



## For a local and ecological agriculture

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Agriculture is in crisis. If the industrial revolution increased production, made the work of farmers easier and reduced famines, the exploitation of soil also implied several serious problems. The biodiversity is at risk, the environment is polluted, the climate is changing and millions of farmers lost their jobs. We wanted to feed the world, but now, we are destroying it. In parallel, the concern about healthy food is growing. People don't want to be fed with antibiotics and pesticide any more. It is time to find an alternative; it is time for a local and ecological agriculture.

The globalized and industrialized agriculture showed its limits. FYEG is concerned with the actual state of this activity sector, which is vital for the humankind.

### • **Destruction of the environment**

Intensive farming, as done today in several regions of the world, have devastating consequences on the environment. Entire parts of the tropical forest are transformed every year into unfertile pasture or soja fields. The massive use of pesticide and herbicide has a dangerous effect on biodiversity and human health.

### • **Climate pollution**

Climate is another big loser of the growing industrialization of the modern agriculture. The destruction of tropical forests to create agricultural lands implies massive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the atmosphere while depriving the planet of significant carbon sinks.

The growth of livestock farming is also a great source of greenhouse gas emissions, which contributes up to 35% of the total emissions attributed to the agricultural sector<sup>1</sup>.

But worst of all, the amount of food importation is exploding. We are not eating food from our garden or local farmers any more. Instead, we eat lamb from New Zealand, apples from South Africa and pepperoni from Morocco. Those regions have industrial agriculture using antibiotics, pesticide and others GMOs and often exploit workers. The trucks or the planes transporting these goods to Swedish or German supermarkets have a huge impact on climate change. The agricultural sector represents 17% of total greenhouse gas emissions<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO : Livestock's long shadow, 2006; <sup>2</sup> Ecointhesys 2007, CPE/ECOPLAN 2005



- **Social repercussions**

The agriculture's industrialization doesn't only have a bad impact on the environment; it also has huge social repercussions. Farms are always bigger while the number of employees is shrinking. In the EU-25, labor force in the agriculture decreased of 2.5% per year between 2000 and 2005<sup>3</sup>. In Southern regions, rural exodus is emptying the countryside and cities are suffocating.

Condition of farmers and employees in the agricultural sector is far from acceptable also in Europe. Scandals in South Italy or frequent problems in Spain are representative of the general situation in this sector. The pressure of the market is too high: producers are ready to violate social principles in order to make profits – or only to hardly survive.

### **Vision of the FYEG**

The FYEG strives for an agriculture in harmony with the nature that can healthily feed the 9 billions humans that will live on Earth by 2050. Intensive farming is not an acceptable solution. Organic farming at the local scale should be urgently developed in Europe and in the rest of the world; it is the only viable path to follow.

The massive importation of food Europe – and other part of the world – is currently experiencing is made possible by the distortion of prices. This situation is not sustainable. The FYEG asks for the truth of costs: impact on the environment and the climate should be considered. Once all external costs will be taken into account, the market will automatically be re-centered on the local scale.

The FYEG supports initiatives to promote local agriculture such as direct selling or cooperation between small farmers. These small steps are not sufficient, but are a very good start for a transformation of the modern agriculture.

The FYEG asks for a more responsible production of meat. Livestock should be organically raised and the import of feed from other continents should be forbidden. Transparency of the climate cost of meat should be ensured.

The quality of food should be well controlled. The FYEG refused the humanity to be fed with pesticide or modified food. The quality of the production should be more important than the quantity produced.

Relations between countries at the global scale should be very well discussed. Global free trade cannot be pursued in the agricultural sector, but blind protectionism is not a solution either. The FYEG strives for food sovereignty in each region or each country and for fair negotiations between countries of the global South and industrialized countries.

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<sup>3</sup> Eurostat : Agricultural statistics - Data 1995-2005



### **Demands of the FYEG**

- Introduce ecological labeling: Consumers need to know the ecological impact of the food they buy. A label indicating the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other impacts of the product has to be implemented as soon as possible.
- Ban GMOs: Genetically modified organisms are dangerous for the environment and for the people. When this fact is not proven yet, the precautionary principle should be applied. Broad studies should be made before growing GMOs in natural environment and a moratorium on this technology should be declared in the meantime.
- Ensure fair price for all agricultural goods: Market pressure implies the drop of the price of many food items. As a consequence, many farmers cannot live from their work anymore. Governments have to assure a decent life to all farmers by setting reasonable price for the products.
- Support organic and fair-trade products: In order to support sustainable products, VAT on all organic and fair-trade products should be suppressed. In addition, all subventions to non-organic farms should be stopped. The FYEG proposes a goal of 20% of organic products on the market by 2020.
- Support small farms: Local and ecological agriculture is best fulfilled within small farms with extensive agriculture. It is also the best solution for social cohesion. Therefore, all policies penalizing small farmers should be abandoned and initiatives should be taken to support them. Jobs in the agricultural sector have to be maintained.
- Give up negotiations on free trade agreements for agricultural goods: Agricultural goods cannot be compared to other goods. Free trade in this sector implies huge environmental and social damages. The Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization should be immediately stopped and rethink taking into account environmental and social aspects.
- Stop exports of agricultural surplus to other continents: Countries of the European Union are frequently producing surplus in order to lower market prices. The products are then exported to other continents. This practice should be immediately stopped as it has devastating effect of the local agriculture in those countries.