



European Economic and Social Committee



Land Sharing Models for Sustainable Agriculture

-Proposals for land preservation, new land use and management practices-

**3-4th June 2013 | Brussels
Working Seminar**



Follow-up workshop organised by Demeter International, Terre-de-Liens, Bioforum Vlaanderen



Acknowledgements

We thank **the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** for hosting this event and supporting our conference.

Many thanks go to all persons who were involved in the organisation of the conference, including: Terre-de-Liens, Terre-en-Vue, Bioforum Vlaanderen and Demeter International. We thank all the speakers and participants for their presence and valuable contributions to the discussion and the realisation of the seminar. We thank all the moderators for their excellent work in the working groups. Finally, we also thank all participants for coming to Brussels and being part of such an initiative.

This seminar could not have taken place without the financial support of our sponsors:

- **Salvia Foundation** (Switzerland)
- **Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer** (France and Switzerland)
- **Stiftung Trigon** (Switzerland)
- **Grundtvig Programme** (European Union)

Thank you so much for your support and commitment!

We also thank the Demeter producers and retailers who have provided us with biodynamic food and beverages, as well as the caterers for the reception dinner and second day of the seminar:

- Birgit Bertelshofer and Tom Bertelshofer (Die Beeren Bauern, Ebermannstadt, Germany)
- Beutelsbacher (Germany)
- Luna e Terra (Belgium)
- Zwoelberich (Langenlonsheim, Germany)
- Humus (Belgium)
-

Brussels, October 2013

The editors

- Andreas Biesantz, Joana Silva, Evangelia Lasithiotaki (Demeter International)
- Véronique Rioufol, Marie Allagnat (Terre-de-Liens)
- Maarten Roels (Terre-en-Vue)
- An Jamart (Bioforum Vlaanderen)

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1. Introduction

On the 3rd of June, Demeter International along with Terre-de-Liens, Terre-en-Vue and Bioforum Vlaanderen conducted the conference “**Land sharing models for sustainable agriculture – Proposals for land preservation, new land use and management practices**”. The event brought together approximately 70 professionals from EU Member States to exchange knowledge about the state of the art and discuss the future of sustainable agriculture, land access and appropriate land use.

This was a follow-up workshop of the event organised by Demeter in October 2012, entitled: “Land sharing vs. Land grabbing - New ownership models for sustainable land use”, where the situation of land was discussed and community-based, sustainable land ownership and land use models were presented.

The **overall aim of the June workshop 2013** was to support the continuous process of discussion and bring the issue of access to land and promising land sharing models and their realisation into the minds of EU policy makers.



Further **main objectives** were to:

- Establish a state of the art of land preservation, land grabbing and land sharing in Europe – regarding problems, policy frames and good practices;
- Provide a platform for continuous exchange of ideas, experiences, brainstorming and capacity building for practitioners, political decision makers and NGO representatives;
- Share analysis of existing EU, national and local legal framework and public policies, to identify those elements which constitute obstacles to, or levers for, access to land and land preservation;
- Network and build alliances, with the long-term objective of presenting developed policy proposals and establish a European Land Sharing Network.

The conference was attended by participants coming from a wide range of organisations: the EU institutions, NGOs, think tanks, universities and (young) farmers.

2. Plenary morning session

Andreas Biesantz (Demeter International, EU Liaison Office) welcomed the conference speakers and participants and outlined the aims of the day. **Lapo Cianferoni** (Demeter Italy and board member of Demeter International) pointed out the relevance of CSA (**C**ommunity **S**upported **A**griculture) projects around the world for biodynamic and sustainable agriculture. He mentioned several examples of such projects, in which citizens, consumers and producers support each other for better quality of agricultural products and sustainable management of agricultural land. Among them, the Sekem initiative in Egypt, was pointed out as a good example of land sharing, having received the Nobel alternative prize for entrepreneurship and sustainable agriculture.



Yves Somville, (European Economic and Social Committee – EESC) explained the role of the EESC within the European institutions. By being the bridge between the EU institutions and civil society, the EESC seeks to reinforce organised civil society not only in EU countries, but also in ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, through a specific committee. Referring to the topic of the event Mr. Somville highlighted the serious consequences that land grabbing has been causing throughout developing countries. He

also mentioned the severe problem that in the EU less than 7% of farmers are aged below 35 and how, especially in Belgium, the price of land has nothing to do with the actual use value of agricultural land.

2.1 Keynote speeches

2.2.1 Patrick Holden - "Food Systems Transition" - Director of the Sustainable Food Trust (SFT) in the UK and organic farmer was the director of the Soil Association for many years and is now an advisor for the Prince of Wales International Sustainability Unit. He addressed the transition of the current food systems to more sustainable ones.

Patrick is as a patron of the Living Earth Land Trust (Biodynamic Association) and the Soil Association Land Trust. Patrick explained that the mission of these two trusts is deeply related to the "question of access to land to be farmed sustainably in perpetuity". However, as he put it, "How could it be possible for new models to be developed to enable this to be made much more widely available internationally?"

He went on by explaining the role of the Sustainable Food Trust, whose mission is to work internationally so as to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food systems, by working in 3 main areas: (more information can be found in Patrick Holden presentation in the annex)

Additionally, by traveling a lot, Patrick Holden has been able to learn about new ownership models and new food systems in other countries and continents. Giving the example of the nomadic pastoralists in Kenya and Ethiopia, where ownership of the land is not necessary, since historically access to land, in these countries,



was safe, is now being threatened by land acquisitions. He is convinced that all land users need a **relative degree of security of land tenure, but don't have necessarily to own the land**. Thus, the new models of land ownership that should be developed, must involve the possibility of sustainable management of the land, through enough security to give a proper motive for the farmers and food producers. He pointed to the alarming trend of the rising size of farms that require big amounts of capital to buy it, making it increasingly difficult the access to land and making it almost impossible for young people to enter into agriculture.

Right now, the "perfect storm of resource depletion, climate change, population growth, diminishing area of agricultural land and growing food insecurity", should support re-localised systems of sustainable production, processing and distribution of food – where the populations would rely on local food producers for the majority of their staple foods. Current agricultural policies in all countries should look through this prism and therefore, increase the level of food security. However, at the moment this is not happening and the agro-industrial model is favoured. One of the keys to break through, alongside with stimulating public debate will be to develop new land

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models of land ownership. Quoting the example of Terre-de-Liens in France, and its possible universal application, he mentioned that if such template could be developed, there would be an opportunity for huge amounts of capital to be made available to finance land purchase.

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As an example he quoted, “that the majority of foundations and trusts, especially in the US have huge endowments amounting to billions of dollars and that 95% of such funds are currently invested in conventional farming models, agro-chemicals, oil, retailing, meaning in the opposite of what they want to achieve.” Although, this is becoming embarrassing for the trustees of these foundations, the board members argue that they cannot risk their capital and invest in places where there wouldn’t be such good returns. This is called mission related investment or programme related investment, the systems cannot be too risky. But if a new model would be developed satisfying these risk adverse trustees, a good amount of capital would become available to be invested in models of land sharing. Beside this financial possibility, others were discussed, like pension funds. He concluded by saying that if this new land ownership structure would be founded, it would attract many young people away from cities and brings them back to the land.

Discussion

Clemens Gabriel (Biodynamic Young Farmers Movement) claimed that part of the money that would be available for such new land ownership models should be also used for sustainable education systems for the next generations. This should happen in a big scale and not only for small initiatives, providing education both for children and for young adults in their 20s. However, investing in education is normally quite difficult, because it doesn’t give the high financial returns that usually the investors expect.

Patrick Holden agreed and said that a proper structure for such education systems should be put into place both for young and existing farmers, and also much more based in practice, inspiration through practice – apprenticeships, etc.

Sjoerd Wartena (Terre de Liens) raised the question that land should be accessible, but for whom? Education is a big problem, since thousands of farmers are lost per day throughout Europe.

