

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3621/09
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to the Commission

Subject: EU-Central America negotiations, intellectual property rights

Protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) are an integral part of the European Commission's negotiating line within free-trade agreement (FTA) negotiations, with the objective of setting 'TRIPs-plus' standards. The EU is currently negotiating with a number of 'biodiversity hotspot' countries, such as in Central America, where biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge and practices not only possess crop, food or medicinal value but to a large extent also bear significant cultural importance and political meaning.

Yet, TRIPs-plus provisions, applied to plants and micro-organisms, can restrict the use and sharing of traditional knowledge of indigenous people, and threaten biodiversity.

The European Commission seems to give little attention to these issues. Can the Commission reassure the public that it will not negotiate any patenting of life forms through FTA negotiations? What are the Commission's main demands as part of the IPR chapter in the proposed EU-Central America Association Agreement?