



## **Workshop: Farmers' seeds networks in Central and Eastern Europe**

**Date:** February 25 (Friday) 2011, 3.30 PM-5.30 PM, Workshop session 2

**Language:** English, Hungarian

**Room:** I. plenary room, basement

### **Coordinators:**

Guntra Aistara (CEU, Hungary/ Latvia)

Dan Craioveanu (CET, Romania)

### **Goal and summary of workshop:**

The situation with agricultural biodiversity conservation and seed reproduction and exchange in Central and Eastern Europe is in several key respects fundamentally different from that in many Western European countries, due to the history of agricultural collectivization and de-collectivization; the relative importance of public breeding through the socialist period; the current lack of resources for both farmers and gene banks; and agri-business lobby having a very strong influence on governments and unprepared opposition. Because of all of these reasons, many farmers groups in the region have not identified seed rights as a salient issue for political activism to date, and there has not been a serious fight for "farmers' rights" in most (if any?) CEE countries to date.

The purpose of this workshop is to:

- assess the main problems for developing seed sovereignty initiatives in the region, which perhaps differ from the situation in old EU Member states;
- discuss what in particular farmers' rights mean and should/ could mean in the CEE context;
- share experiences of activities and networks that have already been done in various CEE countries;
- coordinate mutual support, information sharing, and common campaign strategies among groups interested in beginning to coordinate farmers' seed-saving and exchange activities, public information campaigns, and facilitating coordination among farmers' groups, gene banks, scientists and public officials in their own counties or the region as a whole.

**Format:** The workshop will have a short introduction by the organizers, and informal discussion with all present rather than formal presentations.