

| MEETING REPORT |

EURO+MED AGRI SOCIAL FORUM

Tuesday 11th July 2017 - 10.00 / 16.00 BRUSSELS



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10,00-12,00 Tuesday, 11 July 2017

at *European Parliament - meeting room P1C047*

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14,00- 16,00 Tuesday, 11 July

at CIA Headquarter, Rue Philippe Le Bon, 46 Brussels

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FOREWORD

In light of the strategic guidelines defined by Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals established thereby, approved by the **United Nations General Assembly** in 2015, social and care farming is seen as a further evolution of previous agricultural models, apt at supporting sustainable development policies. Social and care farming is defined as being well-established in the local communities, respectful of the environment and able to add value to the work performed, besides being able to establish a fruitful interaction between, on the one hand, the stakeholders involved in the production process and, on the other, a more conscientious and modern welfare system.

Growing interest towards social and care farming can be witnessed in Europe as well as elsewhere in the world, with very multifaceted points of view which may differ considerably from one another.

On a global scale, the spread of social and care farming has been characterised by experimentation and research on new aspects of the multifunctional approach, generating services and goods, contributing to the spread of ethical values as well as to strengthening the human capital and social cohesion on a local level. In the countries that lie on Africa's Mediterranean shore, this has been applied to small-scale, family-run and subsistence farming, thus furthering the development of its educational and rehabilitation functions as well as promoting the human rights of local populations.

The current crisis that welfare systems are undergoing in Europe as well as worldwide is a threat to the established social rights of citizens and can lead to an increase in social inequality. Within this complex framework, social and care farming is seen as one of the most effective activities that can contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, such as fighting poverty and inequality, the elimination of hunger and the struggle against climate change, to mention a few.

Furthermore, it can also contribute in an effective manner to a revived relationship between Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean area, where epoch-making changes are currently taking place, redefining inclusion and cooperation policies between the states, in order to promote new relationships based on reciprocity, investing on a revived primary sector that shall produce not only goods, but also relations and dignity.

Care farming is based on the practice of both traditional and innovative values as well as on the interaction between different needs, knowledge and cultures. It constitutes a process that leads to the awareness of responsibility on an individual as well as on a community level, harmonising the concepts of food sovereignty and economic sustainability with responsibility towards the environment, the local community and the territory with its common goods.

SUMMARY

The International Meeting on Euro+Med Agri Social Forum, 11th July 2017, Brussels, Belgium, was convened by the CIA – Italian Agriculture Confederation and Social Farming National Forum and hosted by Davide Sassoli *Vice-President of the European Parliament*.

The International Meeting followed the Appeal launched in september by CIA and Forum for the constitution of Euro+Med Agri Social Forum. The Italian Vice Minister of Agriculture On. Andrea Olivero, was the first signatory together with: Massimo Fiorio, Vice President Agricultural Commission at the Italian Parliament and first signatory of the Italian Law on Social Farming 141/2015; Social Farm Network, Confagricoltura, Libera Association, Agricoltura Capodarco, NCO Consortium of social farms. (Annex 1)

According to the Appeal “Euro+Med Agri Social Forum shall facilitate free and democratic participation of all interested parties and citizens, supporting cultural, economic and social forces, as well as institutions at all levels, to gain a prominent role. *Euro+Med Agri-Social Forum* aims at the creation of a space for discussion and constructive dialogue on a European level as well as with the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, among all entities and networks that operate in different ways in the field of Social and care farming. A space for political and cultural discussion and research that shall be able to:

1. further spread the practice of social and care farming throughout European Countries as well as the Mediterranean area as a whole;
2. promote social and care farming among Institutions as well as among European bodies dealing with Agricultural, Economic, Social, Healthcare and Work policies;
3. facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practices among different European entities;
4. develop an efficient communication strategy aimed at raising awareness among citizens regarding the values, ethical principles and opportunities of this innovative welfare system.

The International Meeting aimed:

- to confront on the possible constitution of Promoter Committee for Euro+Med Agrisocial Forum by setting the basic principles, methods and strategies for developing national and international action plans to address this ambitious objectives;
- to strengthen political commitment by European Institution to develop and support Social Farming, as well as the provisions of Opinion NAT/539, adopted on 12/12/2012 by ESSC;
- to share experiences, challenges and technical knowledge on social farming and to construct a plan for being connected at Euro Med Level, considering the need for strengthening of governance;
- arrangements, and learning from different contexts.

