmental practices** and ensure **food security** for future generations.

During the 11th Budapest forum it was presented the results of the

study as the interactive online-map obtained by conducting an LLD and LCD events-based analysis and the wordcloud results.

The main goal is to increase capacities for *in-situ* and **on-farm conservation of plant genetic resources** by mapping and bringing together stakeholders involved in the dynamic management of plant genetic resources.

During the study, participant data and event programmes of the LLD and LCD from 2005 to 2019 (total of 14 events), were collected. The study methodology involved collecting



and summarising data using the participant lists and the programs of the forums for a wordcloud graphic . A total of 1709 records were collected and documented with the organisation name, the type of organisation, the gender of the participant, the country of origin and the scale of action of their organisation for the 10 LLD meetings and the 4 LCD events. The wordcloud analysis, on the other hand, shows the main themes discussed during the forums (central and larger words repeated more in programs).

Note how holding a European forum brings the main and most structured European actors to the different countries, and there is a strong involvement of national actors.

Thanks to 11 Let's Liberate Diversity! Forums and 4 Let's Cultivate Diversity! meetings, it is possible to better understand the historical

## On-line story map

At this link you can find the online map with all the results obtained, from content and outputs of forums to statistical analysis on participants and word analysis of workshop programs.

<https://liberatediversity.org/european-forums/>

At the following link is possible to give a look to the full project deliverable:

[https://liberatediversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/DYNAVERSITY-DL\\_4-DEF\\_ML-5.pdf](https://liberatediversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/DYNAVERSITY-DL_4-DEF_ML-5.pdf)

context and the way of networking of actors involved in the PGRFA conservation and use across countries and years. Nowadays, these types of meetings would be considered as real Living Labs, where the exchange of knowledge is multi-actor, horizontal and taking into account real-life situations of actors.



# The Extraordinary assembly European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity! Summary and main points

Over the past 5 years, the organisation has changed considerably and has seen as many as 10 different members from all different countries join, reaching a total of 21 members from 20 different countries in 2023.

The question then arose, apart from the processes that each member follows and prefers, where do we want to go as an European organisation?? and how?? How can a European network help within the different social processes at national level?

To respond to these questions, in Spring 2023 the Secretariat of the European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity! launched a process to define a **roadmap** of the organisation.

The **Extraordinary Assembly in Dublin in October 2023** was the perfect occasion to gather feedback from EC-LLD members on the goals, which allowed the Secretariat to progress in developing the first part of the roadmap.



## Road mapping Process

### Purpose

We want to develop a roadmap to enhance the relevance of EC-LLD! and ensure that we maximize the value the network offers to its members.

#### 1. Preparation and Research

**Resource Overview:** A swift review of our current and potential resources for the next few years.

**Value-focused Survey:** We'll design and share a survey, focusing on understanding what EC-LLD! members find valuable in our current services and identifying the roles or services the network shall emphasize in the future.

