



**NYELENI** 2011  
EUROPEAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY FORUM

## Editorial

### As we follow the road to KREMS, we advance towards people's food sovereignty

In Europe, more than a thousand farms, along with the people who make them possible, disappear every day. The loss of cultivated biodiversity continues to increase. The best lands are falling into the hands of financial capital, which is also speculating with food and as a result food crises are rocketing. The European population is increasingly suspicious of a food system that regularly puts their health at risk... These are some of the serious consequences of a **global food system based on an unsustainable neoliberal model**, driven by transnational companies and financial markets. Current European agricultural policies have been developed according to the doctrines of the World Trade Organization. And, more importantly, the CAP has evolved from a mechanism to ensure food security on the continent to an instrument without political vocation, which leaves agricultural regulation at the mercy of pure neo-liberal competition, where multinationals always win and small farmers in Europe and in many other countries always lose. It is time for change, and it is time to fill the false democracy in which we live with politics. **Food Sovereignty should be considered as the framework for agricultural policies in Europe and worldwide.** Producers and small-scale producers, with their farming, despite what the agro-industry may say, are the only ones who can feed the people while preserving the richness of our planet for future generations. While political and economic interests persist in the wrong direction, throughout Europe, citizens are organising themselves to regain control of their food and agricultural systems: movements for the multiplication of seeds, anti-GMO organizations, young farmers reviving the countryside and production-distribution-consumption cooperatives are among the many alternatives that are being built in Europe. The Nyeleni Forum 2011 will offer the possibility for a collective reflection on these emerging initiatives, and how we can work together more effectively. In Austria, **we will strengthen the pillars on which we're building the European movement for food sovereignty.**

*Javier Sanchez, ECVC and Steering Committee for Nyéléni Europe*

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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### Food Sovereignty in Europe

The Nyéléni Forum that was organised in Mali in 2007 aimed to start similar approaches all over the world, in order to identify and strengthen struggles for Food Sovereignty. For European organisations this was a priority, as they were aware of the impact on the rest of the world of their institutions and policies as well as that of the agricultural, social, political and economic models that those institutions promote. With a population of 738 million in 51 countries, Europe represents 10% of the world's population. 27 of these constitute the European Union (EU) and account for a population of 500 million. They have pooled many fields of competence that are concentrated in increasingly powerful supranational institutions. Agriculture is one of the key EU policies; it accounts for 46% of the budget and 141 billion euros.

## Who we are

In the last years hundreds of organizations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organizations were present in the Nyéléni Forum 2007 and feel part of a broader Food Sovereignty Movement, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter wants to be the voice of this international movement.**

Organizations involved: Development Fund, ETC, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, Veterinarios Sin Fronteras.

## Now is the time for Food Sovereignty!

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### 5 - 12 August

7th Session of the **UN Human Rights Council advisory Committee** (with a special seminar on the rights of peasants) – Geneva, Switzerland - <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/advisorycommittee.htm>

### 16 - 21 August

**Nyéléni Europe, the european forum on Food Sovereignty** – Krems, Austria - <http://nyeleni2011.net/>

### 3 - 5 September

**UN conference on information**, special focus on Rio2012 - Bonn, Germany  
[www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference)

### 10 September

**International Day of Struggle Against WTO, Commemoration of Lee Kyung Hae**

### October – December

**Regional UN Conferences on Sustainable Development (Rio2012).** Let's participate into the regional meetings to get sustainable agriculture in the agenda of Rio! Check the calendar for your region: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=23>

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[www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)





## Sharing experience: the forum methodology

All participants to the forum are representatives of organisations working for food sovereignty. We hope to be able to welcome participants from the entire pan European area – 42 countries. Discussions will be organized around three key questions:

1. What does Food sovereignty mean for us and how are we engaged in it?
2. What are the barriers and opportunities to reach Food Sovereignty in Europe?
3. How to work together to achieve Food sovereignty?