Over 80 participants attended, including delegates from 6 Member States and 2 Non Member State, Representatives from other organizations in the Social farming system and civil society, and technical experts. In addition, Colleagues from UK, Germany; Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia and Hungary that could not attend the meeting, asked to be informed on the outcome of the meeting.

This meeting report summarizes and synthesizes the proceedings and outcomes of the International Meeting

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

In December 2012 the European Economic and Social Committee in a document on “Social farming: green care and social and health policies” has described Social farming as “an innovative approach that brings together two concepts: multipurpose farming and social services/health care at local level. It makes a contribution in the ambit of agricultural production to the well-being and the social integration of people with particular needs”.

The Committee argued towards the recognition of social farming at EU level and establishment of a regulatory framework. Also made a case for the creation of a database at EU level, pointing towards the need for the inclusion of social farming in research and education programmes. **Furthermore the Committee emphasised the importance to strengthen the role of civil society and build up networks on social farming to include it in the sustainable development strategy and the Common Strategic Framework. (Annex 2)**

Quotation from ESSC :

- 1.7** The EESC also considers it crucial to put in place and bolster social farming networks in order to share lessons learned, pool experience and raise awareness. Also desirable are a joint representation of social farming interests at the political level and the establishment of an umbrella organisation at European level. This would reinforce both exchanges between those involved and the role of civil society organisations.
- 1.8** If it is to become entrenched throughout Europe, social farming needs a conducive environment, greater civil society involvement and fruitful collaboration between different policy areas and administrations (health/social affairs, farming, employment) at European, national, regional and local levels. This means that it should be recognised and provided with targeted support by public authorities to give it sustained access to funding for various aspects of this type of farming.

Within the new European Strategy 2020, social farming is considered a fundamental practise that transects not only agrarian activity but other key sectors such as health care, social services, environment, and employment, to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in rural and often marginalised areas.

In recent years, different national governments have promoted SF in several ways, with the support of EU grants based on economic diversification policies, social inclusion and rural development.

Current debate in Europe, however, still presents a **lack of an agreed common definition of Social Farming**, with different conceptualisations being used, both amongst academics and the actors involved (peasants, users, third sector, public administrations). There is no single, precise definition of the concept nor a consensus about the range, differences or intersections with other associated initiatives such as Green Care, Farming for Health, Green Therapies, Animal Assisted Therapies, Horticultural therapy, etc. **However, this must take into account that Social Farming is not a fix nor harmonized concept but a changing and developing one and any definition can not be narrow.**

Actually in the EU countries numerous models exist that combine voluntary and public social services initiatives, public and private funding, and regulations concerning employment, social outreach and economic support for at risk groups and individuals.

The current crisis that welfare systems are undergoing in Europe as well as worldwide is a threat to the established social rights of citizens and can lead to an increase in social inequality. Within this complex framework, social and care farming is seen as one of the most effective activities that can contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, such as fighting poverty and inequality, the elimination of hunger and the struggle against climate change, to mention a few.

Background

The International Meeting was a landmark event that followed and built upon the numerous contact and formal and informal relationship established in the last years by most of the participants. Previous project such as MAIE, SoFar, The Good Seed linking social farming in Europe or the event organized by Rural Development Network etc create the space to meet each other and to start sharing knowledge and experiences.

In 2012, the Economic and Social Committee released its final report following an Hearing involving researchers and civil society organizations brought together by ESSC to gather and review evidence on what was needed to support social farming and its full recognition.

The international meeting, held in accordance with Opinion NAT/53 aimed to share experiences on how to address the challenges posed by Social Farming and to mobilize commitment to the urgent implementation of feasible actions on social farming in all countries, with the goals of supporting SF as a driver for community development based on a news idea of agriculture and Welfare State able to improve health, reducing inequities and promoting local development, preserving landscape.