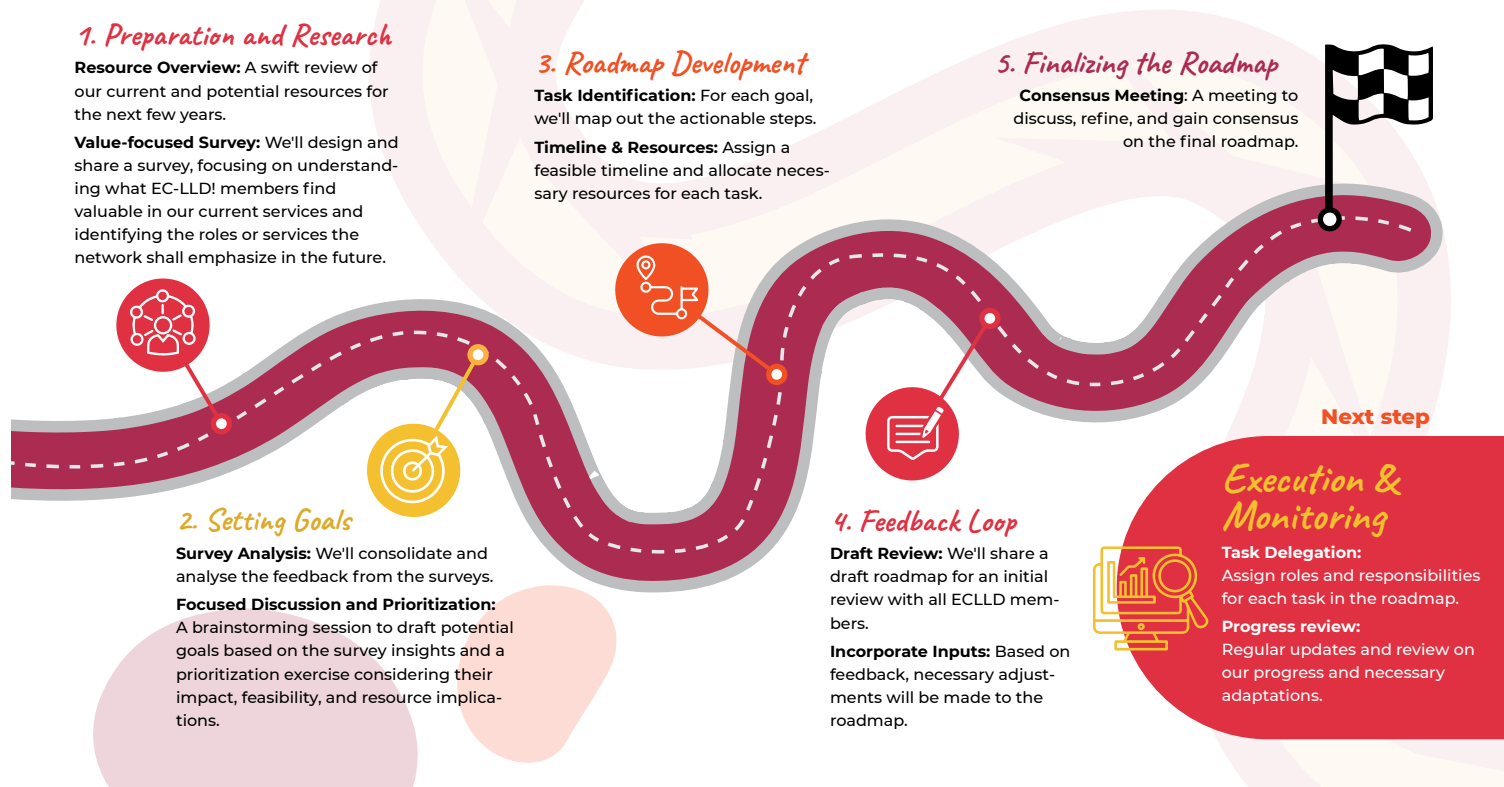
#### 3. Roadmap Development

**Task Identification:** For each goal, we'll map out the actionable steps.

**Timeline & Resources:** Assign a feasible timeline and allocate necessary resources for each task.

#### 5. Finalizing the Roadmap

**Consensus Meeting:** A meeting to discuss, refine, and gain consensus on the final roadmap.



#### Next step

### Execution & Monitoring

**Task Delegation:** Assign roles and responsibilities for each task in the roadmap.

**Progress review:** Regular updates and review on our progress and necessary adaptations.



# The Extraordinary assembly European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity! Summary and main points

*The extraordinary assembly was held alongside the LLD Forum 2023 in Dublin, 40 members of EC-LLD were present representing 18 organisations out of 21.*

We also had 4 board members and 2 observers. A session of the assembly was dedicated to the roadmap process and 4 groups were formed to brainstorm what was the added value of Let's Liberate Diversity! within their national realities.

Each group has reported in plenary and discussed. The result of this discussion has been captured and then analysed through a deductive process identifying 3 emerging themes and defining the objectives for each of them.

## **Area: Networking participation and coordination**

**Objective:** Strengthening the Network by expanding the membership base, fostering active participation and enhancing the profile and the voice of ECLLD members.

## **Area: Engagement, Resource mobilisation, and sustainability**

**Objective:** Involvement of EC-LLD and their members in proposals and research projects to ensure long term viability of the network, empowerment and promoting active participation of smaller members in funding opportunities and (research) projects

## **Area: Capacity building, learning and knowledge exchange**

**Objective:** Build the capacity leveraging and nurturing internal knowledge and facilitating access and exchanges with wider stakeholders

The roadmap, born out of this collective effort, serves as a guiding document for the future endeavors of EC-LLD. To ensure the effective implementation of the roadmap, the Secretariat utilized Miro to translate brainstorming outcomes into actionable steps and aspirations. These actions will serve as the foundation for future initiatives, fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability within EC-LLD.





# Workshops

Summaries and main outcomes



Check the Knowledge&Readings section of the [liberatediversity.org](https://liberatediversity.org) website to see the powerpoint presentations shared by the speakers!

<https://liberatediversity.org/knowledge/readings/>

*Policies*

*Practices*



# 1\_ EU proposal for deregulation of new GMOs: Content and implications for consumers, farmers, and the seed sector

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop examined the **EU Commission proposal to remove safety checks, traceability and labelling from new GM foods.**

Lawyer Blanche Magarinos-Rey of the Artemisia law firm described that the proposal divides new GMOs into two categories. **Category 1 GMOs – expected to comprise around 94% of all new GMOs – would not be subjected to safety checks or traceability requirements; nor would they be labelled for the consumer.**

Blanche said the proposal aims to abolish GMO labelling, the existence of which has led to mass rejection of GMOs in the EU. Claire Robinson of GMWatch described the implications of the proposal, pointing to safety questions over GM foods and illustrating ways in which **the patents applied to all GMOs can seriously impact farmers and breeders** – including trapping them in a “patent thicket”, meaning they will have to

pay licence fees and/or royalties to patent owners if they infringe a patent.