Patrick Holden mentioned the example of Bally Maloo, in Ireland (www.ballymaloo.ie). It is a hotel, cookery school involving education, culture and arts. It is one example of an initiative that can tackle the cultural dimension by attracting young people living in cities. We must think about the social and cultural dimension of agriculture, not only sustainable food production as well as the financial dimension.

Titus Bahner stated: “How do you estimate the readiness of the farmer community to be open to that model (fund) of open ownership of land?”

Patrick Holden brought up the question of farm succession, which is in the mind of every farmer in the world. Therefore, if there would be an alternative model of ownership of land, with some family link and where sustainable farming could be practised in perpetuity, farmers would look carefully at that.



2.2.2 Robert Levesque – The Land Question in Europe – Agronomist, works in the Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon and works for SAFER (Society for Land Planning and Rural Establishment).

Robert started by addressing the issue of soil sealing and its consequences. The soil has 4 essential functions: production of biomass, being the home for biodiversity, storing carbon, storing water, storing mineral components. These functions form a system from which biodiversity, food supply and energy depend on. Nowadays, it is not possible to go deeper in the exploitation of natural resources both in land and in the sea, without destroying all resources from which we depend on. Management of such resources is necessary. The more spaces we give to biodiversity, the more biodiversity we will have. From the combination of climate change, food sustainability and erosion of biodiversity depends the quality and quantity of natural spaces.

Being land a resource finite, we must preserve it and stop soil sealing. Nowadays, Europe is not independent in agriculture areas. In 2008, Europe imported the equivalent of 35 million ha or the equivalent of 20% production of the agriculture area of Europe. We enter into direct competition with China, Arabian countries, leading to the fact that, from this point of view, Europe is not sovereign.

At the same time, Europe continues to destroy every year its forests and farmlands, through extension of housing, new infrastructures, etc. In 2008 and 2009, the rate of which European countries seal their soils through the activities mentioned above, is alarming. For example in France, by 2050 it will have destroyed 15% of its farming potential. Being more than a European problem, but a world problem, through several surveys we can say that soil sealing, between now and 2050, can reach 400 million ha worldwide, which represents 20% to 25% of agricultural land and agroforestry area. The objective is to reach 0% of soil sealing, and should be a European objective, not only a French one.

“Nowadays, agriculture is not sustainable. It is based in non-renewable resources. European Agriculture is not sovereign.”

“We are in a liberal Europe, where it is the market that determines the evolution of the agricultural structures.”

The second point, Robert highlighted is the equal access to the right to use land, access to food, but not necessarily the access to ownership of the land. In Europe it is an open issue: the question of the concentration of land by agribusiness, which increases day by day and in detriment of family farming. He analysed the current situation of land distribution in Europe, where countries like Spain and Italy have large agricultural properties, as well as in Eastern countries retrieved from the kolkhozes of several million of hectares, and in 1990, with the reunification of Germany, the further exploitation of millions of ha and others that we don't know”.

When talking about the CAP, the income for farmers is based on the market price, this being proportional to agriculture production, independently of the costs of such production. Furthermore, there is a concentration of resources in a small number of users. The current system favours the big exploitations, and the finite resources are less and less important.

Throughout Europe, it is the market of the right to use land that guides and favours the concentration of land in the big exploitations. There is the market of free land and there is the market of leases, which is less and less structured. There is also the market of shares of agricultural structures that are quite big. Quoting the example of

“The land market is a market of exclusion.”

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Hungary, while it is not possible through the land market to have a big concentration of land, through the market of shares, one can do so.

Besides this, the CAP with the market of right to production also contributes to this concentration of land. It is necessary to think about policies of structure that can be implemented to give a framework to the development of farms. One should think over the income of the farmer based on the production costs and on specific costs: the improvement of soil fertility, improvement of the environment, and also maybe not remunerate only the sold production. We must reflect on the placement of the subsidies and their improvement in function of labour force, the remuneration of work to improve the soil quality, environment quality, water, etc. Additionally, put in place structural policies that can limit the concentration of land into big exploitations. Also, one must think of how to connect this with food policies, so that everybody can have access to food and implement sustainable forms of agriculture. Sustainable agriculture depends on consumers and citizens, and on our capacity in changing our food habits in quality and quantity. By the year 2050 and beyond, in order to feed everyone it is necessary to put in place sustainable farming systems. In Europe it is an open issue, regarding food sovereignty.

Discussion

Andreas Biesantz raised the issue of taxation of land to prevent speculation on farmland and inadequate unsustainable land use. Should the speculative land investor (for instance as a polluter, destructor of biodiversity, somebody who doesn't care for rural employment or social standards) not also pay for the caused damages by means of heavy taxing?

Michel David (ECVC): Are there in other European countries structures like FN Safer? Even with huge taxes it would be difficult to avoid speculation and concentration of land, because it is still profitable to invest.

Robert Levesque: In the EU, contrary to the US, the right to build is not part of the property rights of the agricultural owners. Thus, it is the public authorities that decide on the construction on the land of buildings or not. Taxing is not always necessary. We are in a finite space, and because of that it is a political decision to stop soil sealing. Robert gave the example of a policy put in place in France in 1960, based on the statute of tenancy, where the farmer was protected. The government gave permits to the farmers to widen their farms and if they didn't have such permits, they couldn't expand. Thus, in a way they were excluded from the tenures market. And the market was regulated by FN Safer.

Pablo Servigne: In the 90s, in Cuba, there was an energy crisis. Due to that, young people who didn't want to work in agriculture had to do it anyways, because hunger started to come in large scale. It is a question of timeline: in Europe we will face this, now with the peak of phosphorus, peak oil, together with peak of gas and uranium; we'll face this.



2.2.3 Pablo Servigne – Land as Commons - agronomist and biologist, teaches agro-ecology and permaculture in Brussels and Gembloux. He is an independent researcher. He addressed the issue of the commons. What are the commons?

Elinor Östrom and Garrett Hardin were thinkers related to this topic. Also, during his presentation he mentioned a report by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung on the Commons.

The commons come from 3 sources: Nature, Culture and the Community. According to Garrett Hardin (1968) ('Tragedy of the Commons') the incentive to maximize the production, reaching a tipping point of overexploitation of the commons made them collapse. Everybody loses in this game.

Examples of commons that are well governed were described by Elinor Östrom. She created the theory of "self-organisation". Natural resources can be managed by people at the local level, with the maximum of stakeholders involved. No single type of regime can be prescribed as a remedy for overuse of resources (only the market or only the state).

Regarding "Commons" Pablo sees the following obstacles:

1. We don't see the commons
2. The religion of the market, everything should be solved by it
3. The religion of the state
4. Fear of communism – an instant association between commons and communism
5. Pessimistic view of human nature as selfish
6. Laziness of people, we rely too much on institutions.

He pointed out 3 spheres: Public sphere, Private sphere, Commons. The objective now is to look for positive interactions between these spheres.

Pablo continued by explaining the commons in 4 levels:

- 1- Have the status: private, public or common
- 2- Structure: market, state or community-based
- 3- The process of building a common?
- 4- People: what does community mean right now? We have to invent it?

***In the commons we have
to build the rules***

Right now, land is seen as a commodity. He went on by saying that we should not reclaim land as a common, but elaborated, that the concept of common is positive for the land, which we still don't know. The objective now is to recognize that. Pablo continued posing the following questions.

- What does it mean to buy land? You buy a structure, a process and people in and around the land, people that depend on the land.
- The land for what purpose? Only for food? Other benefits of land sharing?
- Within what laws? What status of the land?
- We should favor institutional diversity, because it matches better with all the preferences of different stakeholders. More diversity is more resilient.
- What kind of ownership of land, since we can manage land without owning it?
- What is community? Think about the consumer and link him with the land.
- In which process can we create this?
- Commons is not a utopia, it is real, but it is not an ideal solution, we have to test its practability.



