



FINAL REPORT
ABOUT THE FIRST EUROPEAN MEETING
ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE
AND EMERGING DISTRIBUTION
SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Milan, Cascina Cuccagna
10th – 12th October 2012

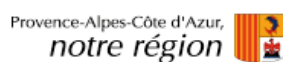






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Layout: Anna Korzenszky
Photos: SERGIU???????, Anna Korzenszky



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INTRODUCTION

The Urgenci-Europe Umbrella is launched! The first European meeting on Community Supported Agriculture and Emerging Distribution Systems for Food Sovereignty was held over three days from 10-12 October 2012, in Milan. The landmark event welcomed 120 participants representing 20 different European countries, from Ireland to Turkey and from Portugal to Lithuania. It was drafted as a continuation of the Nyeleni Europe process, launched in Krems (Austria) in August 2011, and as an enactment of the Nyeleni Europe Declaration on Food Sovereignty. Urgenci had indeed been mandated to pursue the actions foreseen in axis 2 of the declaration, on changing the way food is distributed and consumed.

The preparation of this meeting, in which about 30 Steering Committee members were involved, and which was articulated at around 3 working sessions in Milan, led to the emergence of a new kernel of actors that are extremely engaged in the project.

The meeting itself was a highlight for all the European movement for Food Sovereignty, not only for Urgenci, gathering CSA actors to speak about local and solidarity-based partnerships between producers and consumers in the different European countries, and how to structure them as a movement at the continental level.

The common ground for all these actors is their everyday work to run CSAs. Yet, there is also a shared feeling that coordination is necessary at the European level.

The outcomes of this working meeting should enable the fledgling European coordination to position itself in a long-term perspective. The movement is embattled; it is now the duty of the working groups to progress on the roadmap designed collectively in Milan.





WORKING GROUP AXIS 1

COMMUNICATION, DECENTRALISED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

The starting principle of Axis 1 is to create decentralized knowledge and experience -sharing tools to enable the CSA movement, and all the alternative food distribution systems contributing to food sovereignty, to grow and develop, independent from institutions. The goal is to reinforce this spontaneous movement, instead of restraining it.

In order to serve these goals, the axis participants clarified their will to set the basis for a Europe-wide communication platform that would be designed for and used by those who are active in CSA as well as all others who are taking part in projects that aim to change the way our food is distributed. These actors include farmers, consumers, activists, agricultural workers, researchers, landowners and journalists, but this list is not comprehensive.

The aim of Axis 1 was to answer the following question: how can we connect these activists from all across Europe, so that they can support each other and share knowledge and ideas in a decentralized and open way? The axis was organised into two different working groups: working group 1A on the one hand, focusing on online tools as a way to serve the needs of the movement while preserving its diversity and dynamics; and working group 1B on the other hand, focusing on face-to-face exchanges and experience sharing projects.

AXIS 1 WORKING GROUP 1A

ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The group surveyed with precision what the actors in alternative food distribution systems are and what needs they have. It chose to use the word alternative food distribution systems, rather than CSA, in order to avoid drawing the borders of our movement on a reductive technical basis. AFDS is actually a terminology that had been used previously in the Building Blocks – group (from the Nyeleni Europe meeting, see below). The group tried to specify this with respect to possible online tools. One topic that came up very often was mapping, meaning designing and completing an interactive map of initiatives.

Another widely discussed issue was online access to knowledge and to good practice in alternative food distribution systems. The focus was on the information created by the Building Blocks e-list and the CSA4Europe face-to-face exchange.

1.1.1 WHAT DID ALL AGREE ON?

We all agreed to develop a European map that would combine all the existing regional maps of AFDS. The experience collected in the Building Blocks and the CSA4Europe Toolkit will be pooled and be presented online. Both will be displayed on the same website. A clear mandate from the participants to the meeting has been given to the appropriate working groups to carry both projects.

The blocks and toolkit will be finalised by the Grundtvig teams. Jan Valeska of PRO-BIO LIGA, Czech Republic will be in charge of this process.



A specification for the map and the knowledge pool will be prepared in synchronization with the timeline of the Urgenci website upgrading.

The working group, will stay in touch with the company hosting Urgenci's website, in order to define how the map will be working and added to the homepage.

A short summary about the purpose and usability of the online tool for regional partners will be prepared. Regional partners will be contacted after the new version of the Urgenci website is online, in order to feed the map with information. All information has to be presented so as not to harm the conditions set by the organisers of the initiatives presented on the mapping tool. Their privacy and diversity shall not be threatened.

1.1.2 WHAT WILL BE DONE AND WHEN?

The main connections are obviously to the "face-to-face" group and the researchers group. There should be a link to the Kernel that has been mandated to prepare concrete proposals on the forms of organisation for Urgenci-Europe. In the final plenary the issue of using an online, open source tool for decision-making and for communication with grassroots initiatives was briefly discussed, thus opening the way for further exchanges.

1.1.3 WHERE CAN THE WORKING GROUPS CONNECT TO (OTHER GROUPS, ASSOCIATIONS, THEMATIC FIELDS)?

The possibilities to build a communication tool for all participants to the meeting and even for the movement in general were left open.

The funding and the maintenance cost of an online tool shall be discussed more thoroughly. Additionally, there was no decision whether this is to be better addressed within the online group or in a separate group working on financial issues. Those are key discussions to be continued in the future.

