



Local Food Matters!

International workshop 20-22.03.2014 | Bitola, Macedonia
Finding the good balance between hygiene rules, small-scale production and quality

Conclusions of the workshop in Trnovo, Bitola, Macedonia, 22 March 2014

In many regions, the European regulatory framework on food hygiene and food safety is a stumble stone for small food producers, which play an important role for sustainable development and nature conservation in rural areas.

The European Commission acknowledges that the flexibility foreseen in the European legislation on food hygiene is not often applied by the member states and accession countries. The national and regional authorities responsible for official controls on the ground seem to be reluctant to assume the (sole) responsibility for applying more flexible solutions.

The EU legislation on food hygiene and safety will be under **review** in the near future. The participants of the workshop invite the European Commission to include clear and obligatory **provisions for flexibility** in its legislative proposals, which guarantee simplified and proportionate rules for small producers and local food chains. These simplified rules shall take into account traditional food production and local heritage, the **scale of the production** and the **marketing distance** of the products concerned (and be risk based). For **direct marketing**, special provisions should be foreseen. However, minimum standards should be met by all producers (they need to follow practicable Good Hygiene Practice Guidelines).

The participants of the workshop invite the European Commission to actively promote and support an **exchange of best practices** between the competent authorities of member states and accession countries (through cooperation programmes, training etc). In addition, a food safety **help desk / mediation body** should be made available at EU and at national level, providing support and advice to national, regional or local administrations, targeting practicable solutions, especially for local food chains. These **intermediate bodies** shall facilitate the communication between competent authorities and producers and should be open for interested civil society organisations.

Local food producers often face strict requirements, linked to disproportionate investments in processing facilities. The participants of the workshop invite the **competent authorities** at national, regional or local level to make use of the **margin of flexibility** already provided in the current legislation. Especially in accession countries like those of the Western Balkan, the national legislation for food safety and hygiene should not be stricter than the EU rules, so that local quality food production remains viable also at a small scale without disproportionate financial input. In order to promote best practice, the authorities should also offer **cooperation and trainings** targeting producers, farmers, processors and local authorities. Trainings for small food producers could provide for certificates of good practice. Cooperation between actors of local food chains shall be supported through rural development programmes and involve civil society organisations providing advocacy for local food.

Where competent authorities are not willing to take the responsibility for adapted hygiene rules, they can use a disclaimer: **Local food product. Safety guaranteed by producer, not by the State.**



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Civil society organisations should advocate in view of the public desire for traditional food and its survival.

Local food producers should organise themselves and establish common sectoral guides to good practice. They should cooperate with civil society in order to build trust with consumers, also through school education activities, and share the knowledge and the stories behind their food products.

WE WANT LOCAL FOOD: TASTE THE DIFFERENCE!

Trnovo, Bitola, Macedonia
22 March 2013



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Scores

1.

GROUP 1

1.1	ADMINISTRATION - AUTHORITIES	0
1.1.1	Adopted requirements for SSF	10
1.1.2	Obligatory to take into account SSF	4
1.1.3	Definition of small-scale farmers	2
1.1.4	Definition of a traditional product	5
1.1.5	Intermediate actor between ministry and farmers	5
1.1.6	More control over food frauds, but not punishing SSF	2
1.1.7	Supranational initiative – a body which is providing guidelines, info, trainings	0
1.1.8	Multifunctionality of SFF -	3
1.2.	CIVIL SOCIETY	
1.2.1	Increase capacity	8
1.2.2	Intermediate actor between ministry and farmers	14
1.2.3	<i>Communication between stakeholders (fostered by EU?)</i>	2
1.2.4	Establishing “collective self-control”	0
1.2.5	Crowd funding	1
1.2.6	Supranational initiative	0
1.3	FOLLOW UP	0
1.3.1	Spread /maxing Austrian example	0
1.3.2	Supranational initiative	0
1.3.3	Spread forum synergy success stories	0

2.

GROUP 2

2.1.	ADMINISTRATION - AUTHORITIES	0
2.1.1	Simplification of hygiene rules	12
2.1.2	Risk-based approach (distance, direct sell, quantity) - BUT MIND THE WORDING (minimum sanitary regulations)	3
2.1.3	Guidelines (narrow the space for personal interpretations)	2
2.1.4	Interpret hygiene rules to meet minimum hygiene standards	11
2.1.5	Provide training producers	1
2.1.6	Cooperation	5
2.1.7	Raise awareness of the importance of food heritages	4
2.1.8	Definition of what is local	0



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3.	GROUP 3	
3.1.1	Improve cooperation and exchange between EU, national and local authorities	4
3.1.2	Training possibilities for national government provided by EU institutions	2
3.1.3	Design the rules for producers (not authorities) and let them choose	3
3.1.4	Coherent approach of producers for local quality and recognitions (active and cohesive role)	0
3.1.5	Civil society network to facilitate the process	0
3.1.6	Collective actions for product support	3
3.1.7	Request for obligatory acceptance of flexibility provisions	8
3.1.8	"Warning: local food product" /we want local food	11

4.	BRAINSTORMING	
4.1.1	Farmers market	0
4.1.10	sharing food preparation	11
4.1.11	taste and look	6
4.1.12	youth schools learning process	6
4.1.13	joined possibilities for promotion of local products	1
4.1.14	labelling	3
4.1.15	all of us" to help local farmers	2
4.1.16	training programme for hygiene safety on national level with a certificate when completed	19
4.1.17	SSF as a nature conservation tool	14
4.1.18	local food product - event	2
4.1.19	offer understandable practical guidelines	4
4.1.2	Trust	4
4.1.3	Shortening food chain supply	1
4.1.4	Labelling of local products	0
4.1.5	Proportionate investment-based approach	5
4.1.6	Media and communication	6
4.1.7	Coalition of civil society (with environmentalist groups too)	0
4.1.8	Local products for the cities	3
4.1.9	educate consumers	2