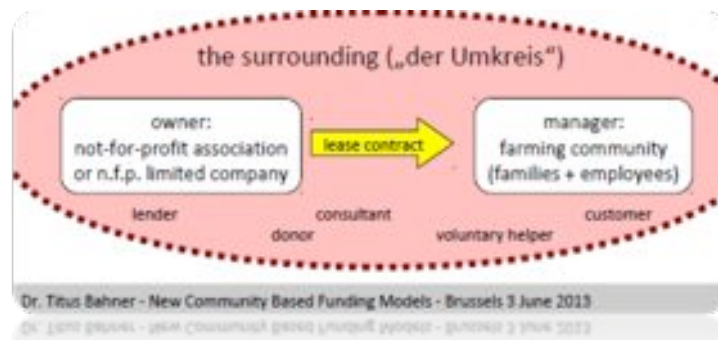
2.2.4 Titus Bahner – New Community-Based Funding Models, has a Ph.D. in Economics and is a freelancer consultant and project developer in the field of organic farming, rural development and renewable energy.

Titus Bahner presented some empirical results of a recently published study, regarding practical examples of new forms of land ownership that have developed in the last 40 years mainly in Germany, but also in other European countries.

In 1960, nonprofit ownership models started called: Association ownership. Titus explained farm succession models: the farmer wanted to keep the land in biodynamic or organic agriculture and at the same time wanted to attract young farmers. One of the targets is to liberate the land from the markets. Also, taxes are exempted for charity purposes. But how does it work?

- Group ownership: there is a new owner, a manager, a farming community (more than one family usually)
- They make a lease contract and then there is the surrounding. Everybody has a share of responsibility; they became more than just consumers.

Example: the “Heggelbach” community farm near Lake Constance, where children are involved and which is a multifunctional farm.



Nowadays, there is a need to regain some links with the societal environment. We also have to deal with individual people and people with different interests. People have now to find new ways, because private ownership is great to provide everybody with food but destroys everything that has common aspects.

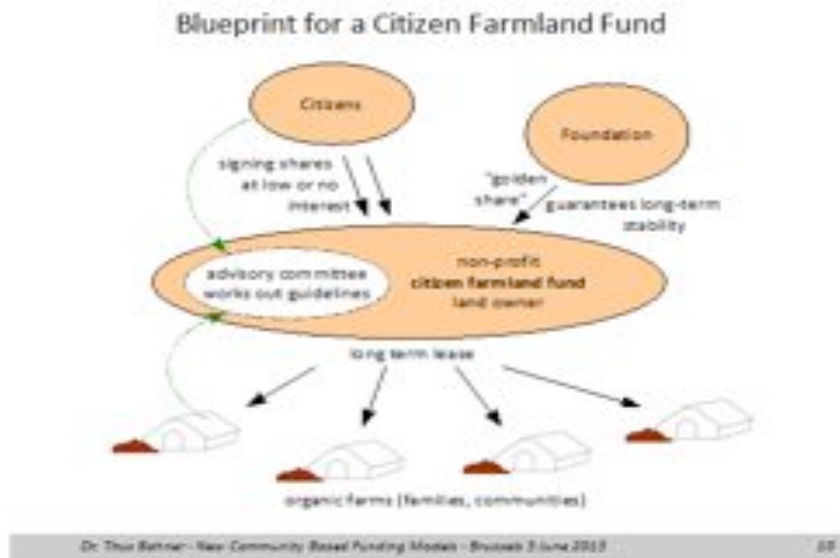
Titus talked about the “community responsibility” which can be promising for the future of land. It is not necessary to convert private property into public property, but for example converting private property into group property. There are two directions to help this idea of community responsibility: municipalities and intentional groups that both can organize it. It is important to deal today, with individual states of mind, only 2% of people are farmers, the rest is just interested public. More than 80% don’t buy organic food, 1 of 20 farmers is an organic farmer. “So we cannot claim that all the organic farmers will be responsible for all the land, it is not logical, because we have a gradual development from individual personalities to new identities. What can we do?”

“We cannot claim that all the organic farmers will be responsible for all the land, it is not logical, because we have a gradual development from individual personalities to new identities. What can we do?”

Then, he explained how the Blueprint for a Citizen Farmland Fund works. Citizens and foundations give money to the farmland fund (owner). Foundations secure the long term stability of the use of the land; and citizens engage financially by signing shares and then the fund requires farmland, giving it, through a long lease contract, to the

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farmers. The key point is the long term lease, which creates security for the farmers. It is a question of security of tenure to the farmers to ensure sustainable farming and guarantee stewardship of the land.



3. Afternoon Session: Working Groups

3.1 Working Group 1: Preserving farmland

Background

Preserving farmland refers to the quality of the farmland, its distribution, the quality of the land and the environment. Urban sprawl and the construction of infrastructures exert a strong pressure on agricultural land. Over the past five decades, EU has lost over 30 million hectares of farmland. In some parts of Europe, farmland is also being abandoned, and taken over by natural spaces. The preservation of farmland is particularly at stake where there is a strong competition for land use: peri-urban and urban areas, coastal areas, touristy areas, etc. Moreover, intensive agricultural practices are threatening biodiversity and the quality of soils, and result in endangering the sustainability of farmland.

However, there are a number of national or local regulations to protect farmland and monitor land use. How can we better preserve existing farmland so as to keep agriculture alive throughout Europe? And how can we preserve the quality of farmland and of its environment (soil fertility, water resource, biodiversity) so as to ensure sustainable farming, food quality, environment protection, public health and diversified landscape? How could EU policies be reinforced to address these issues? What can we learn from good practices of local and national regulations and measures?

In this context, the objectives of the workgroup were to:

- Draw up a state of play of current land use evolutions and of their multi-faceted impacts:
- Share ideas and good practices towards making recommendations for policies addressing farmland preservation, including soil, water and biodiversity preservation

Participants:

- Hubert Gulinck, associate professor in Leuven University in Brussels,
- Tanguy Martin, Terre de liens
- Antje Koelling, policy manager IFOAM-EU
- Jordi Pietx, XCT
- Pacome Elouna Eyenga, AEIAR (European Association for Rural Development)
- Evangelia Lasithiotaki, Demeter International
- Vanessa Martin, FUGEA (Fédération Unie de Groupements d'Éleveurs et d'Agriculteurs)

Working Group 1 – “Preserving farmland” first focused on the problems agricultural land has been dealing with for the past few decades. Then, the group discussed existing national and local regulations about farmland preservation and identified “gaps” in the current policy framework on this issue. Participants agreed that measures should be taken to promote the formulation of a **European common policy for the preservation of land**.

During the first part of the workshop, Antje Koelling from IFOAM moderated the discussion. **Hubert Gulinck** gave a presentation on the ‘**Analysis of current changes and new competing stakeholders in the agricultural land in Flanders**’. Since 2008, farmland area is diminishing; agricultural land is used for other purposes such as hobby-horses (about 10% of statutory farmland) and also for non-farming activities.

Another problem which fuels the loss of farmland is its increased price. For instance, in Flanders the price of agricultural land has increased by 350%, to reach 28.300 €. In Belgium, the price ranges from 8,000 € in parts of Wallonia to 100,000 € in parts of Flanders. To conclude, Professor Gulinck insisted on the importance of taking measures to preserve farmland through **spatial planning policy**.

Tanguy Martin presented ‘**Good Practices of preserving farmland: the experience of Terre de liens**’. He too highlighted the current threats faced by farmland. First, there is a competition with urban sprawl. Second, an

amount of land is abandoned, mostly in mountain areas and wetlands. Besides, the development of industrial agriculture has negative impacts in biodiversity and land fertility. Terre de liens aims to promote land preservation through raising citizens' awareness about that issue, purchasing farms with solidarity-based savings and donations. Moreover, Terre de liens is supporting organic farmers through leasing farms and lobbying about good practices and policies toward the public sector. Tanguy Martin gave an example of soil sealing. In the French Riviera, land is very expensive (100 000 €/ha) and there is strong competition for urban sprawl. This area is "trapped" between 3 highways, therefore a farm was sold in 2011 to build parking lots next to a mall. Multi-stakeholder mobilization from civil society, farmers' organizations, semi-public agencies, as well as the regional and local governments has been needed to preserve the existence of this farm and to bring it back to agricultural cultivation. This example shows that a multi-stakeholder mobilization can be effective against soil sealing. Based on these two presentations, participants exchanged views to identify the key features of the current situation and draw lessons from good practices.

