



## Workshop: Agricultural biodiversity and local food systems 2

### Products derived from agricultural biodiversity and local markets

**Date:** February 25, Friday, 03.30 PM – 05.30 PM Workshop session 2

**Language:** English, Hungarian

**Room:** Big plenary, 1<sup>st</sup> floor

**Coordinator:** Bálint Balázs/György Pataki (Environmental Social Science Research Group, Hungary)

**Abstract:** Local food culture and local markets survived the communist regime in Hungary and in most of CEE countries, but a centralised agro-food system prevails. Multinational food processors and retailers dominate the market while small-scale, traditional family farmers are struggling with fragmented land ownership, lack of capital and marketing skills, distrust. In the past years recurrent food scandals in the industrial food chain and large-scale farmers' mobilisations provoked by price-squeezes imposed by large retailers and food processors, have raised wide-scale concerns about the origins of food. Consumers prioritise the local origin of food as one of the most important consideration, after quality and price, in their food purchasing habits. These trends have been accompanied by a consensus on rejecting GM food and an increasing awareness about the value of agricultural biodiversity. Less is known about consumers' knowledge and perception about the priceless genetic diversity embodied in the variety of local food products. Local food system (LFS) initiatives, particularly those based on collective organisation, are launched by community-organisers in the countryside, urban consumers' and citizens' groups. Their core strategies for developing local food systems extend from traditional forms of direct selling, through agro-tourism and festivals of traditional food to establishing local food councils. Many also act as hubs for knowledge-sharing on the propagation and use of seeds and plants. LFS certainly play an increasingly important role in helping local communities find new ways of using natural resources sustainably. This session will present collective initiatives from Hungary that use agricultural biodiversity sustainably, promote in situ on-farm conservation and renewal of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. As a main question this session will ask Hungarian local food initiatives how landraces find their way towards the consumers, how local varieties are valued, and what experiences they gained in promoting local varieties for their consumers?

#### Presentations:

- Alliance for the Living Tisza (SZÖVET): Landscape management and income generation for small farmers: direct marketing of local fruit and vegetable varieties
- Agricultural Research Institute of Martonvásár and Piszkei Óko organic bakery - participatory breeding and product development: alternative cereal varieties for organic food production
- Kamra-túra: direct sales initiative from the Homokhátság region
- Agricomplex and Arcade Bistro: A rural development and employment model: special quality vegetables for food production
- Natúrháló: information service for locally grown food and local production

**Background document:** Local Food systems in Europe – Case studies from five countries and what they imply for policy and practice

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