Molecular geneticist Prof Michael Antoniou explained the reasons why deregulating new GMOs goes against the science underpinning these products. He said that **new GM techniques are not precise or predictable in their outcomes and that the risks of new GM foods include unexpected toxicity and allergenicity.** So each new GMO must be subjected to risk assessment for health and the environment, as well as traceability and labelling requirements, as currently apply to all GMOs in the EU. Claire proposed actions that concerned citizens and groups can take to oppose the proposal; some participants said they would take action. A discussion followed, with members of the audience asking questions that the speakers answered.



## Speakers:

*BLANCHE MAGARINOS-REY*  
(Attorney at the Paris Bar)

*CLAIRE ROBINSON* (GMWatch)

*MICHAEL ANTONIOU*  
(King's College - London)

## Main outcomes of the workshop

Some participants told the speakers that they would take action and write to their MEPs and ministries demanding that **all GMOs remain regulated and labelled.**



# 1\_ EU proposal for deregulation of new GMOs: Content and implications for consumers, farmers, and the seed sector

*Presentations, publications or any other material shared by the workshop organiser:*

Current directive on gmo's :

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/18/oj>

The Commission's proposal on new gmo's :

[https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/genetically-modified-organisms/new-techniques-biotechnology\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/genetically-modified-organisms/new-techniques-biotechnology_en)

Q&A on the new gmo's on the European Commissions' website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_23\\_3568](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_23_3568)

GMO Myths & Truths: A Citizen's Guide to the Evidence on the Safety and Efficacy of Genetically Modified Crops and Foods, 4th Edition by C. Robinson, J. Fagan and M. Antoniou:

<https://www.amazon.com/GMO-Myths-Truths-Citizens-Genetically/dp/0993436722>



## 2\_Options for the realization of Farmers' Rights under the Plant Treaty: A European approach?

### WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The objectives were to inform about new developments under the Plant Treaty regarding Farmers' Rights, particularly a new set of options for their realization; to discuss a European approach to the realization of Farmers' Rights, and to discuss a position to the upcoming 10th Session of the Plant Treaty's Governing Body.

The presentation introducing the topic covered a history and background on Farmers' Rights in the Plant Treaty, a presentation of the Options for the realization of Farmers' Rights that have been developed under the Treaty, some words on the intersessional work and the upcoming 10th Session of the Plant Treaty's Governing Body, presentation of a new website on Farmers' Rights ([www.farmersrights.org](http://www.farmersrights.org)) and questions for discussion.

The questions for discussion were:

- What could be a European approach to the realization of Farmers' Rights?
- How to follow up on that?
- What do we wish to achieve for Farmers' Rights at the 10th Session of the Governing Body of the Plant Treaty in November?

In the discussion, participants first took the opportunity to ask questions about the processes that had been presented, before we had a **brainstorming on what a European approach could be and on possible positions for GB10.**



### Speakers:

REGINE ANDERSEN (*Fridtjof Nansen Institute*)

RICCARDO BOCCI (*Rete Semi Rurali*)

### Main outcomes of the workshop

The main outcomes are first and foremost **increased awareness of the process on Farmers' Rights under the Plant Treaty** and the relevance of The Options for the realization of Farmers' Rights in Europe.

The Options are however not well known in Europe, and an idea was to organize a **regional consultation on Farmers' Rights in Europe to address The Options**, highlight good examples from the inventory that has been established under the Plant Treaty and develop a European approach to the realization of Farmers' Rights.

Participants also advocated more awareness raising and capacity building for the purpose.

The workshop facilitators will take these suggestions with them in the further work on Farmers' Rights under the Treaty.



# 3\_Underutilised crops, ecosystem services and agroecological practices

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The aim was to explore the contribution of Underutilised Crops (UCs) to Ecosystem Services (ES) through the lens of the **agroecological practices** applied to the agroecosystems.

- **Presentation of us and of RADIANT in plenary**  
Who we are?
- **Let's play The agroecology game!**
- **How to implement ES with AE?**  
Discussion

### Speaker:

PAOLA MIGLIORINI (UNISG, RADIANT)

## Main outcomes of the workshop

In this workshop we explored together in a participatory way, the connection between UCs and ES especially through the agroecological practices applied.

We offered to the 2 groups 2 big posters containing a list of ES and several cards with 24 Agroecological practices. The 2 groups dialogue deeply about the potential of each AP to provide ES and identified many connections.

The results of this workshops will be used to develop a draft of a **self-assessment tool to evaluate the ES provided by farms that cultivate UC.**

## Key messages:

**The agroecological practices can enhance the all list of Ecosystems services. They must be locally adapted and specific for each pedoclimatic and socio-political contexts.**

Education was one of the most important aspect cited by the 2 groups.



## 4\_Culinary Breeding

### WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The Culinary Breeding Network workshop provided a valuable platform for attendees to learn from practical experiences of **Culinary Breeding Networks (CBNs)** presented by Lane Selman and Myrtha Zierock. The workshop succeeded in fostering connections among participants. The insights gained from this workshop are expected to contribute positively to the efforts of attendees in building CBN communities and executing impactful events in their respective regions.