1.1.4 WHAT REMAINED UN- DISCUSSED?

In the next meeting we will present an evaluation of the development process and the impact within the movement.

1.1.5 WHAT COULD (OR SHOULD) HAPPEN DURING THE NEXT EUROPEAN MEETING?





AXIS 1

WORKING GROUP 1B

1.2.1

AIM OF THE WORKING GROUP

FACE-TO-FACE EXCHANGES

The aims of this working group were to: 1) find out the role of face-to-face meetings; 2) identify the real-life multipliers for CSA and alternative food distribution systems; 3) list possibilities which can support face-to-face meetings (e.g. Grundtvig applications); 4) share experiences about ongoing initiatives (CSA4Europe and Building Blocks) and 5) think about future experience sharing in decentralised way.

1.2.2

WHAT WAS DISCUSSED MOST?

The emphasis in Group1B has been primarily on Grundtvig Life-Long Learning Partnerships. After all of the participants had become familiar with the application, experiences about "CSAforEurope" project were shared and new partnership ideas came into life as well (e.g. Grundtvig about logistics).

The Building Blocks idea and document were also presented at the meeting. Since the Nyeleni Europe Meeting on Food Sovereignty in Krems (Austria), in August 2011, the Building Blocks group has been defining the essential building blocks necessary to establish and run Alternative Food Distribution Systems and identified the gaps and missing elements (the tools which still need to be created/developed).

We also collected ideas that could help framing an open network for CSAs and food distribution systems for food sovereignty. These were the following:

- the network should be opened not just to consumers and activists, but also to farmers and researchers, and room should be left to identify other constituencies that could naturally join the network;
- the network should continue building a common ground;
- the network should come up with a common strategy, to be developed in a joint, transparent and collective process;
- ambassadorship or ownership of the network should be developed;
- the network should support the creation of organisational tools (like screening methods or logistics).

1.2.3

WHAT DID ALL AGREE UPON?

The participants to the group agreed that face-to-face meetings on international and local levels are essential for experience sharing; physical meetings strengthen motivation and give energy.

We also agreed that European meetings should be followed by national meetings in order to share the information and experience with farmers and consumers who cannot be involved in the European movement. There is definitely a need to have more farmers on the next European Meeting.

The final conclusion was that no transversal working group is needed for the topic "face-to-face meetings", because with the use of online tools and Grundtvig or Leonardo funds, physical meetings can be organised within ad hoc working groups. These working groups will be created for the coordination of each European Union funded project, from its conception until its conclusion (if the application is successful, of course).





The task for the working groups should be to promote and stimulate new Grundtvig or Leonardo projects, taking into account the needs of different groups (e.g. farmers, consumers, researchers).

**1.2.4
WHAT WERE THE TASKS FOR
WORKING GROUPS ON THE MOST
DISCUSSED ISSUES?**

The working groups should connect to subgroup 1A (online tools). Online networking tools can be used for information and experience sharing, or for partner finding. We also agreed that connection with national groups and initiatives are necessary in order to foster information sharing and networking.

**1.2.5
WHERE CAN THE WORKING
GROUPS CONNECT TO?**

The most appropriate date of the next European meeting and its planning were not among the issues the group touched upon.

Participants agreed they should continue to think about how general information can be shared online, and how online tools could help the preparation of face-to-face meetings. For example, how to share information about on-going Grundtvig projects or collect advice for partners who are drafting an application.

The participants of subgroup 1B also agreed that in the perspective of the next European Meeting more farmers should be involved.

**1.2.6
WHAT REMAINED UN-
DISCUSSED?
WHAT DISCUSSION NEEDS TO
BE CONTINUED?**

The following ideas might help:

- think about the season and organise the meeting when farmers are not so busy;
- limit the number of days of the meeting;
- adapt the agenda to the needs of farmers;
- organise the meeting on an active farm (*Cascina Cuccagna* is not a farm any more);
- put food at the centre of our activities (harvest together /cook together).





WORKING GROUP AXIS 2

ALLIANCES AND ADVOCACY

Many of the alternative food distribution systems in Europe, be they CSAs or other forms of farmer – consumer partnership, are actively circumventing the existing model of corporate control over food and agricultural systems. At the same time, they are also providing numerous benefits to counteract the environmental, economic and social damages caused by the dominating food and agricultural model.

There are simultaneously a multitude of other movements also engaged in reassessing the existing social and economic context of how we live, interact and exchange. Many of these movements are based on reaffirming trust and solidarity as opposed to competition, and offer paths to realign our societies and economies in more effective and positive ways.

The European Meeting on CSA and Alternative Distribution Systems for Food Sovereignty aimed to bring together different representatives from these movements, in order to assess collectively how this multitude of threads can be woven into a stronger web. The final objective is to offer an interconnected alternative to European citizens to redevelop their food and agricultural systems.

Axis 2 precisely tried to improve the links between all the different movements in Europe in order to develop alternative food distribution systems. This attempt was framed from its beginning within the action plan for the axis 2 on “Changing the way food is distributed”, developed during the Nyeleni Europe Forum in Krems.

AXIS 2 WORKING GROUP 2A

2.2.1 AIM OF THE WORKING GROUP

PROJECTS AND ACTIONS DEVELOPED BY ALLIES

The following networks, movements and associations participated in this working group:

- the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Committee of the IFOAM, International Federation of Organic Agriculture movements;
- the Access to Land initiatives -network at the European level: Agronautes (Germany), Terre de Liens (France), Terre en vue (Belgium);
- Transition Town Network;
- Local and fair trade networks.