The main problems of the current situation are:

- Land sealing and urban sprawl contribute to a significant decrease of farmland and the loss of biodiversity. Sometimes, land sealing is irreversible (road development), in other cases it is reversible (golf course).
- Increasing use of farmland for recreational uses (e.g. problem of "horsification" whereby agricultural land is used for hobby-horses), which impacts on local food production.
- Increasing and high prices of farmland limiting land access to farmers.
- Deterioration of landscape due to unplanned spatial organisation.
- Lack of willingness to lease land to farmers (economic and social problem).
- Lately the phenomenon of land abandonment is observed.
- Spatial planning and land preservation is not part of European regulations. There is a need for a link between spatial policies – that are all under national regulations - and the CAP.

Good tools and practices that should be implemented to regulate those problems are:

Policy Tools:

Promoting farmer's preemption rights or preemption rights of public agencies (such as members of AEIAR)

-Spatial planning, including:

-The renewal of Brown fields¹

-Ecological continuity planning (e.g. green and blue corridors)

-Long term public investment in farmland in order to lease it to local farmers

Private financial tools:

-'Crowd funding" for farmers

-Citizens as shareholders of farmland

-Stakeholders council for land stewardship

Private initiatives:

-Promote Environmental land management and local food production.

-Voluntary agreements through farmers or land stewardship organizations are important to promote and maintain good agricultural practices – example of Catalonia.

-Raise awareness of consumers about land issues.

Good practices:

-Multifunctional agriculture

-Keep short food supplies, maintaining farmland close to cities

During the second part of the workshop, Tanguy Martin from Terre de liens moderated the discussion. **Antje Koelling from IFOAM** talked about the CAP measures on sustainable use of farmland as a way to maintain

¹ A former industrial or commercial site, whose future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination

positive environmental features. She also underlined that there is a need for **a common soil policy**. The problem is that too few farmers are left. Right now, CAP negotiations are focused on the process of changes regarding the rural development program. In the frame of a more sustainable agriculture, the **European Commission** has introduced **specific “greening” measures**, which farmers should apply in order to make their practices more sustainable. For example, farmers should grow at least three crops and keep permanent pastures. **Organic farming** is already recognized as being sustainable, so organic farmers do not have to adopt “greening” measures.

Jordi Pietx described the characteristics of Land Stewardship, which is a voluntary approach, promoted by a land stewardship organization, seeking to establish agreements for the protection and/or management of a site, jointly with farmers / owners and other users. The essence of Land Stewardship is the collaborative work of different people from different backgrounds, towards a common goal: taking care of the land.

Pacôme Elouna Eyenga highlighted the current **challenges faced by farmland and the role of public agencies**. He indicated that there is a need to recognize farmland as a natural resource and link it with food security. AEIAR is currently trying to make a databank to know which land is used for food-production and which is not, which will be an important information tool, which can serve for policy development.

Some questions that were raised during the discussion and need further reflection:

- How to link land policies at European and national levels?
- How is the CAP affecting land grabbing in the southern hemisphere? There should be a link between land grabbing happening in Europe and land grabbing in the southern hemisphere.
- Focus on food security and establish it as a primary objective for farmland use - ARC2020 has to play a role in this area
- Regarding Land compensation, European policies should help social partnerships between civil society and farming.
- Should spatial planning tackle qualitative and quantitative problems at the same time? Or should it focus only on quantitative challenges, while the qualitative problem is addressed by agro-environmental regulations?
- Should we create a European agency managing an eco-point system?
- How can we strengthen the network of organizations (both conventional and alternative ones) lobbying in favor of farmland preservation?

3.2 Working Group 2: Facilitating farm continuity and supporting future farmers

Background

European agriculture is struggling for decades with serious problems of sustainable development in ecological and economic terms. **However, there is still a third, distinct problem: in farming there seems (partly as a result of the two previous problems), little future in terms of social aspects.** The employment in agriculture shrinks still further, the average age of the European peasant is rising and successors for the remaining companies are scarce.

The European organic farming movement has been working for almost 90 years towards an ecologically sustainable agriculture. The recent movement for agro-ecology connects with this. The economic sustainability of agriculture and food, including through fair trade, is increasingly in the spotlight. But also at the social level, the continuity of agriculture is at risk if existing companies can't find successors. Different land sharing initiatives pop up in Western Europe: how can we learn from each other and work together?

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In this context, the objectives of the workgroup were to:

- draw up a state of play of the current situation on farmers' continuity within Western Europe
- Share ideas and good practices and brainstorm towards policy proposals addressing farmer's continuity on a European and national level

Participants:

1. Neus Monllor – TOMATA organization
2. Nuria Abenza - Soberania Alimentaria
3. Joris Van Der Kamp - Future farmers in the Spotlight
4. Jocelyn Parrot – URGENCI
5. Clemens Gabriel – BING (Young Biodynamic Farmers)
6. Laura Klemme – BING (Young Biodynamic Farmers))
7. Lieve Vercauteren – moderator, Bioforum Vlaanderen
8. Maria van Boxtel – moderator, Land & Co
9. Maarten Roels – Terre-en-Vue
10. Anna Korzenszky - Forum Nyeleni Secretariat
11. Sabine Obermaier – Young Bioland
12. Sonja Korpeter - Hof Gründer
13. Joana Silva – Demeter International
14. An Jamart – Bioforum Vlaanderen
15. Alain Denau – RENETA

Working group 2 – ‘Facilitating farm continuity and supporting future farmers’ had a diverse group of participants: young farmers, representatives of organic and biodynamic farmer organisations, intermediary organizations that facilitate farm transfer as well as organizations that work on land sharing initiatives. First the focus was on learning to know each other and having a state of play in the different countries. Then the group focused on the priorities and discussed how these priorities could be best approached. Participants agreed that this workshop was the start of a possible Network on farmers' continuity.

During the first part of the workshop Lieve Vercauteren from BioForum Vlaanderen moderated the discussion. First **Neus Monllor** gave a presentation on **‘New peasantry: regeneration or a new agrosocial paradigm?’** Neus conducted a study, where she compared the profile of young farmers from Catalonia and from Southern Ontario, Canada. Her aim was to explore the profile for the newcomers to agriculture on one side and for the continuers on the other, both in attitude as in practice. Whilst the continuers were open to new concepts, in the practice everything stayed the old way. She found that new farmers incorporate innovative practices and different attitudes towards farming, where social issues have an important value that could represent a real response to the economic, political, environmental and social crisis that we are currently in. She calls it the concept of new peasantry.

Anna Korzenszky's presentation was focused on **‘Extra-familial farm succession and its specifics in contemporary Austrian family-based smallholder farming’**, where she talked about young farmers in Austria and analyzed the familiar and non-familiar farm take over. Anna took us through the different steps that take place when taking over a farm. She also presented some alarming statistics on the number of farms that close each year; some 4.400 farms/ year close their gates. Her research clearly pointed out that young people want to become farmers or are thinking of becoming farmers, but as is the case of Austria 48% didn't have access to land. There is definitely a clear relation between farmers' continuity and access to land. Anna also pointed out how important it is when talking about farmers' continuity to include a respectful finalization of the existing farmers carrier.

Based on these two presentations the participants exchanged their experiences. There is a need of a clear definition of farmers' continuity. The group saw that young farmers that take over a farm cope with different

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problems then new farmers that start without any agronomic knowledge. Farmers' continuity is seen as a continuous process. It should approach know-how, access to land, fair market and capital.