The workshop commenced with an introduction by Lane Selman and Myrtha Zierock, highlighting the overarching objective of the Culinary Breeding Networks to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the food industry. Attendees gained insights into the unique opportunities CBN creates for stakeholders, processors and consumers to actively participate in the plant breeding process.



### Speakers:

*LANE SELMAN AND MYRTHA ZIEROCK*

### Main outcomes of the workshop

Throughout the session, the facilitators shared their experiences, successes, and challenges in building networks and organizing engaging events. Attendees were treated to real-world examples of how CBN has successfully executed public events since 2011, emphasizing the importance of creating strong connections within food communities.

The participatory nature of the workshop allowed attendees to engage with the facilitators, asking questions and exchanging ideas. Lane Selman and Myrtha Zierock encouraged an open dialogue, sharing practical strategies for creating awareness, understanding the significance of seed, and celebrating seasonal foods.



# 5\_No Patents on Seeds

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

There were three presentations.

First, Fulya Batur (Kybele) presented the **legal framework for patents**, covering the global, European and national levels.

Second, Katherine Dolan from Arche Noah and the European alliance No Patents on Seeds! explained the **negative impact of patents on seeds for diversity, breeders, and farmers**, with reference to specific examples, and showed the political campaigns taking place at European and Austrian level.

Finally, Maurice Deasy, a farmer and independent brewer from Ireland, explained the **challenges that he has faced in accessing seeds that are appropriate for extensive farming and independent value chains, and how the legal framework hinders this work.**



### Speakers:

FULYA BATUR (Kybele)

KATHERINE DOLAN (Arche Noah)

MAURICE DEASY

(farmer and independent brewer)

### Main outcomes of the workshop

Participants asked lots of questions to understand better the complex legal situation, but also to express their shock at the patenting of seeds.

Katherine Dolan noted organisations can reach out to No Patents on Seeds! if they want to get active at the national level – we need the support of more member states to change the situation.

No Patents on Seeds has capacity to provide technical assistance, but also to co-organise events.

## 6\_Getting inspiration from open-source seed ideas and practices

### WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop began with a brief presentation on open-source seeds, providing insights into various experiments and initiatives taking place globally, including Argentina, the USA, Germany, Italy, India, and Kenya. Attendees gained a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices associated with open-source seeds, emphasizing the commitment to freedom in using, saving, and improving seeds.

The session aimed to address key questions, such as the potential contributions of GOSSI practices to participants' work, the challenges associated with their implementation, and alternative ways in which the general principles of open-source seeds could be adapted.

The workshop provided a platform for fruitful discussions and knowledge exchange among participants interested in liberating seeds through open-source practices. The session stimulated creative thinking and offered a space for participants to reflect on the potential integration of open-source seed principles into their work.

### Speakers:

*ANABEL MARIN (IDS, GOSSI)*

### Main outcomes of the workshop

As participants shared their perspectives, it became evident that open-source seeds have the potential to foster a collaborative and inclusive approach to seed conservation, improvement and distribution. The workshop concluded with a sense of enthusiasm among attendees to explore further how the principles of open-source seeds could be adapted to address the unique challenges and opportunities in their respective contexts. The session also highlighted the importance of ongoing dialogue and exchange within the global community to advance the principles of open-source seeds.





# 7\_ Capacity building on EU seed law marketing reform

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Questions to audience:

- Who has read the current directives for the marketing of seeds and PRM?
- Who has read the new proposal?
- Who knows what VCU/VSCU and DUS stand for?
- Who knows the difference between PVP and seed marketing?

**This was to get to know the audience in the room. It ranged from very knowledgeable to not having any knowledge on this topic.**

The workshop followed the order of:

### 1) General information on commission proposal

- Policy context, objectives, type of legal tool, structure of draft, timeline

### 2) Proposal content

- Main route for seed market access
- Derogations to seed market access
- What is the 'seed market'?
- Specific provisions for organic (seeds)

After going through the content of the presentation, participants had time to ask questions.

### Points raised/questioned:

- DUS comes from UPOV, which are criteria created to have rights of varieties, but now it also determines market access
- Both the national and the European seed register/catalogue will remain
- There will be only one evaluation of variety within Europe, so you can choose your register ('forum-shop')
- The main market access route is getting stricter, but there are also more derogations
- Any farmer that multiplies seeds needs to register as a professional operator



### Speakers:

FULYA BATUR (Kybele)

ILSA PHILLIPS (IFOAM)

GABRIELE MANEO (ECLLD!)

### Main outcomes of the workshop

- Significant changes for many stakeholder groups, farmers, seed saver initiatives, seed banks, seed producers and breeders.
- Seed banks should not be included.
- Adapted DUS for organic varieties is positive.
- Or 848 should stay untouched, especially the OHM part
- What about the burden of administration? For the derogations you need mandatory operator registration. Good that they are there, but to be able to use them there is a high administrative burden
- Timewise, after the proposal will be voted for, there will be many implementing and delegated acts that could have a significant influence on the implementation.