Exclusive information was shared about the activities of different existing organisations, and practical tools and networks were developed.

- The goals to be achieved through joint actions were identified;
- In particular, the PGS Committee, its activities, and its potential joint actions with the alternative distribution/CSA networks have been discussed widely.





COMMON ADVOCACY/POLICY ISSUES

The following networks, movements and associations participated in this working group:

- European Coordination Via Campesina;
- Nyeleni Europe Movement for Food Sovereignty;
- Researchers (Social impact evaluation, advocacy, capacity building, etc);
- Local and fair trade networks;
- RIPPES (Europe and International);
- The Civil Society Mechanism, of the Committee for Food Security of the FAO;
- The FoodSovCap network.

The purpose of this group was initially to work specifically on public policy issues that are important for CSA, e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Two opening questions keyed the group's sessions. First, how to more efficiently involve CSAs into the broader Nyeleni Europe Food Sovereignty Movement (communication, experience exchange, cooperation with farmers unions). The second question was to determine the next steps and action plan for a strengthened advocacy group.

Before splitting up into the two different subgroups, the participants presented the CSA situation in their countries. The countries that were represented in this meeting were, at least, France, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Wales, Croatia and Turkey. There were significant differences in the level of CSA activity and CSA networks development in all these countries.

There is potential for a more extensive mapping of the different levels of CSA networking (rather than a mapping of individual initiatives, already discussed in working group 1A) in different countries.

Participants were introduced to the role of **Participatory Guarantee Systems** and the advantages offered by such a self-organized mechanism, which respond to the needs of farmers and consumers in short supply chain –models.

A representative from **Transition towns** explained how TTs are continuously developing the methodology of resilience. The debate showed the potential for using the arguments around increased energy and food security as tools to develop rural and peri-urban CSA groups and networks. There was some discussion of looking at how to integrate Transition Towns into CSA networks.

There is a growing network in Europe working on the issue of **access to land**. There are differences in each country but an increasing need for joint initiatives.

There was also a broader discussion in axis 2A, which raised a number of suggestions and potential ways to move forward. One was the Development of local food sovereignty platforms with members from different networks, which can develop joint initiatives at local level. The other was continuing cross-network exchanges, focusing on capacity building in the CSA network.

AXIS 2 WORKING GROUP 2B

2.2.2 AIM OF THE WORKING GROUP

2.3 WHAT WAS DISCUSSED THE MOST?

2.3.1 THE MOST DISCUSSED ISSUES IN AXIS 2A

2.3.2 THE MOST DISCUSSED ISSUES IN AXIS 2B

The exchanges within this group were canalised by the achievements Urgenci had gained on two fronts. The first front is the Common Agricultural Policy Reform for 2013-2020. Urgenci has made a contribution during several consultations launched by the European Commission, by defending the role of CSA in Rural Development as well as in keeping smallholders based farming system.

Thus, public incentives to involve more citizens in CSA systems could help make rural areas more attractive. The second front is the Civil Society Mechanism, a consultative assembly that has recently been set by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to give the Civil Society Organisations a chance to participate to the work led by the Committee for Food Security (CFS).

The presence of Urgenci, as the organisation representing the CSA movement, is a major progress. But many questions should be answered to make sure the advocacy actions implemented by Urgenci are sustainable.

One of the key questions that kept coming to the foreground was the issue of representation. Who can Urgenci claim to represent? Which forms of organisation should be chosen to make sure that Urgenci represents farmers and/or consumers? How can we organise the work within the CSA movement in a more satisfying way?

Some elements, rather than a very articulated answer, were formulated: a group should be created in order to enlarge the participation in advocacy actions, which is up to now mainly concentrated in the very limited number of persons¹ who represent Urgenci in the formal dialogue structures. The group should work not only in a reactive way but also in a proactive way, as a force able to elaborate proposals. It would work as an interface between the network and the representatives of Urgenci in formal dialogue structures, promoting a debate in the network about the proposals to be presented.

What is interesting in Urgenci is that it is a **network of relationships** (between producers and 'consum'actors') before being a network of persons. Completing this idea, it has been stressed that we have to defend a conception of food as a global problem taking into account all the chains (from production to consumption) instead of the conventional position of EU, which concentrates policies almost only on the side of production. To give continuity to this discussion, **the proposal is to organize a specific 2-day meeting on advocacy**. The objective of this meeting would be to analyse the existing policies and to elaborate concrete proposals to be discussed in the network and presented after that in the formal dialogue structures.

Several critiques were thus clearly expressed and could be summarized this way: first, the link between those leading advocacy actions and the base of the network is missing; second, our core business is the link between producers and consumers and they should get more attention, even in our advocacy strategy.

¹Among them, the President of the International Committee, the decision-making body governing Urgenci, the General Secretary, a Special Envoy and 3 other advisors.

