

Press release

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Sofia, Bulgaria

Percy Schmeiser visit in Bulgaria was a great success.

The Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser [1], the winner in the 10-year legal battle against the chemical concern Monsanto and named 2007 Winners of the alternative Nobel prize Right Livelihood Award met with representatives of different groups of Bulgarian society. At the meeting in the Forestry University the producers of organic products were shocked that after the introduction of GM soy and rapeseed in Canada these cultures cannot be grown organically anymore. Representatives of branch agricultural organizations declared their will to keep Bulgarian agriculture GMO free [2]. Scientists alarmed that the scientific community in the country were purchased by the big corporations after the socialist system breakup accompanied by the collapse of Bulgarian economy and science. Percy Schmeiser pointed out that this is a worldwide problem and the question whether science should be financed by private corporations had been discussed in US.

The meeting with students and professors in the oldest higher school in Bulgaria, the Sofia University lasted longer than the envisaged time due to the great interest towards the information shared by Percy.

In the Red House *Centre for Culture and Debate* the discussion in the crowded hall was about the issues related to the right to choose, the right of livelihood and the freedom of expression right.

In the crowded hall in Dobrich – the heart of agriculture in Bulgaria – Percy’s speech stirred up heated debates among farmers, representatives of farmers unions, environmental NGOs, scientists. The local agricultural and bee-keepers’ associations supported Percy Schmeiser in his fight against the corporations, which take away the rights of the agricultural producers and cause damages to agriculture and bee-keeping.

At the meetings in Varna and Dobrich Ilian Iliev from the Public Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development presented data about the presence of GM maize in different areas in North-eastern Bulgaria, in spite the fact that there is no official permission for growing of GM maize.

After the three press conferences in Sofia, Varna and Dobrich all media covered Percy’s appeal: “I cannot tell you what to do here in Bulgaria”, but in 2 years, if you introduce GMO, you will not be able to say “we were not informed about GMO consequences”

“Percy’s fight is not against Monsanto, it is for the right of the farmers over their own land and livelihood” , said Todor Slavov from For the Earth association.

The visit of Percy Schmeiser was the beginning of the campaign for ban on cultivation in Bulgaria of the GM maize hybrid MON 810 [3]. “Bulgarian government should declare through the legislation its clear position and to give opportunity to the producers and processors to be competitive on the world market where the demand for GMO-free food grows constantly”, said

Svetla Nikolova, chair of Agrolink Association. She expressed her anxiety about the position of the new Bulgarian government at the voting of the Council of Ministries of agriculture for import permission of three varieties of GM maize. The Bulgarian minister voted in favour of this permission.

[1] <http://www.percyschmeiser.com/>

[2] <http://www.agrolink.org/agrolink/index.php?idcategories=27>

[3] <http://www.agrolink.org/agrolink/index.php?idcategories=56>

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