# 8\_ Diverse approaches to diversity: from market-driven to needs-based and farmer-led breeding

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop was facilitated by Sinéad Fortune, Robin Morgan, Holly Silvester and Kevin Dudley discussed **different aspects of diversity in agroecosystems**, by presenting examples from their own practices in fields ranging from grain to vegetable production.

Robin discussed the processes that define **breeding targets for wheat**. Wheat as a crop is shaped by the forces of offer and demand. While this has allowed for copious amounts of grain to be produced, we are now acknowledging the **divergence between the industry and public health needs**. This is exemplified by the concurrent lack of dietary fiber in the American population and the industry's focus on refined flour production.

Holly then went on to discuss the **loss of genetic diversity in vegetable crops, acknowledging a similar divergence between industry and public health needs**, with plants having been bred for ability to store/travel/uniformity over taste and nutrition.

Holly went on to outline the concept of **diverse populations and landraces**. The presentation featured case studies from various growers from the UK seed sovereignty network who are experimenting with growing diverse populations, demonstrating the benefits they are seeing in terms of resilience, adaptability, freedom and the joy and connection the process brings. These crops ranged from the 'Mendip Rainbow' Broad Bean flock, to Oxtan Organic's winter squash grex and diverse kale population.

**These explorations into growing diverse populations have made plant breeding accessible to many farmers, and encourage a reconnection with crops on a fundamental level – an act of resistance and healing.**

Kevin Dudley highlighted the key crops he has been growing as 'landraces' at Clough Jordan Community Farm, including a storing onion and runner bean population. He highlighted the political implications to growing diverse populations, reinforcing the idea that it is an act of resistance, with **farmers and their local communities reclaiming their seed and taking control back from the hands of global organisations**. He discussed the resilience and nutritional benefits he has observed through allowing his crops to promiscuously pollinate, and the joy in 'breaking the rules'.

## Speakers:

*ROBIN MORGAN (WSU Breadlab)*  
*HOLLY SILVESTER (Organic vegetable and seed grower)*  
*SINÉAD FORTUNE (Seed Sovereignty Programme)*  
*KEVIN DUDLEY (Seed saver / activist)*

## Main outcomes of the workshop

The workshop offered an opportunity to question assumptions on food, ranging from appearance to nutritional value, fostering a positive climate to **reflect on the value of diversity in agroecosystems**.

It asked participants to consider **alternative methods to plant breeding that challenge the current paradigm**. Looking to our ancestors for ways of growing food that provides resilience in our rapidly changing world through **diversity**.



# 9\_Multi-actor culinary breeding methodologies: from theory to practical examples in Europe

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop provided a comprehensive exploration of innovative approaches in plant breeding. The session began with an introduction to ECO-PB and the Young Breeders' network by Mariateresa Lazzaro (FiBL Switzerland) and an overview of the workshop's agenda by Matteo Petitti (Rete Semi Rurali, Italy).

The first segment delved into the applications of sensory evaluation in participatory plant breeding, presented by Camille Vindras from France. Following this, Bernd Horneburg from the University of Kassel, Germany (presenting online) discussed the intriguing concept of conducting tests for flavor and seed production on the same plant, with a focus on selecting root vegetables.

The latter part of the workshop encouraged an exchange of experiences among participants, facilitated by Camille Vindras. This interactive session involved small group discussions, with each group addressing three questions over 15 minutes, followed by a 5-minute presentation per group.

### Speakers:

*MARIATERESA LAZZARO (FIBL SWITZERLAND)*  
*MATTEO PETITTI (RETE SEMI RURALI)*  
*BERND HORNEBURG (UNIVERSITY OF KASSEL)*  
*CAMILLE VINDRAS (ECOPB)*  
*ANDREA GHEDINA (SMARTIES.BIO)*



After a well-deserved lunch break, the second segment of the workshop delved into practical experiences with rice and radicchio. Daniela Ponzini (Rete Semi Rurali, Italy) led an exercise on rice, followed by Andrea Ghedina (SMARTIES.BIO, Italy) guiding participants through a practical experience with radicchio. Both exercises allowed for a 45-minute hands-on session and a subsequent 15-minute discussion.

### Main outcomes of the workshop

The workshop successfully bridged the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications, offering participants valuable insights into multi-actor culinary breeding methodologies. The interactive nature of the session promoted knowledge exchange and collaboration among participants.



# 10\_ Enhancing cultivated biodiversity from integrated local food policy: how to move on from Irish municipalities?

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The support to cultivated biodiversity, and organic seeds and breeding from municipal food policies is needed to build sustainable, healthy, fair and local food systems.

These elements should not be only present in policies for food production but also in **food distribution, diets, social and economic equity, governance and food waste policies.**

These types of actions are quite innovative and not very common. For its development, a comprehensive approach is needed. Ireland has developed unique policies related to biodiversity. For example, it has an **Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan** in response to the biodiversity crisis and follows up on a Programme for Government commitment to ensure that all local authorities have a sufficient number of biodiversity and heritage officers among their staff complement. The work of the biodiversity officers is to put biodiversity front and centre of local authority operations.