There was a consensus on the following decisions and actions to take:

1. A campaign should be launched at the European level to promote CSA, in conjunction with other Movements, like Nyeleni-Europe. This campaign should build its legitimacy on the need to influence not only the production system but the whole food chain;
2. More advocacy actions should be taken towards specific issues. But Urgenci should not limit itself to reacting on policies, but should instead rather make proposals. The experts team working on policy proposals concerning CSA and alternative distribution systems should be enlarged;
3. A CSA Mentor System should be implemented—"Godfather system" –, in order to multiply a domino effect with small input (some voluntary work). Urgenci should facilitate the implementation of such a system, probably with long term Grundtvig partners;
4. A pedagogical document should be developed in order to strengthen the work with researchers and academics about existing CSA initiatives. The Action Research initiatives should be systematically connected to our network.

Those exploring the Mentor/"Godfather" system should connect to the working group in charge of mapping the different activities concerning CSA and AFDS in Europe in order to map the needs for such a system.

2.4

**WHAT DID ALL AGREE ON?
WHAT DISUSSION NEEDS TO BE
CONTINUED IN THE FUTURE?**

2.5

**WHERE CAN THE WORKING
GROUPS CONNECT TO? (Other
groups, associations, thematic
fields?)**





CONSTITUENCY GROUPS

FARMER-TO-FARMER MEETING

The farmer-to-farmer meeting turned out to be a meeting between farmers, aspiring farmers and emerging farmers. It was also said that the farmer-to-farmer component was underrepresented. Consequently, the group focused on the reasons for such a low representation of farmers (8 farmers only were among the participants to the meeting): the cultural reasons, the lack of interest and the timing of the meeting were among the reasons for such a low participation. The group then entered a discussion on how to better involve producers in this whole process and in order to avoid a strict separation between farmers and consumers in the whole process and also inside certain CSA projects. One solution is probably to build and strengthen connections between the CSA initiatives and the farmers' movements whenever it is possible to do so.

Two other inputs from the farmer-to-farmer group came from Ehne-Biscaye, a farmers' union in the Basque Country that could be an inspiration for a lot of people in Europe that are trying to develop an alternative way of distribution. The first input is that political education, through farmers' unions, is important, not only technical training: acquiring land to start a direct selling farm is stepping out of the market system, out of the market competition in a way. The role of the union is to give a powerful meaning to these kind of actions, and to give concrete support. The second input is about the word: Ehne Biscaye farmers do not use the word *clients*, they are not even talking about consumers, because this word is linked to the world of consumption and thus to the global market. They are now talking about *support groups*. The group encouraged all the participants to look for other words, other ways of naming us because we are trying to think and act in other ways. And words are important!

RESEARCHERS

The researchers' group, during its well-attended workshop, started the discussion on what was already existing, made or in the making, in terms of CSA research and what our interests and priorities are for the future.

The group set itself a working agenda: there should be a meeting in Venice before Christmas 2012, and another one in connection with the final CSA4Europe Grundtvig meeting, in July 2013 in Vienna. Otherwise, the group will try to use Urgenci's website to share its decisions and results. First the group will be collecting data offline, before publishing consolidated and validated results online.

Training was given a specific focus during the session. **The participants decided to draft a questionnaire to Urgenci members**, in order to collect both information on existing training programmes and needs for new trainings. During the data collection, the group will try to identify and distinguish between experienced and new farmers. When the data will be collected, the group will then connect to the communication group to prepare a mapping of currently running training programmes. And the core group will evaluate the results of the questionnaire. The raw results will also be incorporated into a database articulated into 4 domains, each consisting of several fields:

1. The first domain is **knowledge** about our movement: mapping of different CSA models and/or movements, the different kinds of organizations existing at the global level, what is common to all and specific to each of them;



2. The second domain is **How to do CSA?** It encompasses all logistic questions, including how to define the prices, how to communicate, how to implement CSA in other contexts, in other countries, but also in other sectors;

3. The third domain regards the **impact of CSA**: its **socio-economic impact on territories**, on global economy and also **its environmental impact**. In this regard, the posture of researchers should not be only descriptive (measuring the impact), but also proactive: how to reinforce the impact, how to give it more visibility. This is very important for advocacy;

4. The fourth domain, **agroecology**, consists in a debate on the specific issues regarding agroecology & CSA and about the needs for farmers to share their knowledge, to better use their resources for instance, and how to farm organically with less work and better results.

A mindmap–shaped database (?) will be created, in order to give a clear overview of what already exists and what is still to be done. This will help new researchers to shift their work in these directions. At the same time, a questionnaire with 10 questions will be circulated between the different partner countries with questions on the basic agricultural situation in each country. Moreover, there is a consensus to guide this research into the direction of interdisciplinary action research: farmers and citizens should be considered co-researchers, not as people who simply participate and listen to what the researcher has to say, but someone who is really co-constructing the research.





CONSUMERS

The word consumers was questioned, as a too inactive word. To describe the active role played by the consumers in the direct producers-consumers partnerships, the following word, used in the csa movement instead of consumers might be better: consumactor.

The discussion also ran on the connection between the farmers and the consumactor, and the group came up with a series of drawings presenting the current communication between producers and consumers, and how it could become ideally.

The first drawing: „the two people with the hands there we saw them as the producers and the consumers, sitting on the system, not really seeing anything, not really seeing each other and putting weight on the producers. And the producers could not bear it any more but with the crashing of the producers also the consumers fell down and there were some who landed on the floor and some who were relaxing for a very long time but in the end they were on the floor as well“.

The second drawing: „producers and consumers are dealing with each other but at the same time they have different objectives or things to think about, they are not looking at each other. How can they find a solution?“

The third drawing is about how it should work: „everyone hand in hand in cooperation“.



