

NYÉLÉNI EUROPE MOVEMENT FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

THE EUROPEAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY MOVEMENT IS GROWING!

All over Europe, initiatives and groups of activists are contributing to the rapid development of the Food Sovereignty Movement. With regard to the current political and economic environment, the austerity policies and the failure of the CAP reform, advancing our Movement is now more necessary than ever.

The diversity of the Movement is one of our greatest assets, as it enables us to undertake several approaches in our endeavours, making us stronger. It is essential, nevertheless, to develop joint strategies, actions and tools in order to address the common challenges and obstacles which stand against Food Sovereignty and the implementation of a different agri-food system.

Austria was the host country of the Nyéléni 2011 European Food Sovereignty Forum. Organising the Forum was an important catalyst for the Austrian Food Sovereignty Movement. Ever since the Forum was held, the number of people working on the creation of a food and agriculture system based on solidarity and sustainability has been on the rise. But, we feel that we need another moment of common reflection. This is why, we decided to organise Nyéléni Austria; an Austrian Food Sovereignty Forum in 2014.

We want to learn from each other's experiences in resisting agricultural corporations and the politics of the elite. We would like to recall the various conflicts that accompanied the creation of an agri-food system based on Food Sovereignty. The diversity of the people involved in the Nyeleni process enables us to learn from one another. However, we also need the willingness to reflect on our practices and strive for consistency.

In April 2014 Nyeleni Austria will take place. We are convinced that this is an important step to strengthen and broaden the Food Sovereignty Movement in Austria. We will build our Forum on the Declaration and the Plan of Action of Nyéléni Europe – carrying forward and contributing to our common European struggle for Food Sovereignty and another agri-food system.

(Irmi Salzer, Nyéléni Europe Committee)

The process of the Nyéléni Europe Forum was initiated by the European Coordination Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth Europe, ATTAC Europe, Vredeseilanden, the IPC for Food Sovereignty, and the International March of Women. Urgenci and many other European and national organisations joined the process.

"We call upon the people and social movements in Europe to engage, together with us, in all our struggles to take control of our food systems and build the Movement for Food Sovereignty in Europe NOW!" (Nyéléni Europe Declaration, 2011)

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NOW!



WORKING GROUP UPDATES

1. MODELS OF PRODUCTION

AGROECOLOGY AND DEMOCRATISING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Agroecology criticises the dominant monoculture model, which is dependent on external inputs, maximises yield as the main criterion for success and neglects environmental constraints and goals. As a social movement Agroecology challenges the social effects of Agro-Industrialisation and the globalised market economy, exploring alternatives based on autonomy, participation and the careful use of resources.

Much is moving in this direction and various examples are seen in Europe. Several farmer, social and research organisations met in Bruxelles in June to discuss a “transformative agenda” for Agroecology in Europe. A common concrete proposal was recently finalised with the presentation of a COST Action project, aimed at setting up a more structured network of like-minded scientific and producer organisations in the area of Agroecology investigation.

European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) members are involved in a Grundtvig exchange programme focused on Agroecology with the objective of ensuring that the principles and agroecological practices and their contribution to sustainable development become better known and shared by farmers, consumers, policy makers, as well as the general public. Another Grundtvig project involving 4 partners in IT, CH, FR and the UK will debate on how to democratise agricultural research (first meeting in Rome at the end of January) and will attempt to match the scope and initiatives of ECVC. The idea, in this case, is to exchange current farmer innovation and on-farm experimentation practices and to discuss any pertinent political implications of research governance institutions at the national, EU and international level.

This latest project follows on from the St. Ulrich (German Black Forest, end of September 2013) event on Peasant Agrarian Culture and Food Sovereignty, which brought together over 60 people from European and Southern countries. Food Sovereignty refers to the endogenous development of locally controlled food systems based on high biological and cultural diversity. This is a radically different perspective from that of mainstream institutions today; universities, policy think-tanks, governments, donor organisations. Many experiences are emerging and there is a growing need for both mutual exchange and institutional recognition.