The workshop generated a space for collective reflection and discussion among municipal responsible and other stakeholders, in order to:

- 1) assess the Irish already existing actions;
- 2) generate possible and concrete strategies and connections with ongoing processes at the local and global level.

### Speakers:

ELAINE BRADLEY (*Irish Seeds Savers*)

MARÍA CARRASCOSA

(*Red de Municipios por la Agroecología*)

MARIA YOUNG (*Cork Food Policy Council and Green Spaces for Health*)

DONAL MCCORMACK

(*Community Gardens of Ireland*)

SABRINA DEKKER (*MUFPP focal point in Dublin*)

MICHAEL KELLY (*GIY*)

### Main outcomes of the workshop

- Agricultural policy is not food policy, **we need food policy**
- The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact needs to integrate **cultivate biodiversity** in their recommendations.
- **Cities are key actors in food policy.** They can develop integrated food systems by building community seed banks, creating more farmers' markets and shortening the supply chain, including local and sustainable food production in public food procurement, being active in protecting nature, habitat and biodiversity, creating chemical-free zones, providing land

for farmers.

- Food Policy Councils are participatory spaces where different stakeholders in the city's food system are represented to build local food systems
- **Right to land** to produce your food is necessary: society needs the implementation of the right to grow
- Some Irish cities are including **community gardens** in their climate action plans.
- **Let's Get Growing** is a document of policy demands in which the Community Gardens of Ireland call for the establishment of a seed library in every community, among other actions. There is an active **Seed Library Network** in the Republic of Ireland.
- The **Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss** consisted of 100 members, including 99 members of the public randomly selected from households across Ireland, and an independent chairperson appointed by the Taoiseach. It was developed in 2022.
- Ireland is finalising **Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan**, which includes a section on "Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded", which can be implemented by local authorities in their local plans.



# 11\_Facilitating the use of crop diversity and Eating the city: biodiversity in urban diets

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Examining crop diversity and its development over time with associated discussions.

Members from various organisations related to crop diversity participated and shared their experience of institutional and organisational obstacles related to crop diversity.



### Speaker:

DYLAN WALLMAN (SLU)  
VIRGIBIA PIGNATA (ACRA)

### Main outcomes of the workshop

Knowledge dissemination and encouragement to act for more crop diversity and a legal framework that supports it within all the participants regions. Exchange of knowledge and experience between participants.



# 12\_ Seed harvesting, drying and storage: basic aspects for improving and maintaining vegetable seed quality

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

### Participants:

20 participants, mainly seed growers (professional, semi-professional and amateur levels)

### Main objective of the workshop:

Allow participants to better understand the physiological processes in the seed during the stages of maturation, drying and storage and stimulate reflection on practical/technical solutions to improve and maintain seed quality.

### Programme of the workshop:

Introduction: sharing information from the Liveseeding seminar on seed quality at Wageningen University in April 2023 led by Steven Groot (PPP)

Feedback from participants about the relevance of the topic: collecting questions and comments.

### Exchange between participants about best practices ranging from low-tech to high-tech solutions.

The powerpoint presentation as an introduction to the topic of ensuring and maintaining seed quality covered the following main aspects:

- Ensuring seed quality during cultivation of seed bearers: the physiological processes going on in the seeds on the mother plant during the pre-harvest late maturation phase
- Ensuring seed quality during drying: time and conditions of drying, relative humidity level
- Ensuring seed quality during storage: humidity and oxygen levels as the main influential factors on seed longevity
- Pragmatic solutions to improve and maintain seed quality during drying and storage: presentation of different technical means and methods from low-tech to high-tech solutions

### Speakers:

FRANK ADAMS (SEED / Technical school for agriculture in Luxembourg)

LOES MERTENS (RMRM, BELGIUM)

## Main outcomes of the workshop

### Feedback from the participants

The participants welcomed the information received during the presentation and said that such information from long term research rarely reaches craft seed producers.

Especially four points were welcomed as **precious hints for the improvement of seed harvesting and conservation:**

- The importance of the late maturation phase happening after the seed filling phase
- The importance of proper drying and information about the impact of humidity on seed longevity during storage.
- The importance of seed storing at low oxygen levels and the effect of oxygen on seed longevity during storage.
- The fact that seed longevity should be evaluated not by the germination rate, but also by the vigour/vigor of the seedlings

The consideration was shared that the diversity of seeds (varieties) is most important, but that good seed quality serves the purpose of maintaining and developing cultivated biodiversity best. ► p.22



## 12\_ Seed harvesting, drying and storage: basic aspects for improving and maintaining vegetable seed quality

► At the same time, the difference between seed banks with long-term storage and **“living seed banks”** (as seed saving networks or small seed producers) was underlined.

Seed producers do not necessarily store and market seed lots for more than 3-5 years, as the stocks are renewed regularly and the seeds marketed are generally from fairly recent harvests (seed turnover).