FORMS OF ORGANISATION

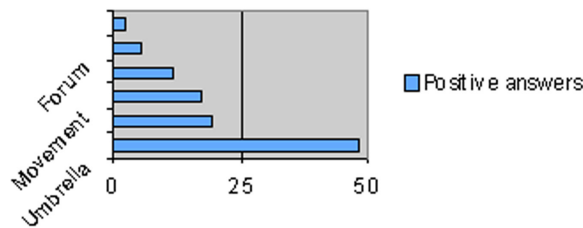
The open discussion about the shape to be given to the future European CSA organisation was structured as a participative session during half a day. It was based on the results from a questionnaire –based enquiry led the day before among all the participants. Five language groups were set up to promote an active and wide participation. Results have been organised through the following items.

The results are clearly in favour of a common and legal structure, which is even an urgent need for a large majority. This structure should try to maintain a large basis. At the same time, a largely shared idea is that the CSA movement should rely on Urgenci as the umbrella, and that there is no absolute need for a new formal organisation, with its own articles of association and its own rules and procedures.

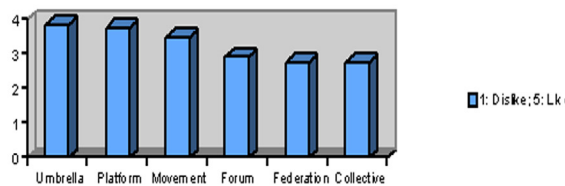
In a similar spirit, somebody wrote that the “legal status should be as light as a feather, handy and not heavy”. The organisation should have an open, flexible and effective structure like an umbrella. Yet, it should be democratic, and should thus have an “assembly format, which has to reach consensus before making decisions”. Somebody else proposed to adopt a grasshopper model: the organisation should be able to jump from one place to the another, from time to time, to make quick moves without losing its efficiency.

4.1 STRUCTURE

4.1.1 PROPOSALS



Graph 1: Favourite organisational form



Graph 2: Evaluation of organisational forms.



4.1.2 THREATS TO BE AWARE OF

During the participative session, many pointed out the dangers of having an umbrella structure that could create non-consensual objectives within the movement. They also stressed that most structures are subject to very negative evolutions, and that one should not be naive when creating a new form of organisation in terms of the effective exercise of power of a few who are growingly disconnected from the base.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

The participants insisted on the necessity to define a common objective that would be: *the development of the Alternative agricultural and food systems* and the *acceleration of alternative economic processes*. Clear objectives will encourage the contribution from the members, but at the same time, they should be kept open and flexible.

4.3 PRINCIPLES

The participants collectively defined the following principles for the European Umbrella of CSA movements:

4.3.1 PROPOSALS

- Shared trust towards each other to be an operative actor;
- Effectiveness and efficiency in decision-making;
- Flexibility;
- Respect;
- Coherence;
- Respiration in opening and closing processes;
- Pro-eminence of human contact over procedures to keep the organisation working;
- Collective, creative and productive governance;
- Collective action learning, working as a community;
- Autonomy of the umbrella components.

4.3.2 THREATS TO BE AWARE OF

A question was raised in one of the groups: *"where should we put our limited funding?"* And a proposal merges in another: the limited funding should go to coordination and administration work, and the search for funding should be spared from political issues.

4.4 ORIENTATIONS

The participants defined the orientations for the concrete organisation of the umbrella.

4.4.1 First, the movement relies mainly on **activists**, and should thus be based on working groups. Consequently, any coordination committee should focus mainly on enabling and facilitating decision-making per groups of interest or per working groups.



4.4.2 Second, any organisation at the European level **should remain representative of this grassroots' movement**. This implies that any representation mechanism should respect the geographical, origin and gender diversity of the movement. There should also be a diversity of memberships (individual, collective, farmers' organisations) to make sure that unions or organisations are not excluding independent individuals from the process. At the same time, this will ensure that non-governmental organisations are not given priority over the farmers' organisations.

4.4.3 The best way to preserve diversity is also to make sure **minorities are protected**: decisions should be taken as much as possible through consensus, rather than voting. Everyone agreed that the consensus decision making to mean discussing a proposal until everyone agreed on a particular way forward, which may mean that some would have to agree to disagree. A consolidated and practical knowledge about how to delegate powers is equally important for the working groups. Additionally, to avoid any kind of strong leadership, the representational functions should rotate.

4.4.4 The umbrella could become a **fractal organisation**, based on the principle of self-similarity: identical organisation patterns can be found at all levels of organisation. What is true for the whole organisation is true for any of its parts. Thus, every part would be equally autonomous and flexible. The long-term development of working groups progressing at very different paces will be possible if and only if flexibility is preserved.

4.4.5 At the same time, **professionalism** is extremely needed: the umbrella is supposed to offer its staff capacity to participatory structures, and it has been a consensual idea during the meeting that "some people should be working for the movement".



Graph 3: Do we need a permanent staff to manage the organisational forms of the European movement of CSA? (N:43)



Graph 4: Which governance model do you think the organisational forms should adopt?

4.4.6 The umbrella and the movement should be organised in concentric circles with an organisational and management nucleus. Around it, working groups, social movements and territorial groups are articulating with each other. Coordination structures must have different representatives and different characteristics. For example, some should focus mostly on the past (reports, communication on past events, etc.), others could act in the present and some would learn for the future. There should be different types of events: open forums, membership strengthening events, working group sessions, peasant struggles' weeks.



