

Thousands demonstrate at the „March against Monsanto & Syngenta“ in Basel

21th May 2016/ At the second „March against Monsanto & Syngenta“ today in Basel, thousands demonstrated peacefully against the business model of the agrochemical corporations. In front of the Syngenta headquarters the colourful protest march demanded a sustainable agricultural model without pesticides, genetic engineering and patents on seeds. Basel also sent a signal against the current merger wave in the agribusiness.

About 2000, mainly young opponents of Monsanto and Syngenta from German-speaking Switzerland, South Western Germany and Alsace, gathered on Saturday afternoon for the “March against Monsanto & Syngenta” in Basel. They demanded a halt in the use of pesticides, genetically modified seeds and patents on seeds. Basel-based biologist Florianne Koechlin addressed the participants: “We simply can’t afford this monoculture agriculture and this enormous waste of resources anymore”.

The protest march was accompanied by various musicians and passed by Basel’s city centre to the Syngenta headquarters. Many participants were dressed up as bees drawing attention to Syngenta’s co-responsibility for Colony Collapse Disorder. “Neonicotinoids from Syngenta&Co do not only threaten bees but also butterflies, birds and many other animals, according to new studies”, Koechlin pointed out.

This year’s march was also marked by the planned takeover of Syngenta by the Chinese state-owned corporation ChemChina. The demonstration was directed against the associated planned large-scale cultivation of genetically engineered crops in China, the loss of transparency, and the increasing market concentration in the agricultural sector. Ulrike Minkner, vice-president of the Farmers’ Union Uniterre, spoke in front of the Syngenta headquarters: “A takeover by ChemChina is alarming. This would continue a merger process, that makes it more and more difficult for the civil society to voice social and ecological concerns.”

Basel’s march was supported by over 50 organisations, including Basel’s left-wing parties, green parties, unions and numerous civil society organisations. While worldwide, hundreds of thousands demonstrated in over 400 cities against Monsanto, the speakers in Basel emphasised that Syngenta barely differs from Monsanto.

Zoe Roth from the organising committee of the march also drew a positive picture: “The number of people that do not want to tolerate Monsanto and Syngenta putting their profits above ecological and social concerns in world agriculture is also growing in the triangle of Germany, France and Switzerland.”

Pictures under the following Link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dyoy2hxo2h8nru/AACmjMm...>