Following needs could be detected:

- Young people must get information and best practices to make them understand that **starting as a farmers is feasible**. The project 'Future Farmers in the spotlight' is a good example.
- There is a need to establish **networks where young and old farmers can share experiences** (good & bad). As an example the 'BING' project that the young biodynamic farmers started in Germany and Denmark was mentioned.
- **sharing tools and training techniques** for matching young and old farmers. During the session we spoke about Landgilde in the Netherlands and Hofgründer in Germany.
- Lacking entrepreneurs' and agronomic skills is seen as a problem for new farmers. Sharing this information in a European context is necessary. The Renata approach is a possible example.
- How can we manage to have a **respectful ending of the farmers carrier? How can we create a sustainable financial framework** for young farmers and farmers that want to take over a farm? The approach of Terre De Liens, France and Grondbeheer, Netherlands where land and often buildings are approached as a common are good examples where capital seen as a common helps old farmers and new farmers to work in a sustainable framework.

During the second part of the workshop Maria Van Boxtel from Land & co moderated the discussion. First **Alain Daneau** presented his experience in the French organization Réseau National des Espaces-Test Agricoles (RENETA), '**Experimentation Spaces for Agricultural Projects**'. **RENATA involves 46 members which include a wide network of stakeholders and which members vary from** experimentation spaces, test zones, to high schools and it is financially supported by the French Chambre d' Agriculture. Renata is about more than just installing young farmers, it is also about establishing a network that thinks about new legal forms of collaboration in farm sites. Twice a year, they organize 2 seminars to discuss new practices and new types of cooperatives. It wants to close the gap between 3 elements: gap between offer and demand; the existence of this new generation of farmers that have certain difficulties to get access to land and interested municipalities that want to preserve farmland. This had led to the idea that **test zones** should be created in order to integrate these new comers in a sustainable way, RENETA has 3 main functions: **an Incubator Function** where a legal framework provides the legal basis for the farming activity, a **Nursery Function**, where the provision of the production tool (land, buildings, equipment) is taken care of and a **Mentoring Function**, where a support scheme helps farmers, organic farming technicians to mentor the new farmers.

During this session participants shared examples of tools and training e.g. Hofgründer, Austria, Landgilde, Netherlands. It was emphasized that also failures in farm succession should be shared so that others can learn from these experiences. The most important thing is to offer perspectives to young farmers.

Following was discussed and need further reflection and sharing on a European level:

- Tools for the training of farmers
- Tools for the training of the supporter of farmers
- How to form a network on farming continuity

It is clear that the issue of 'farmers' continuity' is complex and can't be covered during a 3 hours workshop. There is a need to have a better understanding of the problem in the different European countries and to point out further action points.

Next steps:

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At the end of the workshop the members committed themselves to have a follow-up of this workshop, this could be in a seminar or as a European Network on Farmers Continuity.

Note of the author: since the seminar Skype meetings were held and a core group is working on getting the facts of the problem of farmers' continuity in the different countries. You can contact Maarten Roels & Anna Kosinsky if you would like to cooperate. The aim is to start up a European farmers' continuity network where advisors and intermediaries on the one hand and farmers on the other hand can network and point out further actions.

Know more?

More information about the existing initiatives:

Bing: <https://www.biodynamics.com/bing>

<http://www.hofgruender.de/>

<http://www.landgilde.nl/>

<http://www.landco.nl/>

Future Farmers in the spotlight: <http://future-farmers.net/>

If you want to cooperate in a European Network contact: maarten@terre-en-vue.be and korzanna@gmail.com

3.3 Working Group 3: Managing Land as Commons

Land as a common resource, especially farmland, is currently threatened by financial and short-term interests. Land speculation, unregulated competition for use and soil sealing of farmland, land appropriation for speculative productions, lack of environmental or social concerns in land management, public land sales and land concentration are a consequence of the communities' exclusion from land management decision-making. Some citizen-based experiences are currently trying to reconsider land as a common resource to be preserved rather than a financial heaven and a commodity, and developing new ways of managing land as commons.

In this context, the main objectives of this Working Group were to:

- Share a common approach of the Commons
- Make an overview of practical models and experiences
- Identify approaches and current trends
- Build alliances between key groups working towards "land as commons"

Participants:

1. Zoé Gallez, Terre en vue;
2. Titus Bahner, Projektbüro Kulturlandschaft;
3. Peter Volz, Agronauten;
4. Olivier Marquet, Triodos Belgium;
5. Stéphane Lejoly, Chante Terre;
6. Karin Ulmer, Aprodev;
7. Valérie Dewaelmeys, IAFR;
8. Marie Allagnat, Terre de liens;
9. Patrick Holden, Sustainable Food Trust;
10. Stefan Doeblin, Network Economy Group;
11. Pierre-Yves Defosse, media producer and researcher.

An **initial tour de table** highlighted the diverse experiences or interests of the participants in managing Land as a Commons:

- 1- Regionalwert AG: the food supply chain as a Commons – Peter Volz
- 2- Aprodev's interest in the Commons – Karin Ulmer
- 3- Gardens as a Commons – Valérie Dewaelmeys, IAFR
- 4- Terre-en-vue: Farmland as a Commons – Zoé Gallez

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- 5- Chante Terre: Farm means of production as a Commons – Stéphane Lejoly
- 6- Tangsehl e.V.: Farmland as a Commons for community farms – Titus Bahner
- 7- Open access for the Commons: example of the National Trust – Patrick Holden
- 8- Investing in the Commons? Triodos Bank – Olivier Marquet
- 9- Terre de liens: Farmland as a Commons – Marie Allagnat
- 10- Digital culture as a Commons – Pierre-Yves Defosse
- 11- Land grabbing of the Commons? – Stefan Doebelin

The question was raised on **how to raise ethical investors' interest in farmland?** The group identified three dimensions:

1 – **Values:** investing in farmland has social and environmental added value:

- Landscape preservation
- Land access
- Farmland preservation,
- Sustainable investment for children and grand-children,
- Open access
- Land stewardship

2 – **Value:** investing in farmland should not be a source of a financial loss, but it not profitable based on the sole farming activity (and if you do not wish to re-sale the land): demand for maintaining share value can be met through a re-evaluation linked to inflation or tax deductions (which means the recognition of a public interest and the contribution of the State/ society to support these types of investments). It is in any case indispensable to insist on the social and ecological added value, hence to highlight that there are other – immaterial- “benefits”.

3 – **The community:** investors should feel they can trust the investment fund and the investment. Key tenets are: confidence - guarantee – seriousness – and avoiding “ecological ghetto feeling”.

In this way, Patrick Holden suggested that a vision with an ambitious scale is needed, i.e. creating a global investment fund or a global trust, as well as having a mission like *"Farms for food, for people, for nature, forever"*. It would mean exactly the opposite of land-grabbing.

Olivier Marquet, from Triodos Bank Belgium talked about a *European agriculture and food fund* (as part of the Green Fund), that has difficulties to raise the interests of investors and consumers. *Could financial sponsorship to Commons initiatives networks be an option? Working on this question is crucial.*

What are the crucial points of managing the commons and its limits?

Patrick Holden pointed that Land for agriculture has never been taken as a common, so we are challenging the way of thinking land for food production and its ownership.

Social challenge: conflict between nature conservation and food production (i.e. WWF land grabs for nature conservation). Philosophical question of managing natural resources: are human beings part of nature or are they managing nature?

Community-based management. It requires consciousness, mentality change. Conflicts resolution processes and work on our "homo economicus" behaviours.

Buying land means to be part of the market game and fuels speculation: is it a solution? Linking it to political work towards institutions to regulate land markets can be one way. Another strategy can be: occupations and legalization. However, different contexts require different strategies. Isn't it counter-productive to acquire land at high prices?

Raising shares: should we aim for raising shares (savings) from the community or for raising donations? In fundraising, capital is stuck: is it the right approach?

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Is ownership the solution? Or should we focus on collective tenure and management rather than ownership? Should Commons only mean collective ownership?

Titus Bahner remarked that, nowadays, there are absurd amounts of money available and absurd land prices. The challenge is to channel this money toward buying this expansive land in order to neutralise both.