4.4.7 The danger in such a collective process is to end up with a lack of persons who really feel in charge. In a similar way, even if, at the beginning, the process should be open and flexible, it is necessary afterwards to start to spin finer?

4.5 COMMUNICATION

4.5.1 CHALLENGES

As far as communication is concerned the umbrella will have to face the double challenge of both creating its own online identity, taking into account its "external image" and guaranteeing fluid communication and exchanges between the different working groups and between emerging and well established projects. Additionally, being open could result in attracting destabilising subjects.

4.5.2 COMMUNICATION TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR THE UMBRELLA

Given the broad geographic spread of the EU, online open source communication tools were considered an important aspect of engaging the wider movement and making the network as reciprocal as possible. For instance, when a proposal is put out to the wider movement, grassroots people should also comment via open source; someone from the online communications working group would represent this feedback within the kernel.

Among the communication tools available for the umbrella, there are free softwares that increase the possibilities for participatory processes, as well as a specific terminology, enhancing the alternative dimension of our local food systems, to be coined and enriched progressively. *"Let's use our own language, don't let stale words sterilize our own language!"*

Additionally, some protocols, bulletins, reports on process results are needed to ensure a reliable organisational structure, a well-working decision making process and a fluid communication.

4.6 FORMALISATION

In terms of formalization, a clear majority (in the survey but also in the language groups) was in favour of an umbrella, i.e. a formal organization mixing horizontal direct links and a centralized body to rapidly take decisions when necessary. Most people think it is better to use Urgenci to create this umbrella, instead of creating a new structure, also because Urgenci is seen as an open and flexible structure, easy to adapt. For this purpose, it would be possible to insert inside Urgenci's internal regulation (règlement intérieur) a special section to formalize this European umbrella with its own autonomy. For instance, having its own staff, a decision 75% of the participants would support, according to the results of the survey, would of course imply to raise its own financial resources.

The selected model, a "respiratory umbrella", should be clarified. The umbrella structure was chosen as a way to represent a broad movement in a non-hierarchical way; yet, with an efficient structure.

The respiratory part of the umbrella function refers to a way of working, whereby the centre of the umbrella acts as the middle of a cell, coordinated by a small number of people or 'kernel'. These people represent the wider movement in relation to regions, producers, consumers and gender. Countries would be represented by the regional representatives. These representatives should be revolving so the kernel does not become stagnant. One consumer and a producer should ideally represent each country. Once a proposal had been agreed within the kernel, it would be put out for feedback to a wider group of representatives (the outer rung of the umbrella). Once this feedback has been reviewed, the kernel would turn the proposals into actions.





Three lessons should be drawn from this successful first European meeting on CSA and other Distribution Systems for Food Sovereignty in terms of the forms of organisation chosen by the participants.

First, URGENCI is now fully legitimised as the leading organisation supporting the European CSA movement. The participation of the already existing CSA networks, from Miramap in France to Ehne-Biscaye in the Basque Country, via Solidarische Landwirtschaft in Germany, the GASAP in Brussels and the CRIES in Romania, among others, is synonymous of the largest possible recognition.

Furthermore, the self-management capacity of the various working groups has already been demonstrated. During the meeting, 8 new working groups have been created; there were two pre-existing groups. They held their first meetings right after the delegations came back from Milan. Among these 10 working groups, 4 are thematic (online communication, training, research, advocacy); 4 are focused on cross-border exchange projects (especially in connection with the Leonardo and Grundtvig European Union projects) and two are mostly related to the general coordination of the movement (the temporary coordination group – “the kernel”- and the steering committee that organised the meeting in Milan). All these groups are managing their own e-lists and prove to be very active.

Called umbrella, the new platform of European CSA movements is designed to function exactly like an umbrella. Most of the time, the umbrella is open: the working groups are working autonomously, on a thematic basis, trying to keep it cross-border. Then, the umbrella gets closed during the regular physical meetings, when everybody comes together.



The third lesson is the creation of a temporary commission, called Kernel, which is made up of 9 members in charge of setting up a permanent structure. Its mandate, received from all the participants to the meeting in Milan, should expire when another meeting takes place, with the objective of finalising the creation of this structure, already named Urgenci-Europe. A set of criteria to set up this permanent Kernel have already been selected. In March 2013, the report from the meeting in Milan should already be published and absorbed, and a feedback should have been solicited from all the participants.

The debates clearly expressed that the temporary Kernel has no mandate to speak in the name of the movement or even in the name of all the participants to the meeting in Milan. It cannot communicate the needs of civil society on any political level. It has no institutional character, but is instead a working group dedicated to a specific task, not able to take political decisions until a permanent Kernel is established.

Apart from the Kernel, there are 8 different working groups active in the European Umbrella of CSA Movement.

5. CONCLUSION





Apart from the Kernel, there 8 different working groups active in the European Umbrella of CSA Movement.