The participants choose then one thematic axis for the whole of the forum where these three questions are debated:

1. Models of production
2. Markets, organization of food chains and food web
3. Conditions of work and social aspects
4. Access to land and other resources
5. Public policies (CAP and rural development, fishery policies, energy, trade)

The Forum's methodology will ensure the equal participation of all its participants. Decisions will be taken by consensus. Of course, there is no space for discrimination (race, sexual orientation, gender,...) or aggressive behavior. Discussions will be along the five thematic axes and constituencies (producers, consumers, workers and NGOs) and regional meetings provide further input to these discussions. The forum will start with a women's day and youth meetings will be held regularly. In addition to the collective work during the sessions there should be enough time to get to know each other. Volunteers are preparing a cultural program, there will be a Field Day with the possibility to visit local farmers' initiatives, we will have a daily Mystica,...Food will be regional, organic and fair, provided by a mobile kitchen which cooperates with local farmers. A crowd of enthusiastic Austrian people will be working as volunteers during the Forum. The interpretation will be done by COATI, a collective of volunteer interpreters. Participants and support groups are dedicating their time, brains and hearts in order to strengthen a Pan-European movement for Food Sovereignty, according to the Via Campesina slogan: **Let's globalize struggle, let's globalize hope!** More info at <http://nyeleni2011.net/>

## A memory from Nyéléni 2007

*Miriam Nobre, World March of Women*

The Nyéléni forum brought together people from very different political cultures and experiences but with a common purpose: to make food sovereignty a reality. We built an independent space that favored coexistence and exchange between different movements, set to the rhythm of time, flavors, and knowledge of the people of Mali. We had the opportunity to share the struggles of women for food sovereignty and to sharpen a feminist vision which recognizes our contribution to the production, preparation and distribution of food, and with which we could confront the barriers posed by patriarchal traditions and the expansion of capitalism in agriculture. We left stronger to continue the struggle for peoples' sovereignty and for the autonomy of women, organizing new actions between women from the countryside and the city in alliance with other movements.

## Common Agricultural Policy: from food self-sufficiency to neo-liberal competition

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has changed considerably since it was first created in 1962. The CAP was created at that time **to overcome the need for people to guarantee food security and independence in the EU** and to improve farmers' income and maintain reasonable prices for consumers. The policy was based on three aspects: fair farm gate prices for key products decided annually at administrative level according to production costs, import duties, and a guaranteed outlet on the internal market according to the principle of community preference. **(Over)production rapidly increased.** EU countries were obliged to stock and export the surplus to other countries, subsidising prices to offset the price difference. This encouraged dumping on other markets, particularly those of countries of the South. Local producers were obliged to compete with subsidised imported products. The first milk quotas aimed at limiting production were introduced in 1984 and sharing the production between Member States; cereal production was limited by a compulsory fallow programme. But this was not enough. Given the huge increase in the budget as well as international pressure (essentially from the USA) to reduce protection of EU agriculture, as well as that from agribusiness to cut prices for raw agricultural products and to open markets, the CAP was radically reformed in the 1990s, and again more recently. Farm-gate prices were greatly reduced to meet global rates, and direct subsidies were introduced on the basis of the number of hectares or animals per farm. This was completed by a rural development policy with far less financial resources. In 2003, the subsidy became a SPR (Single Payment Right). It was no longer linked to production in agreement with demands from the WTO; since its creation in 1994 the WTO has had a predominant influence on the CAP, all the reforms have been dictated by the need for liberalisation. **Competitiveness became the key word within the EU.** Let us also add that since its creation, the EU has forsaken its independence in the production of the vegetable proteins required for animal feeds and has accepted a waiver on import duties on soy bean cakes (GM or not) from the USA.

## A dominant agro-industrial model

This process has had a strong influence on the agricultural model that has developed in the EU. **The agro-industrial model now dominates.** The number of farmers is falling rapidly, and some farms are getting bigger and bigger, without any upper limit for subsidies. Between 2000 and 2009, the European Union of 27 lost 25% of its active farms (with 3.6 million jobs lost, particularly in the new member States, Rumania, Poland and Bulgaria). With 11.5 million people working full time in 2010, agricultural labour represents less than 5% of the total EU labour force<sup>1</sup>. **The fall in the number of small-scale family farmers is presented as a dogma, as proof of economic efficiency.** Thus one of the conditions for preliminary admission for Turkey to the EU includes imposing a reduction in the active farming population from 33% (in 2002) to almost 7%. This is in keeping with the demands imposed by the IMF and the World Bank who have destroyed the policies supporting producers and the publicly managed stocks<sup>2</sup>. The European Union also imposes production and processing norms, making it difficult for small-scale family farmers to sell their produce. This is justified by protecting consumers, animal welfare and "modernity", **these norms are a de facto means of favouring agribusiness**, that has a very strong influence in Brussels. Different methods are used to protect industrial interests in the seed sector (patents, Certificates of Plant Origin...) to hamper farmers' independence and oblige them to use seeds produced by the multinational seed companies. It is the huge mobilisation of citizens that has so far limited the introduction of genetically modified seeds into Europe. This is constantly undermined and has not stopped massive imports of genetically modified seeds that have been used for animal feed. Hypermarket chains - dominated by the 6 European groups like Carrefour, who are the second biggest global distributor after Walmart, or the German groups Aldi and Lidl, the hard-discount champions and whose bosses are amongst the wealthiest in their respective countries, - are gleaning all the added value. They also continue to block local producers' access to the market and to industrialise the food that Europeans eat. In Romania, for example, over 50% of the food is imported, although the country has rich agricultural land. This is the case for many countries both within and outside the European Union. However, we need to bear in mind that many systems co-exist, including many subsistence and semi-subsistence farms that contribute to feeding people and to the cultural wealth of Europe.

