

## **The Maize Balloon is About to Start its Tour in Turkey!**

### **We do not want Genetically Modified Food!**

The primary source of survival for animals and humans is **food**, the primary source of food production are **agricultural activities** and the basic components of agricultural production are **the soil, water** and the **seeds**. If one of these components is missing, there will be no food, and without food, there will be no animals and humans. On these grounds, "seeds are life", "soil is life" and "water is life." Without food, there can be no life and without food sovereignty, we will have to continue feeding on the manipulated and devaluated food stuff that is offered to us now.

Because of the agricultural and food policies of the recent decade, Turkey turned into a country that is dependent on food imports, taking whatever is offered, eating whatever is available, however, we used to be a land that is self-sufficient and with a potential to build on regarding perspective food production. But nowadays, the intertwined relations between food and agricultural production are working against the good of the citizens. Traditional agricultural systems and production methods are being demolished, import regulations are bent to fit the advantage of multinational agricultural companies. The rural population loses all opportunity and chance to produce food, is forced to migrate to the ghettos in the megapols; the peasants lose the right to collect, develop and use traditional, local seeds and all rights over seed production and trade are handed over to the multinationals. The multinational biotech companies and seed monopolies are waiting in line to take hold of the soil of our land and of our dining tables.

We need a **National Biosafety Law** in order to offer remedy to the harm done by the new seed law, that will hit a big blow on the agricultural system and food sovereignty of our country. We need the biosafety law to protect our local seeds and biodiversity, for secured access to equal and just distribution of safe food, to protect our food sovereignty.

Today, we, the protectors of life, are calling on all citizens, consumers, peasants and farmers, all of our people to side with us and join our campaign, "**Biosafety Law, right now !**"

From 1998 to 2008, during a total of 10 years, the National Committee on biosafety met regularly. During this time, the biosafety law to regulate the free distribution of GMO was kept pending, and the law was not issued in a way to meet the needs of those segments of the population that are most dramatically concerned by the implications. Our governments remained caught in the cross fire between the EU and the USA. Instead of bending to the pressure exercised by the USA and keeping an eye on the shy lack of policy-making by the EU, our

governments should listen to the voice of the people, the scientists and the ecological realities of our time. We demand right now, a biosafety law that is in harmony with the ecological needs and the needs of the consumers, the farmers and the peasants in our country. We are the "**No to GMO's Platform**" consisting of tens of democratic mass organisations, scientists and other activists, and we are ready to spend time and labour on developing regulations that will protect our future, on developing a draft for a Biosafety Law. With this prospect in mind, we are organising a **Biyosafety Workshop** in Ankara on **April 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2008**.

This workshop will serve to put together a biosafety law that is on the side of the people, of sustainable agriculture, on the side of the farmers and of local ecosystems. The resulting draft will be presented to the Turkish Parliament.

At the **Food Sovereignty and Biosafety Forum** taking place on **May 10-11 2008**, we will discuss about how seeds and food can be shared in a just and equal way, how people can gain sovereignty rights on food and how to develop more democratical systems on food production and distribution. The forum will be held with international participation and on the second day, we will organise workshops on seed rights, public health, food sovereignty and biosafety.

Another campaign, that is soon to start, is the national tour of the **Maize Balloon** in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Bursa. The Maize Balloon will serve to attract attention to the GMO that are increasingly entering the food chain in our country, as well as the presence of the Cargill Production site in Bursa that was illegally built on agricultural land in Bursa, for which the legal regulations were bent to fit the needs of the company by the current government. We invite all people, organisations and institutions to have a say in the ecological future and the agricultural policies of our country and to join efforts for this campaign.

**No to GMOs Platform**

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