Participants list - Local Food Matters workshop

Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country	Website
Mr	Agron	Cakalli	Agriculture Federation of Elbasan	Albania	
Ms	Drita	Tanazi	SHBR "Spirit of Kelmend"	Albania	
Mr	Gilberto	Jaçe	Convivium Slow Food Permet	Albania	
Ms	Katia	Zene	VIS	Albania	
Mr	Pier Paolo	Ambrosi	VIS Albania	Albania	
Mr	Prekë	Gjeloshaj	Agricultural Cooperation Company"Production Reçi"	Albania	
Mr	Christian	Jochum	Austrian chamber of Agriculture	Austria	www.lk-oe.at
Ms	Simone	Matouch	Forum Synergies	Austria	
Ms	Branka	Tome	Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development - European Commission	Belgium	
Mr	Oliver	Emmes	Forum Synergies	Belgium	www.forum-synergies.eu
Ms	Dessislava	Dimitrova	Slow Food in Bulgaria	Bulgaria	
Ms	Maria	Yunakova	Society for territorial and environmental prosperity (STEP).	Bulgaria	
Ms	Mariya	Peneva	University of National and World Economy	Bulgaria	www.unwe.bg
Mr	Stanimir	Stoytchev	Association of Tradition and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture	Bulgaria	
Ms	Vyara	Stefanova	EFNCP - Bulgaria	Bulgaria	www.efncp.org
Ms	Yanka	Kazakova	European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	Bulgaria	www.see.efncp.org
Ms	Karmen	Sinković	Ministry of Agriculture	Croatia	www.mps.hr
Mr	Philippe	Barret	Forum Synergies	France	
Mr	Michele	Rumiz	Slow Food	Italy	www.slowfood.com
Mr	Aleksandar	Gvozdic	-	Kosovo	
Mr	Lamir	Thaçi	FVA	Kosovo	www.auv-ks.net
Mr	Naser	A. Krasniqi	FVA	Kosovo	www.auv-ks.net
Mr	Āris	Ādleris	Latvian Rural Forum (Latvijas Lauku forums)	Latvia	lf.partneribas.lv
Mr	Aleksandar	Dimovski	Mlekara Galicnik	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Ana	Karamandi	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Ms	Anica	Ilieva	SF Dojran	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Anita	Glavevska	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Mr	Boban	Ilic	SWG	Rep. of Macedonia	www.seerural.org
Ms	Bogdanka	Leveska Gjorshoska	Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE	Rep. of Macedonia	www.seerural.org
Mr	Dejan	Dukovski		Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Dime	Galapcev	SF Kavadarci	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Elena	Karovska	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Ms	Elizabeta	Gjorgjievaska	ALKA	Rep. of Macedonia	www.alka.mk
Ms	Emilija	Nedelkovska	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Mr	Gjorge	Uzunov	SF Dojran	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Gordana	Stojanovska	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk

Mr	Hristo	Kostovski	Local producer - Krushevo	Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Igor	Zlatkov	National Extension Agency	Rep. of Macedonia	www.agencija.gov.mk
Ms	Ilinka	Veselinovic	SF Dojran	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Jagoda	Dimitrovska	Food and Veterinary Agency	Rep. of Macedonia	www.fva.com.mk
Mr	Jon	Ivanovski	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia	Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Jovan	Angelevski	National Extension Agency	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Liljana	Tanevska	Forum Synergies	Rep. of Macedonia	www.forum-synergies.eu
Ms	Maja	Skartova	SF Kavadarci	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Morena	Pandovska	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Mr	Nace	Jovcevski	Local producer - Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Natasa	Mateva	Institute of animal science	Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Nikola	Georgiev	Agro VA-NI	Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Nikolce	Nikolovski	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Mr	Pece	Cvetkovski	SF Bitola	Rep. of Macedonia	www.slowfood.mk
Mr	Petar	Gjorgjevski	Ruralnet	Rep. of Macedonia	www.ruralnet.mk
Mr	Slobodan	Milosevic	Association "Natura Balkanika"	Rep. of Macedonia	www.balkanika-crd.org
Ms	Sonja	Srbinovska	Faculty of Agricultural Science, UKIM, Skopje	Rep. of Macedonia	www.zf.ukim.edu.mk
Ms	Valentina	Kolar-Jovanovska	Balkan Biocert	Rep. of Macedonia	www.balkanbiocert.mk
Mr	Vanco	Stojanovski	Local producer - Stenje	Rep. of Macedonia	
Ms	Viktoria	Dulgerova	Ministry of Agriculture, forestry and water economy	Rep. of Macedonia	
Mr	Zlatko	Sireta	National Extension Agency	Rep. of Macedonia	www.agencija.gov.mk
Mr	Dejan	Vickov	agricultural household	Serbia	
Mr	Dragan	Roganovic	Ibar Development Association	Serbia	www.ida.org.rs
Mr	Nenad	Nikolic	Association Eco talas/Eco Wave	Serbia	
Mr	Milos	Homola	EKOTREND Slovakia	Slovakia	www.ecotrend.sk
Mr	Carlos	Soledad	Slow Food Convivium Alto Palancia	Spain	
Ms	Marina	Guédon	Forum Synergies	Spain	www.forum-synergies.eu
Ms	Gumus Burcu	Gezeroglu	MUTFAK DOSTLARI DERNEGI (MDD)	Turkey	www.mutfakdostlari.org.tr
Mr	Vargin	Boy	General Directorate of Agriculture in Kars	Turkey	
Mr	Rostyslav	Kos	NGO "Assosiation Karpatske kolo"	Ukraine	



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