1 - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Agricultural\\_labour\\_input](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agricultural_labour_input)

2 - An analysis in Sections 5 and 7 [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/TURKEYEXTN/Resources/361711-1209153236622/Volume\\_II\\_Final.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/TURKEYEXTN/Resources/361711-1209153236622/Volume_II_Final.pdf) and [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETTRADE/Resources/Pubs/Turkey\\_BHoekman&STogan\\_book.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETTRADE/Resources/Pubs/Turkey_BHoekman&STogan_book.pdf)



## With Europe facing a social crisis, Food Sovereignty is fuelling a huge movement

**Insufficient income is also causing many people to migrate and sell their labour as seasonal workers on intensive fruit and vegetable farms.** In Spain, Germany and France the low wages paid to workers are being justified by the imperative need to remain competitive in a Europe that proudly claims that trade is “free and fair” but that fails to propose any tax or social harmonisation between the Member States that compete with one another. In this Europe, poverty and precariousness are increasing, and are leaving many young people without any perspective, with increasing unemployment and the erosion of public services. Access to food has become difficult for an increasing number of people. Banks are applying pressure, and the States are on the brink of bankruptcy. This is the case in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy soon will follow. **This is a crisis of predatory capitalism. It is time to change the system.** Meanwhile alternatives to this unsustainable model that is dominated by the interests of industry and finance are springing up everywhere. Citizens, youth, men and women are building initiatives to support access to land and helping young farmers to get established so that they can produce respecting the environment, allow local people to have access to healthy food, enable the poor to have access to good products, or create more fair exchange in a world of solidarity. Actors of these deep changes will all be gathering in Krems from more than thirty countries during the Nyéléni Europe Forum. They will exchange on the key issues of food, on how to strengthen the Food Sovereignty movement in Europe and debate public policies that take responsibility for the good of both people and the planet. For more info <http://nyeleni2011.net/>

## Food Sovereignty, the definition

*Food Sovereignty* is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define and exercise their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. FS prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. FS implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations. For more info <http://www.nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/31Mar2007NyeleniSynthesisReport-en.pdf>

## Voices from the field

*Short stories from Africa, America, Asia and Europe, resistance and alternatives.*

### Time are changing, agriculture is now a political issue

*Heike Schiebeck, Austrian farmer, bee-keeper and Via Campesina activist.*

Longo maĭ, a city-dwellers' youth movement created collective farms in several different countries in the 1970s. This was not at all common at that time. One of these farms, which is where I have lived for the last 32 years, is in the mountains in the South of Austria. It is a mixed farm, with a herd of sheep, 30 bee-hives, pigs, chickens and rabbits, as well as vegetables, medicinal plants and fruit trees as well as forests. The production is used both for our own subsistence and direct sales. When we began farming the abandoned farmland, the principle of collective farming did not yet exist. In Austria, farms are managed by families in traditional manner. The number of farms is rapidly declining: too much work, prices that don't cover production costs, and a family structure that is often patriarchal are all causing young people to flee the land. But times are changing. In recent years, agriculture has become a political issue. An increasing number of people no longer accept their daily food being produced by a few multinationals. Let us change the Common Agricultural Policy as well as social relationships, and let us promote gender equality! Criticism against supermarkets, the creation of vegetable gardens in the cities, the occupation of land lying fallow to plant potatoes, «guerilla gardening», new collective farms, and agricultural projects developed by social movements are all starting to become a reality. A young rasta said to me «I want to become a farmer». I was very moved. All these initiatives as well as the preparation for the Nyéléni Forum in Austria have contributed to building a movement that supports food sovereignty.