Next steps

Building policy proposals:

1. Tax deductions for investment in the Commons
 2. Develop alternative bookkeeping (and accountancy) systems matching the needs and specificities of management systems of the commons
 3. Tax negative externalities (e.g. taxes on greenhouses emissions, etc.), so that conventional large-scale agriculture would not be profitable anymore (even in the short-term).
 4. Establish a new legal frame on property: a legal status for common property.
- => Develop enabling economic, legal and fiscal policies

Follow-up workshop:

Participants concluded that there should be a Follow-up workshop on Farmland as Commons. This workshop would bring together: "best practices" (exemplary cases); banks; institutions; other private and public investors. Its purpose would be to:

- Investigate different models of investment structures to invest in farmland for local, community-connected farms.
- Discuss the possibility of bringing all shareholders together in a European or global financial structure building financial bridges between existing entities (cf. proposal from P. Holden).
- Develop a common framework for managing the commons, which could be the first step towards a Charter on Farmland as Commons and a common "protocol" for investment in the commons

This workshop could cover the following topics:

1. Multiple organizations and levels for managing the commons;
2. Private / public investments in the commons;
3. Security of investments;
4. Second-market issues (related to liquidity);
5. Tax and other policy issues.

It is also important that this workshop addresses the underlying question "The commons for what?". What is the finality of the commons? We need to have a strong and credible answer to this question, to offer a powerful proposition, beyond just referring to "the commons". Shall we refer to "Farm sustainability in perpetuity"? Participants suggested examine the proposals and arguments of all existing experiences (Soil Association Land Trust, Regionalwert AG, Terre de liens and so on) and find a common argumentation frame.

Preparatory work for this workshop would be to make an inventory of existing initiatives of managing farmland as commons in Europe (and document, in particular, the different investment models)

Potential funders identified for the organisation of this workshop are the Triodos Bank, or as part of a Leonardo or Grundtvig project.

3.4 Working Group 4: Developing a policy environment promoting land access for local, peasant agriculture

Background

A growing number of citizens, experts, associations, and local authorities are calling for an agriculture, which is sustainable, nurtures the social and economic local fabric and endorses a civic dimension by engaging directly with the community or providing public goods. While forms of local, resilient civic agriculture already exist throughout Europe, they are still marginal and under pressure from the majority model of intensive, specialised corporate agriculture and side-lined by the current CAP. In Eastern Europe, we also witness phenomena whereby small-scale, rather extensive forms of farming are being replaced by intensive monoculture – phenomena likely to be heightened by the opening of land markets in these countries. How could the CAP be reformed to address these issues? How can we draw from the FAO guidelines on land tenure? What can we learn from good practices of local and national regulations and policies?

In this context, the main objectives of this Working Group were to:

1. Draw up a state of play of current land policy frameworks: establish key features of land concentration; analyze CAP impact on land markets discuss the recent phenomenon of massive land acquisitions in Europe and current as well as expected impact of Eastern European land markets opening.
2. Share ideas and good practices towards policy proposals addressing the land barrier and promoting local, ecological and peasant agriculture: CAP reform, learning from national land policy regulations; potential of the FAO voluntary guidelines on land tenure.

The working Group was facilitated by Hannes Lorenzen from Forum Synergies / ARC 2020 and Agricultural adviser for the European Parliament.

Participants

1. **Anne van Schaik** (Friends of the Earth Europe)
2. **Erik Mathijs** (Leuven University)
3. **Evelyn Underwood** (IEEP)
4. **Florence Kroff** (FIAN Belgium)
5. **Floriana Pondichie** (IEEP)
6. **Frank Stubbe** (VLM)
7. **Gerard Breeman** (Wageningen University)
8. **Griet Celen** (AEIAR- land banks)
9. **Judith Bouniol** (Ecoruralis)
10. **Michel David** (Confédération Paysanne)
11. **Michel Dupont** (Assistant, Jose Bové MEP)
12. **Michel Merlet** (aGter)
13. **Robert Levesque** (FN SAFER/ AEIAR)
14. **Samuel Féret** (ARC 2020/Groupe PAC 2013)
15. **Sjoerd Wartena** (Terre de liens)
16. **Stanka Becheva** (Friends of the Earth)
17. **Véronique Rioufol** (Terre-de-Liens)
18. **Andreas Biesantz** (Demeter International)
19. **Lapo Cianferoni** (Demeter Italy and Demeter International)
20. **Hans Martin Lorenzen** (Agricultural adviser, EP; ARC2020/ Forum Synergies)

The first part of the workshop aimed at analyzing the current policy contexts of land markets and highlighting key features and challenges. As underlined by Hans Martin Lorenzen in his introduction, it is very difficult to monitor and debate land issues on a European scale. Few years ago, the Commission suggested a program to map the state of agricultural areas in the EU. It was opposed by the majority of Member States and interest groups, who do not wish to create transparency and spread information about the state of farmland, as it may lead to changes in land prices and land market functioning. As long as Member States behave like that, it will be impossible to establish a European policy which regulates access to land and would lead to best practices of sustainable land use.

Robert Levesque (AEIAR/ FN SAFER) gave a presentation on the **“Analysis of recent evolutions of agricultural structures and increasing farms’ financing”**. In his presentation, based on the example of France, he explained that land prices are determined by added value per hectare resulting from agricultural activities, as well as by the evolution of interest rates. In areas/ situations where farmland may be converted to other uses, such prospects lead to farmland prices being over-estimated, and disconnected from its use value. Across Europe, prices also largely differ according to the structure of land markets: in Germany, where farmland is really put on the sales market, prices are much higher than in France, where farmland is more often sold and bought. The automatic result of the functioning of the land market is land concentration. So unless if sound regulations are introduced, for instance to reserve access to land to specific types of candidates, the number of European farms will continue to decrease dramatically. At the same time, we can witness a trend towards financial capital being invested in farmland (through investment funds, or other forms of financial structures). See also his presentation in the annex in French language.

Anne van Schaik (Friends of the Earth Europe) gave a presentation on the topic **“Analysis of large financial investments in farmland”**. She presented the work done by Friends of the Earth to analyze large financial investments in farmland made by European companies. Most of this work concerns investment in countries of the South. It shows that these companies do not have clear ethical principles guiding their investment: they little monitor their investments in farmland, do not analyze its impact, not assess it as part of their corporate and social responsibility policies. FoE is now bringing forward a report before the Dutch Parliament to highlight the extent of these investments, and make proposals to better guide and monitor these investments. They have encountered some cases about investment of European companies in European farmland, and would be interested to pursue this work together with other interested organizations.

Judith Bouniol (Ecoruralis) described during the situation of land grabbing in Romania. There are no official statistics, but estimates are that 800 000 hectares (i.e. 6 % of the agricultural area) are being bought or rent by foreigners with the help of Romanian partners. Many national features: recent history, orientation of current national agricultural policies, soil fertility and climate, lack of knowledge or interest from the population, etc. can explain why Romania is such an attractive country for foreign investors.

There are various forms of land-grabbing. In some cases, land is taken away from the community, and farmed in ecologically and socially deplorable conditions. Thus, in a village near Sannacolau (city with industry employment for a large part of the Duesti active population), an Italian company settled in 2001 and started exploiting 11 000 hectares of land for crops and beef meat (mostly for export). The impacts on the local area are significant: land monopoly, destruction of natural heritage (archeological sites, forest and old roads), separation of the community, privation or control of water resources (dams). Besides, no jobs are created. Local development in that area cannot be characterized as sustainable.

Another example of land-grabbing is the famous case of Rosa Montana, where farmland is being taken away for mining. Altogether, at national level, the impacts are tremendous: encouragement of Agro-industrial systems, land

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concentration, discouragement of peasant agriculture and weakening of the local economy, increase of land prices (+ 300 % in 10 years), pollution and destruction of biodiversity.

The second part of the workshop was focused on identifying the key obstacles and levers that should be addressed by policies and regulations.