Working group	Moderator	Contact
Temporary Kernel	Jocelyn Parot	Jocelyn.parot@urgenci.net (moderator)
Online Communication Tools	Sara Schaupp	food-distr-alt-online@lists.immerda.ch (e-list)
Researchers	Maarten Roels	maarten.roels@ugent.be (moderator)
Training	Maarten Roels	maarten.roels@ugent.be (moderator)
Advocacy	David Marchiori	david_marchiori@yahoo.it (moderator)
CSA4Europe Grundtvig Project	Morgane Iserte Jan Valeska	morgane.iserte@urgenci.net
Multilateral Grundtvig	Zsofia Perenyi	zsofi@tve.hu
Grundtvig Extended	Colin & Maarten Roels	grundtvigextended@sdu. collectifs.net
Grundtvig about logistics	Peter Volz (Germany, AGRONAUTEN)	peter.volz@agronauten.net (moderator)
Central and Eastern European CSA	Daniel Balaban (Croatia)	central-eastern-csa-mailing- ist@put.com.hr (e-list)



Anna Korzenszky, from the Nyeleni Europe Committee, introduced the legacy of the Nyeleni Europe forum on Food Sovereignty, held in Krems, Austria, 16-21 August 2011.

"Nyeleni Europe is the largest international network aiming to establish Food Sovereignty in Europe. Its strategy is to bring together farmers, consumers, NGOs, trade unions, environmental and Development Organizations, by building common strategies in order to re-organize the relationship of our societies to food and agriculture today.

The first step in the Nyeleni history was the first forum in Mali in 2007. The six principles of the Nyeleni Forum and the Nyeleni Declaration were prepared there, which became our common basis to prepare the European forum. The Steering Committee working on the 2011 Krems forum took the basics of the Mali Forum, not just in terms of contents, but also regarding the methodology. We replicated the first forum to create the most participative and most democratic way to come together and to think about how we can realize Food Sovereignty in the European context.

In Krems, more than 400 people from 34 different European countries came together. All the participants who took part to this forum share the opinion that until now it has been the most dynamic space that have been constructed for experience-sharing and discussions about Food Sovereignty.

The Forum was articulated around five thematic axes and one of these axes of the forum was: "Changing how food is distributed". The focus in this axis was on alternative food distribution ways. The forum you are now participating in, in Milan, can be seen as a follow up, where we can continue to discuss about the alternative distribution methods.

The results from Krems are a European Declaration, and the Synthesis Report and Action Plan. The Declaration outlines our common visions and commitments to realize Food Sovereignty in Europe. But in order to put these visions in practice we needed an action plan. The Action Plan is organized around three keywords: Transform, Resist and Build. We transform the current agricultural system, resist the agro-industrial Food System and build the Movement for FS in Europe.

There are many ways to work towards our common objective. One is to organize ourselves at a local level in the different European countries. Last Summer activists from the former Yugoslavian countries gathered together and held a forum for Food sovereignty. In the UK, a platform for Food Sovereignty was created last Summer as well.

This meeting in Milan is a really good opportunity to choose one topic, discuss in a more specific way and bring those people who are working on these issues together and create new connections and new declarations. In the case of the Food Sovereignty movement, we could reverse the famous motto "Think global act local" into Think local but act global as well."

APPENDIX

1. NYELENI EUROPE MOVEMENT FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

2. EUROPEAN COORDINATION VIA CAMPESINA (ECVC)

Geneviève Savigny, a farmer from Southern France, and a member of the Coordination Committee of the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), said a few words about farmers organisations and about how the concept of Food sovereignty was coined.

"ECVC was created under a different name in 1986 when farmers from different countries realized that they were facing common problems in Europe, that all across Europe the same economic developments were happening and that farming was becoming more and more industrial. It became clear that the European farming production had improved so much that it was in fact generating environmental problems and health and economic problems for farmers.

A few years later, during a meeting with other unions from Latin America, there was an understanding that common issues were faced by farmers from all over the world: Neoliberalism was creating the same problems everywhere, as similarly shown recently by land grabbing. In order to struggle against the transnational corporation which was taking over the food system, during a meeting in Belgium in 1993, the decision was made to launch an international federation of family farmers' unions, called Via Campesina, which means in Spanish the 'Peasant Way'.

This new organisation grew quickly out during the following years, also due to the signature of World Trade Organisation and GATT agreements. A lot of interstate negotiations on the trade of agricultural products took place. Commodities, as they call it: we produce food, and they call it commodities. And they sell, they trade commodities. That is a fundamental difference: we produce food and we think that the question of agriculture is to produce food and to feed people, but they think it must be subject to trade.

The concept of Food Sovereignty is related to this history: it was launched in Rome during the United Nations' Food And Agriculture Organisation (FAO) meeting that took place in October 1996. At the beginning, Food Sovereignty meant simply the right to produce our own food. Then, step by step, it was refined as the right to choose how we are going to eat and how we are going to organize food production and as the right to have our own laws, regulations, policies for good food production.

In 2007, an international forum for Food Sovereignty was held in Mali. It was called Nyeleni, after the name of a very strong and very famous woman who had fought for agriculture and also for women's rights. There also, Food Sovereignty appeared as a strong concept to gather a lot of fights, a lot of initiatives that take place all over the world against the mainstream agricultural system, which continuously reinforces the concentration of power over the food chains in the hands of a very few corporations. Instead, the focus should be on food producers. More rights should be given to peoples, to the population to organise the way they produce food and how agriculture is structured. This implies of course that food systems should be relocated.