WHY A PROMOTER COMMITTEE

The ambition is to support the creation of a transnational multi-actor network for Social Farming, a community of practise which can be strategic to promote and support SF in and beyond Europe, to enhance a structured dialogue between the different actors involved, including researchers, and promoting exchange of good practices on Euro+ Med level.

The key challenge of the specific EURO+MED AGRI SOCIAL FORUM is to contribute to fostering an active and greater participation of social farming actors; to promote and support SF in Europe and at international level; to create a common place of discussion and to foster the exchange of good practices and knowledge; to promote in Europe and in the Mediterranean countries a rising awareness about the potential of SF and to support the market of SF products

The main idea of the FORUM is that social farming in rural, peri-urban but also urban development can have a key role in addressing the specific challenges: as part of multifunctional farming, it can offer a wide range of services aimed at pursuing the well-being of citizenry, and responds to the wider needs of welfare policies. As a social innovation it contributes to the development of new forms of organisations and interactions in rural areas in order to respond to societal challenges

For all these reasons and in recognition that a fundamental gap exists between the increasing social farming potential of social inclusion and sustainable growth, and the lack of research and analysis in this area, public recognition the Promoter Committee will set the next step for the Creation of Euro+MED AgriSocial Forum.

SESSIONS

Morning - TUESDAY,
11 JULY 2017 - 10.00 / 12.00
*European Parliament -
meeting room P1C047*



SPEECHES

The official opening of the International Meeting was held in the *meeting room P1C047* at European parliament and included speeches by Cinzia Pagni, Vice President of CIA; Davide Sassoli *Vice-President of the European Parliament Replacing the President for Neighbourhood Policy (South/EUROMED /Middle East)*. The panel was coordinated by Ilaria Signoriello, *Social farming national Forum*

5 years after the Opinion released by ESSC, the International Meeting wanted to collect and share knowledge about SF at national level and also to get opinion by international stakeholder directly involved in SF activities, in order to start a process toward the constitution of EURO+MED Agri Social Forum to support SF at European level but also in the Mediterranean Countries.

A full morning of productive discussions on the significance of an transnational organisation to be connected, to start sharing data, research, knowledge but also to set joint strategies looking at the new programming period. Some of the speeches stressed the importance to share existing data and also to implement new research to carry out an in depth analysis of the state of art of SF.

During the morning session new proposal came up such as: a new Hearing at the EESC, proposal welcomed by the President of EESC, but also to start involving the *Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament with an hearing* to be held in autumn in order to rise awareness

We report below a quotation of Georgeos Dassiss:

Georgeos Dassisis recalled the Opinion NAT/539, adopted on 12/12/2012 and he stated that “ESSC found that EU institutions, national and regional authorities and organisation should not only establish an appropriate and conductive regulatory framework but also put in place and bolster social farming networks in order to share lessons learned, pool experiences and raise awareness. We stressed that it is necessary to have a joint representation of social farming interests at the political level and the establishment of an Umbrella Organization at European Level. This would reinforce both exchanges between those involved and the civil society organisation”. (Annex 3)

Main Intervention

Davide Sassoli

Vice-President of the European Parliament Replacing the President for Neighbourhood Policy (South/EUROMED /Middle East)

Cinzia Pagni Vice President of CIA

Enida Shena, Representative of the *Agriculture Ministry of Albania*

Georgios Dassis *President of the European Economic and Social Committee, EESC*

Paolo De Castro *Vice-Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament*

Michele Gaudio *Secretary General of Cittadinanzattiva*

Marjolein Elings *Wageningen University*

Massimo Fiorio *First Signatory of Italian Law on SF*

Olga Brigo *CERCICA, Portugal*

Lorraine Guillaume *Wallonia RDN*

Giuliano Ciano *President Consortium NCO*

Willem Rombaut *Support Centre for Green Care – Flanders*

Schiffers Olivier *Accueil Champetre en Wallonie (ACW)*

Faouzi Zayani *Vice President de syndicat de agricultores de Tunisia SYNAGRI*

Michela Ascani *Italian RDN*

Carlo De Angelis *National Coordination Of Host community- CNCA*

Irena Xhani (Ilajaj) *Inac Albania*

Dino Scanavino *President of CIA*

Agim Rrapaj *Kash-albania*

MEPS attending the meeting:

Brando Benifei

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/it/124867/BRANDO_BENIFEI_home.html

Elena Gentile

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/it/124847/ELENA_GENTILE_home.html

Michela Giuffrida

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/it/124864/MICHELA_GIUFFRIDA_home.html

Giovanni La Via

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/it/96816/GIOVANNI_LA+VIA_home.html

On Andrea Olivero, the Vice Minister of Agriculture could not attend the meeting but sent a letter (Annex 4).