Participants confirmed that the information received at the workshop enables them to reflect on their practice from cultivation to storage of their seeds in order to introduce measures of improvement concerning the above mentioned 4 points.

At the same time, most of the participants agreed that the quality of their seeds is already quite satisfying, at least regarding short and medium term storage.

### Conclusion

The workshop allowed to convey information that was partly new to the craft seed producers. The information shared stirred reflections on best practices in order to ensure maximum seed quality.

Participants confirmed that the information on biochemical processes during the seed development and on technical devices for seed drying and storing were very helpful to further improve their practice.

Participants also welcomed the idea of regular workshops and ways to share the information by means of documents.

### Next steps

The following reference material is intended to be made available to craft seed producers:

- *Powerpoint presentation “Seed quality”*
- *Practical guide for the drying and conservation of vegetable seeds.*

A coordination group led by Stephanie Klaedtke is planning further workshops in the future, including more practical examples, demonstration material and practical exercises.



# 13\_ Agrobiodiversity for Rural Regeneration – Supporting the emergence of a social cooperative for Irish-grown textiles

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop was introduced by the coordinator of the Seeds4All project run by the association ARC2020, who put into context the collaboration already underway between the guest speakers and gave some keys to understanding the main challenge tackled by the workshop, i.e. **how to enable the sustainable initiatives promoting the regeneration of agrobiodiversity to develop economically and offer a genuine, Irish-based textile production alternative?**

Each speaker presented their projects to the audience (the natural dyeing company Apple Oak Fibre works, the Fibre Shed network of Ireland and the Galway Wool Coop).

They particularly focused on explaining why and how they are valuing agrobiodiversity in their respective initiatives and on identifying what are the main obstacles to the development of their activities in terms of access to local crops and/or breeds: **lack of raw material** (seeds and plants),

**lack of processing facilities, lack of funding** and **legal absurdities** such as those applicable to wool or hemp, were among the most important.

Kate Carmody from the Hemp and flax cooperative of Ireland followed with an overview on the **social cooperative model**, analysing its relevance to overcome the obstacles identified by the speakers, and **help reverse the decline of rural areas and communities** (rely on local resources, attract more funding, especially EU funding, strengthen short circuits, revive rural solidarities, etc.)

A moment was given to the audience to present their reasons for interest in these issues and any other relevant projects. We were pleased to realise that they had many different links to the issue of textile production, from the professional craftsman to the citizen committed to greater self-sufficiency, via researchers and journalists with expertise in bioeconomy issues.

The final stage of the workshop consisted of a **collective brainstorming session** on the question of how to adapt the social cooperative model to the Irish context and to the needs of an alternative textile production sector relying on indigenous crops and breeds. The audience was divided into 4 different groups, each of which was asked to reflect on a specific aspect: What kind of governance? What social goals? What services for what priorities (access to machinery, seeds, solidarity, etc.)? What funding?

Finally, we took the time to present the results of each working group and discuss them together.

## Speakers:

*MALÚ COLORÍN & JESSICA LEONARD*  
(FibreShed Ireland)

*TRISTAN LIENHARD*  
(AppleOak FibreWorks)

*DEIRDRE LANE*  
(Youghal Blue and Green community network)

*ADÈLE PAUTRAT*  
(ARC2020)





# 13\_ Agrobiodiversity for Rural Regeneration – Supporting the emergence of a social cooperative for Irish-grown textiles

## Main outcomes of the workshop

For most of the participants, the key element of the workshop was to **emphasise the urgency of relocating essential industries and know-how**, and in this context, to **rethink our modes of production and consumption**.

In order to be more resilient and autonomous in the face of climatic demands but also to put an end to the absurdities generated by the internationalisation of trade, in particular the waste of available resources and the agony of rural areas.

One figure was particularly impacting: each year, Ireland exports 20 million kilos of wool as waste – and imports all the wool it needs for textile production – because for legal

and financial reasons, this option is more accessible for sheep breeders not specialised in wool production, than the option of valorising the wool for the needs of different sectors.

The 5 organisations which initiated the workshop could collect precious feedback and thoughts regarding the feasibility of implementing a structure in Ireland that would help revive an alternative sector for textile production relying on local crops and breeds. This will be used for progressing with their collective project in the following months.



# 14\_ Round-table discussion on EU Seed marketing reform\*

## EVENT DESCRIPTION

The round table provided a valuable platform for a nuanced exploration of concerns and perspectives surrounding the proposed Seed Marketing Law Reform, fostering a collaborative dialogue among diverse stakeholders.

The round table commenced with an overview of the key points of the proposed Seed Law Reform. This formed the basis for the ensuing discussions which encompassed some of the key criticisms and comments raised by ECLLD members including:

- **Restriction on Transfer of Cultivated Plant Diversity:** The proposed regulation restricts the free transfer of plant genetic resources for conservation, introducing bureaucratic hurdles that hinder farmers and seed organizations from preserving and selling endangered diversity.