We felt we also had to do something in Europe, and in 2011 a coalition of organisations succeeded in organising a forum in Krems, Austria. By organising this forum, there was really the hope that it would gather people from very different backgrounds to build up a common vision. And it was a success. Of course, we have to be modest, because our fight is against powerful mechanisms. Yet, here is just one positive example: last summer I was invited to Serbia and Croatia by people who are building the Food Sovereignty movement there. There are many other examples and I want to emphasize that what we will be doing for the next two days is part of a stronger movement, which is very important for society in general. To put it modestly, thank you for building a better world."



Judith Hitchman, Advocacy Officer attached to the International Committee of Urgenci, made a report to the participants about the dialogue led by Urgenci with the international institutions.

"The key question for the participants to this forum is how the social movement working together can have some impact on the system. One should never forget the grassroots dimension of the CSA movement, the dimension of working with people in the communities, but at the same time rather than letting the system rule the people, we also need to move forward to playing an active role within the system. The WTO system today at the global level is a disaster, and all the different institutions at the global level are aware of this fact and looking for solutions. Community Supported Agriculture is part of the solution.

What does this constellation of different international and civil society structures look like, and how does Urgenci situate itself in this landscape?

First of all, there is the Committee for Food Security (CFS), a unique structure that was created in 1974, as part of the United Nations family of bodies and agencies. Although it is housed at the FAO, it is not accountable to the FAO, but only to the United Nations General Assembly, the EcoSoc, which is the Economic and Social Council. In 2009, the CSF was reformed in a way that is totally unique in the United Nations, because it now includes the broadest and most inclusive consultation and participation of civil society organisations. Yet, the civil society organisations do not have the voting right, it is the States' duty to make a final decision. Civil society is there only to influence. It is however really the hub where decisions on food-related policy are taken.

The International Planning Committee (IPC) was created in 2002, as an autonomous forum for small-scale food producers to build strategies and develop food sovereignty. It operates on a very broad constituency basis, with 11 different constituencies, which include producers, pastoralists, fishers, landless people, urban poor as well as regional constituencies. They played a key part along with the Via Campesina in preparing the Nyeleni Forum in Mali and, right afterwards, to set the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) in 2009. With the installation of the CSM, a big question rose: what should become of the IPC? The answer was that IPC should be preserved as an autonomous space for social movements to have independent discussions to influence policy.

Urgenci is represented in both the IPC (by Andrea Calori) and the Civil Society Mechanism for the CFS.

The Civil Society Mechanism is the largest international civil society mechanism to facilitate civil society participation in agriculture, food security and nutrition policy, development at national, regional and global levels in the context of the Committee for World Food Security. One should notice that the word used in the United Nations is food security, instead of food sovereignty. Food Security exists, when everyone has enough to eat, to meet their nutritional needs, but it does not mean that food is grown locally. It can be dumped from intensive agricultural production, it can include GMOs – and these are key issues.

Food Sovereignty defends - if you look at the Nyeleni Declaration – the right of people to determine their own local sources and kinds of food and to have control over the whole chain from the seeds to the farming to the consumers, both in terms of the way it's grown, and the way it's distributed. Thus, there is really a confrontation. The United Nations, the CFS and the FAO have not yet completely accepted the term Food Sovereignty. It is under discussion and it is an important battle that is being fought, in terms not only of linguistic form, but also regarding the underlying fundamental vision our movement is promoting.

3.URGENCI AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS





Urgenci represents consumers within the Civil Society Mechanism. As such, Urgenci is also a member of the Coordinating Committee. The CSM divides into 11 constituencies, 17 sub regional groups, different working groups.

Concretely, Urgenci participated in the Regional civil society consultations of the FAO where we formed an important Urgenci delegation. Urgenci managed to put the question of Food Sovereignty and Solidarity Economy on the table, because in order to achieve Food Sovereignty we need to develop a paradigm shift from Capitalist Economy to Solidarity Economy. Moreover, Urgenci has input into the Voluntary Guidelines for the Governance of Land Tenure in terms of spatial planning – in other words: preservation of land for urban and periurban agriculture. And Urgenci has been co-moderating a working group on climate change, which is also a very important aspect at the global level for all of us here.

Urgenci is also involved in RIPESS, the intercontinental network of social and solidarity economy. Urgenci is a founding member of the European Coordinating Committee and also has a member on the board of administrators, which means that we are in the position, as the second European member of the global board, to put Food Sovereignty at the heart of all the issues of a different kind of economy. At Rio+20, Via Campesina very loudly proclaimed that solidarity economy is also the way forward. So we are at a crossroads, where Community Supported Agriculture is one of the concrete steps for moving forward. In terms of the picture of the institutions, Urgenci works in the CSM, Urgenci works with the RIPESS, Urgenci works with the Via Campesina, Urgenci is part of the Nyeleni Process, hopefully Urgenci will be able to build a bridge to Transition Towns, Urgenci is also active as Anna mentioned, in the CAP negotiations, and present through Andrea in Food for Cities in the UNDP.

In the future, Urgenci needs to gain greater recognition for Community Supported Agriculture as being a means of levering into a different economic paradigm. The CSA are part of the answer, they are not part of the problem. Urgenci needs to build and strengthen its alliances to promote Food Sovereignty and Local Food Networks and especially to develop advocacy, so that when we go somewhere we are able to consult with people like a proper social movement. Because, unless Urgenci behaves like a social movement with bottom-up ideas, Urgenci is not doing its duty.

And hopefully we will strengthen our input and become more recognised as a social movement in order to work with our allies and impact the future. Thank you."





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