The strategic importance to be connected at Euro+Med Level was acknowledged by all participants.

SESSIONS

Afternoon - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2017 CIA Headquarter Rue Philipe Le Bon, 46 Brussels



ROUNDTABLE

The Round table was preceded by a networking lunch. The lunch gave the opportunity to start sharing experiences on the national basis between the different stakeholders.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Moderator: *Mr Giuliano Ciano, NCO Consortium*

<http://www.ncocooperazione.com/ncco/idPage/100/lang/it>

- *Olga Brito, Cercica*
<http://www.cercica.pt/>
- *Cinzia Pagni, Vice President CIA*
<http://www.cia.it/>
- *Ilaria Signoriello Social Farming National Forum*
<http://www.forumagricolturasociale.it/>
- *Giuseppe Cornacchia CIA*
<http://www.cia.it/>
- *Marjolen Elings Wageningen University*
<http://www.wur.nl/en/wageningen-university.htm>
- *Massimo Fiorio Member of Italian Parliament*
- *Lorraine Guillaume Wallonia RDN*
<http://www.reseau-pwdr.be/>
- *Willem Rombaut Support Centre for Green Care – Flanders Groene Zorg.*
<http://www.groenezorg.be/>
- *Schiffliers Olivier Accueil Champetre en Wallonie (ACW)*
<http://www.accueilchampetre.be/>
- *Nico Polman Wageningen University for SIMRA project*
<http://www.simra-h2020.eu/>
- *Faouzi Zayani Vice President de syndicat de agricultores de Tunisia SYNAGRI*
<http://www.synagri.ca/>
- *Michela Ascani Italian RDN*
<http://www.reterurale.it/>

- *Carlo De Angelis National Coordination Of Host community- CNCA*
<http://cnca.it/>
- *Antonio Gaudio General secretary of Cittadinanza attiva*
<http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it/>
- *Agim Rrapaj Kash-albania*
- *Irena Xhani Inac Albania*
- *Enida Shena Ministry of Agriculture of Albania*
- *Cristina Chicco CIA*
<http://www.cia.it/>
- *Niccolò Zavattoni CIA*
<http://www.cia.it/>
- *Cludio Guccinelli ASES*
<http://www.ases-onq.org/>

MR Ciano made the initial statement emphasizing the importance of understanding how to find new ways of working and having integrated, multisectoral approaches to meet the challenges of SF. In his introductory note, MR Giuliano Ciano provided an overview of the theme of this second session following the morning meeting at the European Parliament and he focus on the need to know each other . All participant introduced themselves, their organisation and their engagement in SF.

After a brainstorming about critical point such as the financial resources and also the difficult to find a common definition of SF at Euro+ Med level, all the Representative decided to “form a Promoter Committee aimed at strengthening the European and Mediterranean Policies for social farming and to exchange experiences and good practise” (Annex 5)

RESOLUTION (See annex 5)

- To create a common database and mailing list in order to start being connected and sharing data and contact
- To be committed in the next months to get involved other potential interested actors, starting by the national network of social farm if constituted and agricultural organisation.
- To meet again in Autumn

KEY AGENDA FOR MOVING FORWARD

POTENTIAL IDEA TO SHARE:

- to create a Euro+Med Newsletter with news about SF coming from the countries and organisation involved in the constitution process.
- to identify potential financial resource to support the Euro+Med agrisocial Forum to share before the next meeting
- to elaborate the International Chart of Principal for SF
- to share before next meeting a draft statute of Euro+ Med Agri Social Forum
- to open a virtual space to share documents (initially dropbox)
- to organize a new hearing at the ESSC
- to plan an hearing at the *Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament*
- to organized the Promoter Committee in working groups to be decide together.
- to organized a WEBINAR at Euro+Med level on SF

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THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK TO ALL OF US

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