

FORUM SYNERGIES

Linking Sustainable Practices throughout Europe



Political Training Session

28-30 May 2010

in Pierrerue, Haute-Provence, FR



**Let's prepare our messages from the
country side....**

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Draft Programme

Friday 28 th May 2010 – arrival day	
	▪
17:00 – 19:30	▪ Understanding of the current CAP reform process and the ARC process
19:30	Diner
Saturday 29 th May 2010	
morning	▪ Introduction of the political training session: working on the contents of the messages (from local situations to political messages): Working groups and plenary
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
afternoon	▪ Working on the shape of the messages
	▪ Official General Assembly: financial report approval of new members
Sunday 30 th May 2010	
morning	▪ Organizing our participation in the ARC process
12:30	Lunch, departure

Minutes

- Hannes is reporting about the ARC process, the time frame with regard to the EU CAP reform process and the options for action. He points out the specificity of the ARC process which tries to come out with a concerted common message from civil society which stands in strong contrast to the exercise the commission has started where everybody is invited to contribute to somewhat like a black box of a big variety of different position statements.
- Participants gather topics which are relevant to the actual political discussion and which might be relevant for the ARC process:
 - Health
 - Organic/ ecological farming
 - Rural poverty and increasing nationalism
 - Small scale family farming
 - Land grabbing and access to land; community connected farming
 - Ownership of renewable energy
 - Corporate social responsibility
 - Education for sustainability
 - Transmission of traditional knowledges (-> link to Farmers Ecology)
 - Communication on EU legislation
 - How to implement more democracy in rural areas
 - How to maintain the population in rural areas
 - Understanding cultural differences / richness of diversity
 - New perception of values – money is not all...
- Creation of 3 working groups:
 - **Health**, integrating the topics organic/ ecological farming; education for sustainability; transmission of traditional knowledge
group leader: Simone
 - **Rural poverty and disadvantage**, integrating the topics reappearing nationalism; democracy; corporate social responsibilities
group leader: Marta
 - **Look to the local**, integrating the topics land grabbing, community connected farming, linking farmers and local communities to revive rural areas
group leader: Jocelyn

We had 2 rounds of discussion the leaders staying at their original place and welcoming another group in order to deepen and focussing the messages.

The main points and messages from each group were then compiled to a common document “Messages from Haute Provence” (see in Annexe). This basic document shall be put on the ARC website and also build the basis for the creation of discussion groups on the ARC website. The document shall moreover be supplemented by cases studies, success stories, maybe interviews or video clips.

Participants

Titus	Bahner	Katemerer Mühlenbachtal e.V
Philippe	Barret	Forum Synergies
Mara	Bergmane	Upmail Farm; Eco health farms
Jean-Maurice	Bonnefond	
Jean-Daniel	Gallandat	Biocoop
Marina	Guedon	Forum Synergies
Hannes	LORENZEN	Forum Synergies
Wojtek	Magnowski	Forum Synergies
Márta	Marczis	UNDP Regional Center for Europe and the CIS
Simone	Matouch	Natur- & Kräuterwerkstatt Lesachtal
Gabriela	Micevska	CeProSARD Center For Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and rural development
Jocelyn	Parot	Urgenci International Network Coordinator
Jane	Paunkovic	Faculty of Management
Jeanine	Sochas	Association d'animation du Beaufortain (Savoie)
Sirje	Vinni	Estonian Village Movement KODUKANT
Marek	Zabek	Dolina Strugu development initiative



FORUM SYNERGIES: Look to the local!



A message from a European network of sustainable practices to the ARC process

Towards a new framework of policies

Europe needs a new framework of policies which supports people in finding local solutions to the challenges we face today. We are worried about growing poverty and vulnerability of rural economies and communities; about the reappearing of nationalism which grows upon economic insecurity and the exclusion of a growing number of people from decent livelihoods; about unsustainable farming practices and about unfair distribution of public money.

We are engaged as European citizens for policies which enable people to take responsibility where they feel at home. We believe that sustainable land use and more democratic decision-making shall be at the very heart of policy reforms which are ahead of us. We want to see more education and capacity building for farmers and consumers so that they can produce and consume healthy food as a rule, not as an exception. We want policies which provide enough and healthy food for all, while preserving the environment and the capacity of eco-systems so that they can regenerate the living resources we depend upon.

We want to tackle rural poverty and growing disadvantage of people in rural areas by adapting the rhythm and the speed of development programmes to the people. Subsidies and rural development programmes which aimed at making agriculture and rural regions more competitive in global markets have left too many people more vulnerable and excluded. If EU programmes enter and leave rural areas like high speed trains they increase the differences between rich and poor. Instead of forcing people to migrate to growing cities, public policies and support should strengthen the social fabric of rural areas instead of dividing people into winners and losers.

We want policies which preserve and create values beyond money. If governments or private enterprises invest in land or rural infrastructure they should respect a number of social and environmental principles which prevent further exploitation of nature and people. We want states and enterprises to put money where sustainable practices and lifestyle grows, not where these are further systematically undermined.

We believe that in order to avoid further disconnection between people living in rural and in urban regions, policies for education and capacity building should first give them more responsibilities and influence in decision-making; - then more competence and more democratic decision-making will follow. Instead of subsidizing and compensating farmers, policies should contribute to more self-help and self-organising. We do not believe that simply more information through the internet will create better cooperation between people living in rural and in urban areas. We want better quality of communication, and more recognition of local knowledge.

A new approach to Public Health

Healthy food is at the very beginning of a healthy life. We do not believe that public health is just a question of access to medicines and curatives. For us, the key word is sustainable and organic farming as well as a sustainable lifestyle. In order to avoid a vicious circle of bad food, obesity and public illness, we need first and foremost a more inclusive education in sustainable production and responsible consumption practices. We wish policy makers to take a fresh look at local knowledge in order to deal with the challenges of dwindling resources and increased demand for food. A broad access to local know-how which promotes public health is not a question of business but a priceless common treasure.

Look to the local

Farming and food as well as land and natural resources should not become hostage of speculation. They are essential elements of our European food culture and biodiversity. We deplore a growing disconnection between people, their land and sufficient and healthy food production. We see ever more people losing interest in cultivating land as they have lost trust in a common future, in a decent livelihood and in a European community.

We call for policies which stop land grabbing and speculation with food commodities. We reject exclusive rights on seeds or animal breeds through patenting or other exclusive rights. Speculative investments of large companies are disconnecting farmers and communities from the land and food resources. We want policies which restore responsibility of land owners and land buyers towards the local communities. We say: If you join our community, you are welcome – if you just invest money, you are not.

We want to see the “polluter pays” principle to be strictly applied. Local actors must be empowered to oppose massive and irresponsible land purchases. We wish to see community farming, farmer-consumer cooperatives to be supported, instead of allowing big supermarket chains to extend their dominant market power. We want policies which provide rural infrastructure adapted to local marketing, small slaughter houses, dairy industries, as well as hygiene rules which allow farmers to keep and reinvest their added values in their communities and regions. We want innovation through decentralized and bottom-up research. We want food and rural services with identity.

EU farm and rural policies must re-localise food-production and re-connect farmers and their local communities. Farmers and consumers must create a new kind of market ownership. We prefer small scaled structures, and infrastructure, because they can offer decent work for more people and reconnect us to the specific resources and conditions of food and agricultural production.

Forum Synergies has something to offer. A wide range of experiences and success stories in sustainable rural development; engaged European citizens to contribute to the urgent change needed in policies; and - if necessary - a good deal of resistance against an economy and a lifestyle which undermines our common achievements of democracy and solidarity.

Forum Synergies

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