2. CHANGING HOW FOOD IS DISTRIBUTED

THE EUROPEAN CSA MOVEMENT: RUNNING THE RACE AGAINST AGRIFOOD BUSINESS ON TWO LEGS, GRASSROOTS' EXCHANGES AND ADVOCACY

Urgenci, the network of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movements, is growing thanks to practical exchanges between field actors and advocacy actions, which influence legal and institutional framework. These are the two dimensions of CSA. It is both an immediate way of saving or creating thousands of farms and a way of implementing Food Sovereignty on a daily basis.

However, it is also a message sent to the institutions; committed citizens are calling for the end to the absolute power that a few corporations possess over the food chains, assisted by an army of lobbyists. The latest news from Urgenci follows these two dimensions; practical exchanges and advocacy.

The successful CSA4Europe project has just been closed, with the unique European Handbook on CSA as an outcome for the next generations of CSA militants. Yet, activist-to-activist and farmer-to-farmer exchanges keep flourishing. Here is just one example; around 30 CSA practitioners from 7 different countries met in Lyon 10-12 October of this year, in the framework of 2 different European exchange projects. It should be noted that one of these projects concerns “Logistics of Short Circuit Food Systems”. As a sign that the values of CSA can successfully be extended to other Distribution systems for Food Sovereignty, visits to AlterConso and De la Ferme au Quartier were conducted. As with the CSA, these two initiatives are contract-based partnerships, requiring a pre-payment from the consumers. However, the difference is that contrary to most CSA, they are based on an intermediary; a small-scale cooperative.

Apart from European exchanges, there is an increase in conferences with the objective of sharing experiences. For example, there was the International Conference on Short Supply Chains in Estella, Navarra, 26-27 October, organised by Ecologistasenaccion.

The second dimension, Advocacy, suddenly developed this Autumn. The CSA movements, both Western European and Eastern European, were very active during the Regional Consultation in Brussels (11-12 September) of the Civil Society Mechanism, a consultative body for the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Thanks to their action, the input in the 40th Session of the Committee for Food Security session in Rome proved extremely valuable.

Urgenci and the Belgian GASAP network also participated in a public hearing at the European Parliament in Brussels, 18 October. Click on the hyperlinks to watch the videos from these interventions.

Cross Border Fertilisation and Advocacy: the European CSA movement will keep running fast on two legs to win THE race against productivist agri-food businesses.

FOR THEIR RIGHTS AND FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY. FARMWORKERS “WITHOUT BOSS” OF SOC SAT OCCUPIED A GREENHOUSE IN ALMERIA

Andalusia is characterised by strong land concentration - 50 % of agricultural land is owned by 2% - and by a heavily industrialized agriculture, epitomised in the 40,000 hectares intensive cultivation under greenhouses in Almeria. Here, more than 3 million tons of fruits and vegetables are produced annually, from which 70% are exported to Central and Northern Europe. Around 100.000 farm workers, mostly migrants, work in the greenhouses under severe physical and socially precarious conditions for an agricultural system that claims production at the lowest level of costs, for the benefit of the major exporters and traders of the agricultural market.

In an economically and socially weak region with an increasing level of unemployment, SOC SAT (Union of Agricultural Workers - Andalusia Workers Union) has been fighting for 35 years for land and natural resources by land occupations, by establishing cooperatives and by developing an ecological and socially equitable agricultural model. This year, the first time, land occupation in the middle of the “plastic sea” of Almeria was successful. In the beginning of May 2013, more than 100 workers and SOC-SAT activists decided not to accept their collective destiny anymore, and occupied a greenhouse of 30 hectares, owned by the agricultural entrepreneur Simon Sabio.

Facing a debt of nearly 2 million euros and numerous legal manoeuvres, the workers coming mostly from Morocco keep controlling this area, in order to prevent the infrastructure of the greenhouses from being owned by other companies. Last August, lacking solutions, the SAT-SOC initiated to cultivate a piece of land and to produce food for families with locally organised (short chain) distribution. The workers demand a legal way of acquisition of the greenhouses. In case another company would hire these greenhouses, they should guarantee to further employ earlier workers. The defence of working conditions and rights goes hand in hand with the struggle for an agricultural model based on the idea of Agroecology and Food Sovereignty.