- **Failure to Implement Farmers' Right to Seed:** The proposal introduces arbitrary restrictions on farmers, limiting their ability to exchange and sell their own seeds, contradicting their internationally recognized right to save, use, and exchange seeds.
- **Inadequate Measures for Widening Access to Diverse Varieties:** While the proposal removes restrictions on marketing diverse varieties, it introduces impractical requirements that may hinder small producers from making these seeds available.
- **Lack of Focus on Sustainable Agriculture:** The proposal's approach to seed testing falls short in ensuring sustainability, as it does not mandate testing under organic or low-input conditions.
- **Positive Impact on Hobby Gardeners:** The proposal includes exemptions for hobby gardeners, allowing private seed exchange and sale without mandatory variety certification, recognizing their unique needs and interests.

The European Coordination Let's Liberate Diversity! (ECLLD) continues to facilitate discussions and exchanges on the new EU seed reform. Stakeholders are urged to stay tuned for ongoing updates and actively engage in shaping the future of seed regulation in Europe.

## Speakers:

*KATHERINE DOLAN (ARCHE NOAH)*

*ERIC GAL (IFOAM)*

*BLANCHE MAGARINOS-REY (ARTEMISIA)*

*FULYA BATUR (KYBELE)*



# International seed swaps

*Seed swapping is more than a simple exchange of seeds; it is a celebration of biodiversity and a grassroots effort to preserve, nurture and dynamically evolve traditional knowledge.*

In an era where industrial agriculture often prioritizes uniformity, seed swapping becomes a counterpoint, ensuring a diverse array of crops that can adapt to changing environmental conditions. The seeds exchanged carry stories and knowledge, connecting us to our agricultural heritage, but also represent an effective strategy to adapt to challenges posed by Climate Change. The 12th edition of the LLD Forum was a perfect occasion to witness the growing momentum around seed swapping. Attendees, representing diverse corners of Europe, brought with them a variety of seeds, each carrying a unique story of origin and adaptation.

The seed-swapping session was a testament to the shared commitment to bring diversity back into our food system.

The success of the seed swapping sessions at the LLD Forum underscores the need to amplify these efforts on a global scale. As we reflect on the experiences shared and the connections forged, let us carry the momentum forward. Seed swapping is not just a tradition; it is a catalyst for change—a way to cultivate resilience, biodiversity, and sustainable agricultural practices worldwide. In the seeds we share, we sow the seeds of a more sustainable and interconnected future for agriculture.



*Irish seed savers seed swap table*  
<https://irishseedsavers.ie/>



*Rete Semi Rurali sharing italian variety of wheat*  
<https://rsr.bio/>



## Field visits

Attendees had the unique opportunity to engage in three insightful field visits, each offering distinct perspectives on seed conservation and biodiversity.



# Field visit 1 - The Liberties Weavers Walking Tour



*A brisk walk from our venue at Trinity College took participants to the Liberties, a centuries old neighbourhood of inner-city Dublin whose name derives from the 12th century and the arrival in Ireland of the Anglo- Normans with their system of land ownership and control.*

*The lands were united with the City of Dublin but preserved their own jurisdiction, hence 'The Liberties'.*

*Our group were led by Marja Almquist of the Liberties Weavers, a program honouring 1000 years of textiles and weaving and breathing life into the tradition of weaving, in its historic centre, the Liberties.*

*The walking tour introduced participants to the rich history of the linen and textile industry in the area of which there is much evidence. Archaeological excavations have yielded items from the Hiberno-Norse era, such as whorls, spindles, weights and bone needles together with evidence of a thriving cap and*

► p.30



# Field visit 1 - The Liberties Weavers Walking Tour

► scarf/shawl industry in both wool and dyed, watered silk - an indication of 'high status' - being found.

Our walk started in the Hyatt Centric Hotel with its photographic and illustrative collection of artifacts and then continued with visits to key parts of the Liberties - St Patrick's Cathedral, Weavers Square, the Tenter Fields, Black Pitts, Cow Parlour, Weavers Park, and Engine Alley - all places associated with the linen industry throughout the ages.

We learned that many people associated with Ireland's struggle

for independence in the early 1900s were associated with the weaving industry, and some of the sites we visited were of historical importance in terms of the Easter Rising 1916 and the War of Independence.

The walking tour ended with a visit to a community-based workshop to see examples of the weaving taking place today.

The contemporary revival in today's inner city of Dublin by The Liberties Weavers Project, is in part based on heritage flax seed, Northern Queen, that has been retrieved from the Irish Seed Savers Seed Bank.



## Field visit 2 - Visit to a Community Garden

*The visit to a local Community Garden called Mud Island showcased the power of grassroots initiatives in seed conservation.*

*Participants engaged with passionate local gardeners who shared their experiences and knowledge regarding sustainable practices and seeds.*



# Field visit 3 - Visit to the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin

*Led by expert botanists, attendees delved into the fantastic curation of rare and endangered plant species.*



*The visit underscored the vital role botanical gardens play in preserving genetic resources and highlighted the national-scale efforts to conserve and protect our plant heritage.*





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