### Romania, a country with a strong peasant history

*Doug Knight, Project Manager of the Eco Ruralis Association.*

Here in Romania, the fight for the rights of small scale farmers is both difficult and inspiring. We must deal with a government that is working against us, and yet we get to work with a population of peasants which is the largest in Europe and is full of rich traditions. The Eco Ruralis Association was founded in 2009 to give a voice to the 4.2 million small scale farmers in Romania who, until now, have had no voice. In 2011, we became the first Romanian member organization of the European Coordination Via Campesina. Decades of

collectivization under communism and neglect under capitalism have left Romanian peasants disheartened with their government but continuing to maintain their lifestyles and practicing eco-friendly small scale agriculture as parts of ancient local economies. We are an association OF peasants and FOR peasants, and our association works on behalf of all the peasants in Romania. Our current government in Romania is advocating biotechnology and is constantly promoting agribusiness as the future of Romanian agriculture, and we work to give a voice to opposition viewpoints. What encourages us is that the average Romanian maintains a deep connection to the land, due to the peasant history of the country, and most Romanians know that small scale farmers must be supported to keep Romania thriving. We are optimistic for the future of peasants in Romania; after all, they have experienced worse, and they are still standing, 4.2 million strong.

### A seed for the revival of autonomous local communities

*Pierre Besse, farmer for 20 years, and a Community –supported Agriculture farmer for 7 years, SouthWest France.*

After getting my degree in agronomy, I studied the Masanobu Fukuoka's principles of natural farming and became engaged in the emerging movement of permaculture in the 1980s. That's how I decided to dedicate my life to farming. Since the beginning, my purpose has been twofold: to know and experiment environmentally friendly production techniques, and to foster the political project of a society inspired by the principle of Food Sovereignty and based on large and independent farming communities. When I begun my farming activity, I was selling at the local open-air market. It was quite difficult, even if the relationships with the customers were very good. Selling at the market absorbed two to three working days per week, and the income remained very low, half the minimum wage... Then, the first AMAP (Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne, French way of doing CSA) appeared in the nearby town in 2003 and I got involved with consumers as early as in 2004. Working in AMAP meets our family's expectations: the time spent to sale is almost divided by 5, giving more time for production, and most of all the relationships with AMAP customers are very rewarding in

terms of recognition, both material and symbolic. We, AMAP farmers, really feel “carried by consumers”. Personally, through this long-term partnership with committed consumers, I got into the situation of being able to improve my farming abilities, without promoting a commercial «organic» label. There is indeed a growing distance between our understanding of our work on the farm and the label or certification approach, which is just a marketing tool. For all these reasons, we usually see the AMAP system as a social and economic integration process at the local level: it is a seed for the revival of autonomous local communities, a powerful tool for Food Sovereignty.

### The milk production chain in Burkina Faso and the massive imports of European milk products

Maurice Oudet, Chairman of SEDELAN - [www.abcburkina.net](http://www.abcburkina.net)  
Burkina Faso is a West African country with 16 million inhabitants, of whom 3 million are livestock breeders. Half of these 3 million breeders are families, which, for several generations, entirely depend on their livestock. These breeders own 8 million heads of cattle. But, how then explain that the milk chain is very poorly

developed? The reason is simple: massive imports of milk products; mainly milk powder coming from Europe. It is thus that I am saying that enemy number one of Burkina [Faso] cattle breeders is the industrial 25 kg bag of milk powder. Before the food crisis of 2008, with 200 F CFA (0,30 euro) one could buy enough milk powder to produce one liter of whole milk. While a dairy producer who would use locally produced fresh milk had to pay a liter of milk at 0,45 euro. How to explain that one liter of milk produced in France, Germany or Ireland can travel in a refrigerated milk tank truck to the factory, be heavily processed, shipped on a cargo boat, call to a West African port, subsequently travel 1000 km by road, be unloaded to a warehouse, loaded on another truck again, unloaded at a retailer and sold – at a profit- to the end consumer at such a low price?! Obviously the main reason is dumping! One should count all the direct and indirect subsidies which explain this reality. Today, after the crisis the situation improved slightly, nevertheless continues to be very worrying. In Burkina [Faso] and in all of West Africa, cattle breeders are very worried. Food sovereignty is a necessity and an emergency!  
Illustrations: [http://www.abcburkina.net/photos/cpf\\_hongkong/b\\_2447.jpg](http://www.abcburkina.net/photos/cpf_hongkong/b_2447.jpg)  
[http://www.abcburkina.net/photos/cpf\\_hongkong/mr\\_2466.jpg](http://www.abcburkina.net/photos/cpf_hongkong/mr_2466.jpg)