Contact, support and more information: www.satalmeria.blogspot.com.es and www.socalmeria.wordpress.com
socalmeria@yahoo.es, sober.alim.sindicatoandaluz@gmail.com

VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE OF LAND, FISHERIES AND FORESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY

The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security have been officially endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security on 11 May 2012. Since then the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has organised ten regional workshops to evaluate the document and see how it can be implemented.

At the European workshop held in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 28-30 October 2013, the representatives of different European CSOs had the possibility to present their interpretations of and their questions concerning the Tenure Guidelines. The following is a short summary of this presentation:

What do we want to implement in the upcoming months?

We need a clear legal framework to preserve the rights to farm and to feed our families as well as secure and promote access to land for small-scale food producers and sustainable agriculture. The implementation of TG could be an opportunity to define a clear framework to ensure the access of the European small-scale farmers and food producers to natural resources.

Even though the TG are not an internationally binding instrument of developing hard law, they do constitute new soft law. They have deep roots with human rights and, as such, they provide a guide for governments on how to improve the governance of land and natural resources in the respect of human rights obligations.

The study of Hands Off the Land (made by TNI, Via Campesina, FIAN and national organisations, entitled: *Land concentration, land grabbing and people's struggles in Europe*) raises awareness on the European relevancy of land grabbing by documenting concrete cases of unequal access to land and land grabbing.

In this sense, we call on European States to respect their existing obligations and implement the TG. As they are based on international human rights laws, they touch upon principles of implementation and clearly outline that the tenure of land, fisheries and forests is not a matter of business, but a fundamental right to be recognised, respected and guaranteed.

For these reasons, in order to implement the TG, we demand that:

1. European countries do not limit the implementation of the TG in the Global South and Eastern Europe. European Countries have to revise current national policies which contribute to the increase of the concentration of land while discriminating and marginalising small-scale farmers and young people. European policies also have negative impacts on human rights outside of Europe;
2. States recognise that TG were adopted and constitute soft law, and they implement the principles of the TG as a whole and not only an optional list of the best practices;
3. The European Union adopt a special EU directive on the access to land for small-scale farmers, farm-wages workers and prospective farmers in order to invite the European Commission to take actions against land concentration and land grabbing at the EU level;
4. FAO plays its role by facilitating neutral round tables and multi-stakeholder platforms, especially in conflict situations or when initiated by social movements and/or CSOs. We propose that FAO convene a workshop in Western Europe (Brussels) as it has already done in other regions.

EU-US TRADE DEAL

Negotiations between the European Union and the United States on a transatlantic trade deal – the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – began in July 2013. These trade talks could have significant negative impacts on food and farming on both sides of the Atlantic.

In both Europe and the US small-scale farms and family farms are being driven out of business. In effect, the current economic approach and on-going trade talks, such as the TTIP, treat farmers simply as raw material producers. They effectively ignore the fact that farms produce food for people, are fundamental to local rural economies, interact with ecosystems and play a major role in the protection of biodiversity and soil fertility.

Tariffs on agricultural goods being traded between the US and the EU are already extremely low. Rather than focus on further small reductions, the aim of the TTIP is to focus on lowering or removing the rules and standards that govern what kind of food is being produced and how — even if those rules have been put in place democratically. One way of achieving this is to establish a system in which substances or products that are deemed safe in one country or region are automatically accepted in the other. This means that imports are permitted even when they do not meet the specified standards of the importing country.

This deregulatory process could have a dramatic impact on our food and farming system.

For example, it could lead to:

- significantly reduced information for consumers regarding the ingredients in their food and challenges to emerging EU and US rules on GMO labelling;
- the presence of more toxic and potentially toxic substances, such as pesticides and genetically modified products, in our food;
- the relaxation of standards governing food production, including how meat can be treated;
- restrictions on 'buy local' public procurement programmes, e.g. for school meals
- the enhancement of control over the food chain for a handful of transnational conglomerations.

The negotiations are happening behind closed doors and the actual decisions are kept confidential. Civil society organisations are calling for transparency and are told that they should trust the negotiators. Friends of the Earth Europe demands that the trade talks should not:

- introduce new commitments on any areas dealing with food safety, animal or plant health;
- create rules that would limit local decision-making on public procurement and regulation, especially with respect to farm-to-school programmes and other local efforts to improve food systems;
- hamper labelling laws that give consumers more information about their food.