First, **Samuel Féret** analyzed “How to include land access and land consecration concerns in a reformed CAP”. He underlined that a number of other civil society demands (i.e. ARC2020) would have a positive effect on land distribution and preservation of small-scale farming (e.g. capping of subsidies). However, going further or being more specific about land issues would be difficult under the current CAP framework, as land is not a subject of the CAP and considered as not being of European competence. Ways could be to try and stretch planned policy measures (e.g. advisory services under pillar 2). A debate followed around two issues:

- Is CAP the right policy instrument or not? Should farmers', ecological and rural development organizations continue to try and influence the CAP, or is it unable to adequately address land issues (albeit in a technical and marginal way)?
- Direct payments: most of these civil society organizations concur to say that direct payments shouldn't be based on acreage? But what do we want them to be based on?

Florence Kroff described the “Potential of FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure in Europe”. The Guidelines were adopted in May 2012 by the FAO, as a result of a new process, that of the Committee on Food Security, which brings together states and civil society organizations. While the latter strongly participated in and influenced the process, the final results do not totally reflect their demand. The Guidelines are an important progress as they are the first instrument to adopt a human right approach with regard to the governance of land. It also has important loopholes, but civil society should use it in their struggle. A first step is to disseminate it and make it known. A second step is to bring the message home: when discussing and adopting the Guidelines, European States only had in mind the issue of land grabbing and land tenure in Southern Countries. Now we need to explain and highlight that land issues (land grabbing, land concentration, etc.) are also taking place in Europe, and that the Guidelines are also applicable here. A debate followed between participants about whether the Guidelines were a useful tool, or just good intentions.

Finally, the session ended with the presentation of **Michel Merlet** on farmland and added value. He showed that the distribution of added value between the various factors of production explains why land grabbing has become so common. It is not so much because they are more efficient that capitalist companies are grabbing land, as because they capture ground rent (i.e. natural fertility, etc.). A series of recent studies, carried out by AGTER and some partners, in Ukraine, Romania and Peru, all confirm that small farmers produce more added value per ha than large holdings. Additionally, they represent more labor and less unemployment and, in general, also translate into more sustainable production.

While land shouldn't be dealt with as a commodity, land is on the market. And the current functioning of the market makes it difficult to differentiate between various rights attached to the land and various right holders. We have to rethink the boundaries between the different rights and right holders. Together with few other organisations, we have just conducted an extensive comparative analysis of land policies and land markets in 7 EU countries. One conclusion is that the land situation differs widely, depending on the strength of farmers' organizations and their rhythm of entry into the EU. We can learn from the rich national histories of European countries in terms of land policies: many successes and failures we can draw lessons from. To address land issues, we will also have to include land in the CAP. We also need to get at the root of the “mystery of land grabbing” and begin strategic thinking of all organizations involved on these issues.

4. Main Conclusions of the conference day

- EU decision makers must be again and again confronted with the result of the AGTER study (and others) that small-scale farmers produce more added value per ha for the society than large holdings (see study above). The superior added value results from taking into consideration economic, environmental and social factors.
- As also concluded in workshop 2 (farm continuity) we must educate and motivate young farmers and people to work on farms again. Otherwise more and more small-scale farms and peasant farms will disappear and be replaced by large-scale farms. (This would be the inevitable consequence as at present only 6% of the European farmers are in the age below 35 years, but more than 50% are more than 50 years old).
- A European observatory for monitoring who owns the land and studying land use evolutions (changes in land uses, land concentration, etc.) should be established and lead to more transparency concerning land ownership and land access.
- Regarding the Common Agricultural Policy:
 - Rewarding increased employment on farms could be a valuable political tool for the future CAP and replace badly targeted direct payments.
 - The enormous differences of agrarian systems in Europe demand a more flexible agricultural policy and flexible measures to be applied in order to achieve sustainable production.
 - We need to start now working on CAP reform starting in 2020, as the land issue is still far from the mind of many decision-makers, and far from the current framework of the CAP.
- The new program of the Commission “EIP” (European Innovative Partnership) should include a project about innovative models for access to land. Moreover, program activities in the field of advisory services should focus on the development and implementation of sustainable practices.
- The “**Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests...**” of the Committee on World Food security (CFS) of the FAO (2012) are a potential tool to promote land access and limit land concentration in Europe. Further discussion is needed between civil society organizations to see how to use it as a basis to introduce similar, but mandatory, guidelines in European agricultural policy and legislation. Interestingly, these guidelines contain also recommendations for **taxes** to prevent speculation on land or encourage socially, economically and environmentally desirable behavior with regard to land tenure ship.

Day 2 (3 June)

5. Internal working group meetings of the land sharing alliance partners

On the 4th of June the main organisers of the conference (Demeter International, Terre de liens, Bioforum Flanders and Terre-en-vue) and other relevant stakeholders came together for an internal meeting which took place in the EU Liaison Office of Demeter International in Brussels. It lasted from 9.00 h until 16.00h in the afternoon.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the outcomes of the four working groups of the previous day and brainstorm how to “go further” and which are the next steps that should be taken in order to preserve agricultural land in Europe and mobilize different actors to take action.

Participants

1. Andreas Biesantz (DI),
2. Joana Silva (DI)
3. Evangelia Lasithiotaki (DI)
4. An Jamart (Bioforum),
5. Véronique Rioufol (TDL),
6. Marie Allagnat (TDL),
7. Sjoerd Wartena (TDL),
8. Laura Klemme (BING),
9. Clemens Gabriel (BING),
10. Peter Volz (Agronauten),
11. Michel Merlet (aGter)
12. Titus Bahner (Projektbüro Hitzacker)
13. Anna Kronzensky (Forum Nyeleni)
14. Neus Monllor (TOMATA)
15. Sonja Korpeter (Hof Gründer)



During the morning session, participants were distributed in 4 different groups. The method “World Café” was used. In each table, a designated rapporteur presented an overview of the discussion of the working group he/she attended on the previous day. During this session, participants reflected on the topics presented and brainstormed on possible proposals or suggestions for the development of the ideas discussed. Each session lasted 15 to 20 min. After 4 rounds, all participants had been quickly informed about the conclusions of each working group and gave further ideas or suggestions. After, they were invited to present their main ideas in the plenary session. An Jamart from Bioforum and Véronique Rioufol from Terre de liens were the moderators of the discussion and responsible for reporting the main points of the discussion in a flipchart. In the next session results were presented briefly about the conclusion reached during the plenary session for each working group.

Working Group 1 - Preserving Farmland

Conclusions reached:

- There is no common policy for land use
- Market of land has to be changed
- There is a disconnection between food, land and agriculture
- Loss of Agricultural Land

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Needs identified:

- An inventory for the use of land has to be created for each European country
- Within a market approach sustainable prices are needed
- An extensive list of literature on the topic
- Agricultural land laws should be composed and good and bad current practices should be evaluated critically and be the baseline for future alternatives

Actors acknowledged:

- Agter (i.e. Farm Land Policy in France exists already)
- AEIAR
- ILAC
- COPA COGECA
- Publications of the French Ministry for Agriculture
- XCT – Land Stewardship

Working Group 2 - Facilitating Farm Continuity and supporting Future Farmers

Conclusions reached:

- Where are farmers that have passed through successful programs of transmission? (old & young farmers)
- Who owns the land? Land leasing contracts (transferable land contracts)
- Policy aspect: not so much addressed
- Lack of Farmers

Needs identified:

- Exchange face to face between actors, for in depth meetings
- Long Term Vision is needed
- An inventory for access to land on farmers continuity
- Training and Education
- Concretization: creation of a EU network
 - Aims
 - Who is who?
 - Literature list
 - Meeting
- Research Agenda on Sustainable Access to Land
 - Inventory
 - Training and Education/Agricultural Knowledge

Tools:

- Best & Bad Practices
- Expand and open up the existing platform, where farmers can communicate and meet
- Involve both young and old farmers

Working Group 3 - Managing Land as Commons

Needs identified:

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- Mapping existing initiatives (i.e. Group de Bruges)
- Analysis
- Inventory:
 - Practical experiences
 - Financing Commons
 - Managing from the point of view of public institutions

Tools:

- Organize a conference, in Brussels
 - Networking, connecting experiences of NGOs with banks, institutions and think of investing in farmland
- Topic of conference not yet decided

Working Group 4 - Developing a policy environment promoting land access for local, peasant agriculture

Needs identified:

- A new comparative study where:
 - Agro-ecology benefits (social, economic, environmental, etc.) vs. Non-Agro-ecology
 - Identification of actors working on land issues
 - Political impact possible? How? Awareness, broad spectrum of actors
- To Build a Strong Network: funding opportunities
- Experts from current policies: research, both good and bad;
- Criticize bad experiences and learn from it, find alternatives.
- Exchange experiences

Tools:

New Study of AGTER regarding economic added value throughout the chain, on: Farming/ Agroindustry/Eastern European Countries

Conclusions

Overall, participants identified the strengths of each organization they belong to, and reflected on which recommendations would they give to EU policy makers. Some of the topics that were covered in the Word café were: Policy stance of each organization – what are they working on. Also, we tried to identify pools of competence: What should be the approach from the “network” of organizations towards the EU Institutions, on this matter? How does each participant see the links between their work and the contribution for the EU policy?