## THE WORLD IN WORDS

### Sierra Leone opposition urges scrapping of land deals

A leading Sierra Leone opposition party has called on the government to cancel major land deals signed with international investors, saying they are taking away the livelihood of peasant farmers. The statement came just days after Swiss energy group Addax & Oryx announced it had signed a 258 million euro (\$368 million) deal to finance a renewable energy project in which it has leased over 50,000 hectares of land. The project includes the development of a sugarcane plantation, the construction of an ethanol refinery and a biomass power station. “Our records showed that 10 percent of the country’s estimated 5.4 million hectares of arable land suitable for farming have been let out,” said National Democratic Alliance spokesman Mohamed Bah. Full article at <http://www.mnw.nl/africa/bulletin/sierra-leone-opposition-urges-scrapping-land-deals>

### Solidarity with Honduras

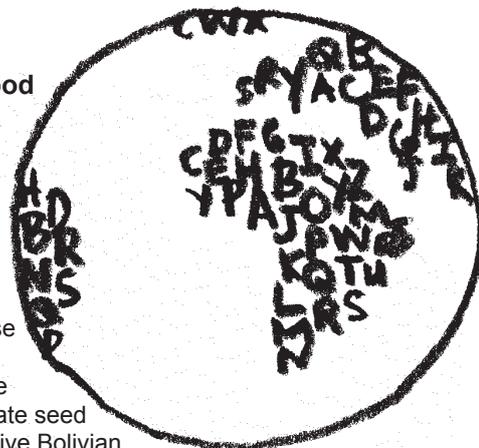
Two years after the Military Coup in Honduras, former President Zelaya and the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP) gathered in San Pedro Sula, the economic capital of the country, to demand an end to the regime that continues hindering democracy. In spite of the systemic human right violations especially directed against activists, opposition leaders and journalists – since the military coup twelve journalists have been killed in the country\*, the Honduran resistance has been standing firmly. During the commemoration, the Frente Amplio de Resistencia Popular (FARP) was launched as a political alternative for the 2013 elections, that aims to the creation of a “new Honduran state”\*\*.

\*[http://www.baserribizia.info/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2506&Itemid=131](http://www.baserribizia.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2506&Itemid=131); \*\*<http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/Necessary-End?lang=en>

Reports and interviews with leaders of Central American organizations <http://www.radioteca.net/result.php?id=13030166>

### Bolivia toward Food Sovereignty

President Evo Morales signed a new law designed to move Bolivia toward food sovereignty. The initiative requires a \$500 million a year investment over the course of 10 years. Among the many actions planned, the government will form a state seed bank to store and sort native Bolivian plants and channel credits to community producers. For more <http://alainet.org/active/47638&lang=es>



### World Bank told to stop lending to land grabbers

Civil society organisations from Latin America, Europe and around the world have issued an open letter calling on the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation to reject a proposal to finance Calyx Agro, a company that acquires farmland in Latin America on behalf of wealthy foreign investors. Calyx Agro is a subsidiary of Louis Dreyfus, one of the world’s biggest commodity traders. The World Bank is considering a loan of up US\$30 million to help Calyx Agro expand its operations in Latin America. The letter also denounces the Bank for its on-going support to other leading investors involved in land grabbing around the world.

The complete letter is available in English, Spanish and French here: <http://farmlandgrab.org/post/view/18886>

Next edition special on **Women and Food Sovereignty** – Send your contributions - news stories, photos, interviews to [info@nyeleni.org](mailto:info@nyeleni.org) by the **30th of August!**

## To read, listen, watch and share

- *Against the Grain*, GRAIN, a new report on the role of pension funds in the global land grab, June 2011 [http://www.grain.org/articles\\_files/atg-30-en.pdf](http://www.grain.org/articles_files/atg-30-en.pdf)
- *Una injusticia llamada PAC*, Veterinarios sin fronteras, May 2011, <http://www.veterinariossinfronteras.org/news/2011/06/08/0001>
- *La PAC après 2013. Quels enjeux socio-économiques pour le Sud?* ETOPIA; July 2010 <http://www.inter-reseaux.org/groupes-de-travail/politiques-agricoles/article/la-pac-apres-2013-quels-enjeux>
- *Dakar Appeal against land grabbing handed over to G20* <http://www.fian.org/news/press-releases/g20-agriculture-hundreds-of-organizations-say-stop-farm-land-grabbing>
- *On accountability of TNC* [http://www.fian.org/news/press-releases/copy\\_of\\_resolution-of-human-rights-council-on-business-and-human-rights-fails-victims-of-transnationals](http://www.fian.org/news/press-releases/copy_of_resolution-of-human-rights-council-on-business-and-human-rights-fails-victims-of-transnationals)



For reports and more references [www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)

**One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk.** Tashunka Witko, 1840–1877