More information can be found:

http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foe_iatp_factsheet_ttip_food_oct13.pdf



WOMEN

On 15 October 2013, GEORGIA celebrated the International Day of Rural Woman.

The event was the exhibition/sale of local produce by 50 women farmers from different parts of Georgia that came to Kachreti (Region Georgia), along with the participation of the government and MPs, as well as representatives of NGO/CSO and international organisations.



FINE TREADS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: FORUM FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN CROATIA, 26/27. OCTOBER

For the second time the Green Network of activist groups was organising the local Food Sovereignty Forum in Croatia with the title, Fine treads of local development. The Forum took place in city of Velika Gorica in October 26/27.2013.

Two main topics were discussed; the question -how to protect our local varieties and animal breads, and the issue - how to encourage different models of short chains between producers and consumers. We presented several successful initiatives from all over Croatia, aiming to give an answer to problems that affect us all and encourage participants to find priorities and possible models of cooperation through open dialogue. In the framework of discussions held on Saturday and Sunday participants presented their products and initiatives at the fair in the city centre together with two other traditional events that promote local heritage and gastronomy (Gastro-Turopolje and Apples Day).

City of Velika Gorica has a symbolic role as the location for the Food Sovereignty Forum. Last year the building of local green marketplace was rented to supermarket chain Billa. As the construction works for adaptation started, the marketplace moved to the street under the tent. The local farmers, who make their living by selling their products there, still didn't know where the location of the new market place would be. Most likely, it would be in the lobby of the supermarket, emphasizing the contrast between the small, local and big international food chains.

SAVE KISHANTOS (HUNGARY) !!!

Save Kishantos, Hungary's outstanding organic farm and education centre!

Kishantos has been serving sustainability and democracy in Hungary for 21 years. It is a Folk High School Centre with a 452-hectare organic demonstration farm. Kishantos is threatened to become victim of land grabbing. We can save Kishantos with your help.

Kishantos Rural Development Centre in Hungary is an NGO based civil institution on the basis of a grassroots initiative by local people. The centre has two main parts: the Folk High School Centre and the organic demonstration farm of 452 hectares. Its main mission is to help the people gain up-to-date knowledge and to spread the idea of sustainability and democracy. The organic demonstration farm surrounds the education centre.

For the past twenty years Kishantos has worked with the local society of the village Hantos in Hungary. The main goal of that programme is to offer experiences for young Hungarian people on democracy and sustainability in practice. The leasing contract of the 452 hectares of state-owned land is valid until 31 October 2013. However, last October the Hungarian Land Fund (representing the State as the owner) called for rent to be paid for the lands of the organic demonstration farm, for an open application in ten lots. According to the decision of the Hungarian Land Fund, the Kishantos Nonprofit Company is going to lose all the land of the organic demonstration farm (452 hectares) as of 1st November 2013.

Kishantos is working for the common good, for sustainability, for democracy, for a safe future for our children and grandchildren. We should not let it disappear!

More information: http://lmv.hu/Save_Kishantos

ECVC ORGANIZES A BIG DEMONSTRATION AND CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 21ST IN BRUSSELS!

The upcoming reform on Seed marketing, animal and plant health and controls on the food chain will be voted in the agricultural commission of the European Parliament on January 20th or 21st in Brussels. Farmers from throughout Europe will be present those days in front of the European Parliament to defend their rights to exchange seeds, which are at the basis of Food Sovereignty. Please join and support this action, in order to put more weight on the necessary recognition of farmers rights to freely exchange and reproduce their seeds, and protect themselves against the patented seeds of the industry!

The demonstration will be followed by theoretical and/or practical workshops on different topics (farmers seeds, patents, the Eu legislation...), and a big conference on the strategies to resist and improve those new European laws.