Afternoon Session

During the afternoon participants analyzed and brainstorm on the following topics:

- **Strong Networks and Funding:** the objective was to brainstorm on the establishment of a European Land Sharing Network and how it would look like. Having as a background, already existing alliances and other networks, of which the organizers and others are part of. Certain concrete points were thought of:
 - Policy/lobby work both on Land and Farmers, the Future of Organic Farming
 - Good practices, alternatives
 - How broad the network would be?

- Dialogue is the next step

- **Research:** this group presented a scheme of how research should be conducted and organized, being something different than Universities do.



Main Conclusions

The participants worked on alliances and network building. It is important to highlight that this workshop was only the beginning of a process. The possibility for follow-up workshops was discussed as well. For Working group 4 “Developing a Policy Environment promoting land access for Local, Peasant Agriculture”, it was identified that comparative studies are needed to add economic value throughout the whole chain. Therefore, the identification of actors working on land issues is important. Also, increasing awareness in a broad spectrum of actors is essential in order to have successful political impact. Building a strong network between the actors will contribute to discover new funding opportunities. At last, current policies should be evaluated and become a platform of knowledge for improvement.

Some of the participants of working group 2 “Facilitating Farm Continuity and supporting Future Farmers” came together and create the “Farm Succession Workgroup”. This group emerged from the following problem; in many cases farmers do not find successors and few tools exist in order to lead farmers to success. Also, there is very little interest on the issue and few independent initiatives exist and have the knowledge to help the farmers. Another problem is that farm succession is problematic when no family members can take over the farm, or when a mix of family and non-family members are needed.



Therefore, the aim of this group is to create a European platform on Farm Succession in order to spread good practices and tools that can facilitate farm succession, create an active EU network on farm succession and do lobby work on this issue. To achieve those goals is needed to map the existing situation on farm succession in the Europe, identify the existing actors who have competences and create partnerships.

Moreover, during this workshop very fruitful discussions were generated and it was a platform of networking and knowledge exchange between different actors that are actively involved in land issues. Besides, participants critically evaluated the current situation concerning land and were able to identify some of the most critical challenges that exist, due to past and present actions and will continue in the future if nothing is changed.

Overall, they brainstormed about possible future answers in the fields of research, practices and models policies and funding for sustainable preservation, use and management of land. Additionally, this seminar was a first step for exchanging ideas, getting to know each other and their work, and encourage collaboration between different stakeholders.

6. Summary

The conference “**Land Sharing Models for Sustainable Agriculture – Proposals for land preservation, new land use and land management practices**” took place on 3rd and 4th of June in Brussels, organized by Demeter International, Terre de liens (France), Bioforum Flanders and Terre-en-vue (Belgium).

It aimed to inform, support and mobilise EU policy makers, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders with regard to the issues of access to land and models for realising new land sharing models for sustainable agriculture. Experts on that topic were invited to give presentations and relevant organisations working on this issue participated.

The first day of the conference took place in the **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**.

In the first session the following keynote speakers made valuable contributions to the topic.

Patrick Holden, director of the “Sustainable Food Trust” in the UK and organic farmer, gave the first presentation. He pointed out that new models should be developed for land management. Significant capital in the US is invested in conventional agriculture. This capital could be invested in more sustainable systems, if the investors could be sure that they would have reasonable returns (a combination of interests and ethical values).

Robert Levesque, who is an agronomist and works in the Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon and for Safer, reported about the consequences of soil sealing and reiterated the challenges that agricultural areas face. He analysed the current situation of land distribution in Europe and pointed out that the market favours the concentration of land in the big exploitations. Therefore, the structural policies should try to tackle this problem.

Pablo Servigne talked about “land as Commons”. Right now people see land as a commodity, but it should not be like that. Still, people should find a way to manage land as a “common good”.

At last, **Titus Bahner**, a freelancer consultant and project developer in the field of organic farming, rural development and renewable energy, explained how a recently developed blueprint of a non-profit ownership models work. He talked about “community responsibility”, which can be promising for the future of land. It is not always necessary to convert private property into public property, but converting public property into intentional group property could be a solution.

For more information you can find the full presentation of all speakers in the annex of this report.

During the second session of the day the participants and speakers were divided in **four different working groups**. The aim of these working groups was to identify existing obstacles and elaborate possible solutions and models for future land sharing projects.

The first group “Preserving Farmland” focused on the problems agricultural land has been dealing with in the last decades. Existing national and local regulations about farmland were discussed as well as identified gaps in the current policies for that issue. Participants agreed that measures should be taken to promote the formulation of a European policy for the preservation of farmland.

Working group 2 “Facilitating Farm continuity and supporting future farmers”, was focused on the exchange of experiences, sharing ideas about the current situation and brainstorm towards policy proposals addressing farmers` continuity on the EU and national level. The outcome of this working group was the creation of the “European Network on Farmers Continuity”.

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Working group 3 “Managing land as Commons” discussed the meaning of Commons. Approaches and current trends in Commons were discussed. The issue of how to raise ethical investor interest in farmland was discussed extensively. Participants brainstormed about future policy proposals that could establish a dimension in “Commons”.

The forth working group was entitled “**Developing a policy Environment promoting land access for local, Peasant Agriculture**”. Participants pointed out the key features of land concentration and analysed the impact of the CAP on land markets. Key obstacles that should be addressed by policies and regulations were identified. The “Potential of FAO Guidelines on Land Tenure in Europe” was discussed as a potential instrument to adopt a human right approach concerning land governance.

The second day of the workshop took place in **Brussels` Office of Demeter International**. It was the “informal” part of the conference as only the organisers, alliance partners and some others being active in the field of land sharing met that day.

The main objective of the second day meeting was to discuss the outcomes of the four working groups of the previous day and brainstorm how to ‘go further.’ Which are the next steps that should be taken in order to preserve agricultural land in Europe and mobilise different actors to take action? The participants worked also on alliance and network building.

The most striking outcome of the second day was the creation of the “**Farm Succession Workgroup**” by some of the participants of working group 2 “Facilitating Farm Continuity and supporting Future Farmers”. The aim of this group is to create a European platform on Farm Succession in order to spread good practices and tools that can facilitate farm succession, create an active EU network on farm succession and do lobby work on this issue. To achieve these goals it is needed to map the existing situation on farm succession in Europe, identify the existing actors who have competences and create partnerships.

Another important issue and vital for the successful and active continuation of the lobby work is the need for co-ordination of the network about land sharing in Europe, i.e. to set up a “**European land sharing network**”. The alliance partners will go on at the moment to keep up the established network, but are in urgent need to find funding for employing a coordinator for 2-3 years to strengthen the network.

Overall, the conference brought together stakeholders from Brussels and Europe who discussed the issue of land access and land sharing in Europe. They contributed to foster the newly established network so that relevant stakeholders can start co-operating now, build alliances and take action to preserve and cultivate farmland in Europe in a real sustainable way.

Thank you all!