UPCOMING EVENTS

25-28 November, 2013, Brazil: International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Meeting

29 November, 2013, Brussels: Conference "Family farming: A dialogue towards more sustainable and resilient farming in Europe and the world"

6-7 January, 2014, Oxford: Oxford Real Farming Conference

21st January, 2014, Brussels: Big seeds demonstration, organized by ECVC

24 January, 2014, The Hague, Netherlands: Food Sovereignty: A critical dialogue

March, 2014, Norway: Farmers Agroecology 2nd meeting

8-9. March, 2014, Groningen, Netherlands: 3rd 'Reclaim the Seeds' weekend

SHARE INFORMATION ON THE NYÉLÉNI EUROPE WEBISTE

send us information (texts, calls, videos, photos, etc) and share you news with all in the Movement
INFO@NYELENIEUROPE.NET

RECLAIM THE SEEDS IN THE NETHERLANDS

At the beginning of March a 'Reclaim the Seeds' weekend took place in Den Bosch. The weekend contained a seed swap, information stalls, a workshop programme and some local food actions.

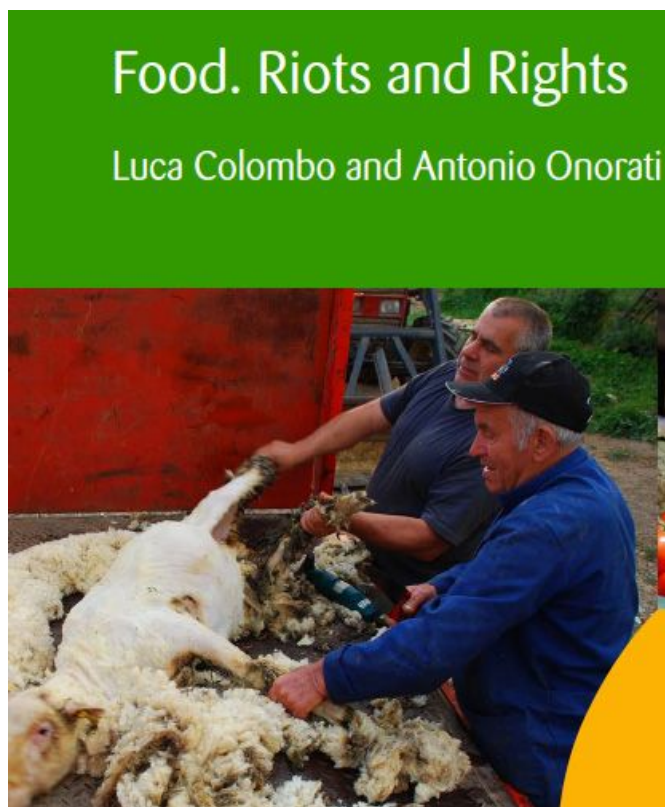
The third 'Reclaim the Seeds' weekend will take place on 8/9 March 2014 in Groningen in the North East of the Netherlands, once again organised by local seed activists with some involvement of ASEED. Seed savers from the North West of Germany are cordially invited to join this event as well. For more info on the previous and upcoming Reclaim the Seeds events in the Netherlands, go to <http://reclaimtheseeds.nl>

BOOK: FOOD. RIOTS AND RIGHTS

The Centro Internazionale Crocevia (CIC) and the Fondazione Italiana per la Ricerca in Agricoltura Biologica e Biodinamica (FIRAB) announce the publication of the book "Food, Riots and Rights", published in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The book, available in electronic version, is the updated and adapted English version of *Diritti al cibo! Agricoltura sapiens e governance alimentare*, written by Luca Colombo and Antonio Onorati (Jaca Book ed.).

The book focuses on the root causes and the power games behind the recent global food crisis, finally acknowledged to be of a structural nature. The main request then was for food and economic justice, since Riots and Rights have often been two sides of the same coin in the past.

It is available for download along with free access to www.croceviaterra.it and www.firab.it (a more direct link: <http://www.firab.it/site/food-riots-and-rights/>)



**NEXT EDITION OF THE NYELENI EUROPE NEWSLETTER:
SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS, NEWS, STORIES, PHOTOS OR OTHER MATERIALS
TO INFO@NYELENIEUROPE.NET 15TH JANUARY!**

WE WILL TRANSFORM OUR FOOD SYSTEMS IN EUROPE AND RECLAIM COMMUNITY CONTROL.

WE WILL RESIST THE EXPANSION OF AGRO-INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEMS IN EUROPE AND OTHER REGIONS.

WE WILL BUILD OUR MOVEMENT FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ACROSS EUROPE.

(NYÉLÉNI EUROPE ACTION PLAN, 2011)