



**Newsletter**  
**Nr. 1, January 2003**

**Teruel 2001**

From 19 to 22 of September 2001 over a hundred participants from eleven European countries gathered in Teruel, Spain to participate in the forum 'Another Food System is Possible'.

The participants represented a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the food system: producer and consumer organizations, NGO's working in the social and environmental sectors, scientists and representatives of local, regional and national governments.

The forum concluded that the current dominant food system in Europe is the cause of poor nutritional standards and the serious crisis in our food system. At the same time democratic and community influence and control over policy and decision making is weakening. It also allows decisions to be taken by a decreasing number of private sector companies that are reducing and even eliminating a significant part of Europe's food and cultural diversity and heritage.

The industrialised food model has had a negative impact on the health of the citizens of Europe, which is reflected in statistics produced by the World Heritage Organization in 2000: 130 million Europeans suffer from illnesses that can be directly attributed to their diet.

Furthermore, in this system the socio-economic position of the producers is weakening.

The results of the discussion were laid down in a declaration, which will serve as a mission-statement for the Teruel-network

**Support from Fondation Léopold Mayer and WLTO**

Since the Teruel meeting it seems that not much had happened. Well, this is by no means true. The biggest problem for the follow up was, as is often the case, money. In July last year it finally became clear that both the Fondation Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme (FPH) and the Dutch Farmers Union (WLTO) were willing to support the work. With this contribution a workgroup was able to continue.

**Workgroup**

The members of this workgroup are:  
Clive Peckham from East Anglia Food Link, England  
Sophie Trigtignac from CIVAM, France  
Marina Guedon from CERAI, Spain  
Bart Soldaat from WLTO, Holland.

The workgroup has met three times in 2002. During the first meeting a first proposal was discussed. During the next meetings this has been elaborated into a work programme, which will give a clear structure for the activities to be undertaken in the next years.

In the future the workgroup should be expanded in order to better divide the workload and also to obtain a better geographical representation.

## **Work programme**

The main objective is to provide for an alternative European food system.

A food system that is economically, ecologically and socially sustainable, offers fair prices for both producers and consumers, offers healthy food products which reflect the rich diversity of food throughout Europe.

In other words: to bring the philosophy of Teruel into practice.

This, of course, is a truly ambitious goal. However, it is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. Actual and future problems in European agriculture, the European country-side, in health-related problems related to diets are all part of the same problem which necessitates a comprehensive strategy to resolve these major problems.

The main targets we want to focus on for the next years are:

- To influence the European agricultural, rural and food policies at all levels

- To establish an European standard for sustainable food production

- To develop a European trading network for local and sustainable food products

- To develop a European project on public sector catering that establishes common methodologies and charter.

## **The network**

To be able to achieve these goals a strong European network is essential. Taking the Teruel 2001 as a good starting point, the network should involve all those organizations and persons that support the mission and goals mentioned above. In this sense it is an open network, but participation must be based on a clear commitment and a contribution to the network's resources. Members are expected to get actively engaged and contribute, each member in its own way and with its own means, to help achieve these goals.

Lobbying and project development on a European level are complex and time-consuming matters. It is therefore vital to develop an adequate infrastructure, which will be accessible to all members.

Information and communication are the key-factors in this.

This Newsletter is just one way of disseminating information through the network. Regular meetings, like the Teruel conference, are another.

In the future we also aim to set up a series of databases in which is joined the common body of skills and knowledge already present with all the members of the network.

## **Salone del Gusto and Slow Food**

From 24 to 28 of October 2002 the fourth edition of the Salone del Gusto (Taste Fair) was organized in Turin by Slow Food. The Salone has become the most important international event in the food and wine sector. The central themes this year were food education and biodiversity.

Slow Food has over the last ten years developed into an organization with some 70.000 members all over the world.

Apart from visiting the Salone, we have established regular contact with Slow Food over the last year.

They were one of the participants of the Teruel forum and are very interested in participating in future projects.

Website: [www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com).

## **Teruel and the European Social Forum**

From 7 to 11 November 2002 the first European Social Forum was held at Florence. The central theme was: "Another Europe is possible".

As we all have been able to follow on the news channels, this was a major event, with over half a million people protesting in the historic centre of Florence. A wide number of topics were discussed, from the war threat on Iraq to the position of union leaders in South America.

As part of the programme, the FPH organized 3 workshops on the Teruel-theme: "another food system is possible".

The Teruel-workgroup was asked by the FPH to assist in organizing these workshops. Although the attendance was somewhat below expectations, the quality of the discussions was good and confirmed once more the need for a European network to continue the Teruel proposals.

Website: [www.fse-esf.org](http://www.fse-esf.org)

## **Public sector catering**

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The public sector has a key role to play in creating a sustainable food culture at all geographical levels in Europe both through its food provision services and as a prime provider and promoter of food education. Public sector support for producer groups supplying public caterers with sustainably produced ingredients has the potential for achieving significant benefits, especially if this can be linked with issues concerning health, development of rural economies and environment. In other words: a good opportunity for public bodies to put policy into practice. Actions and research in the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain have shown the need for the creation of a more integrated approach.

Because of this the workgroup has taken the initiative to develop an European project, which will be proposed for the Interreg IIIc programme in May this year. The project will focus on exchange and development of best practice, exchange and development of common methodologies and the creation of models for public sector catering that can operate on all levels throughout Europe.

### **Trading network and standards**

A lot of organic and local, sustainable producers are struggling with the marketing of their produce. Some are successful, but most remain at a scale too small to offer a durable economic future.

On the other hand it is recognized at all political levels that these producers play a vital role in supporting local economies and in maintaining the environment.

One way of creating better means for survival is to share experiences and create an European trading network. In this way producer groups can profit from each others knowledge, marketing channels and thus an access to a wider market.

There are several examples that show this can work. We think that for example the Leader+ programme and network offers a good stepping stone to build on these experiences and try to establish an European trading network.

This year we will develop this idea into a Leader-project.

### **Food policy**

On the political level these projects offer a springboard for the European discussion on the reform of the CAP and on the issues concerning food safety and health.

The CAP reform seems to become more favourable to small scale organic and local producers. But on the other hand will they, as well as the small scale processing industries, be most affected by the regulations on food safety that are discussed by the European Commission and European Parliament. It could well be that what is supported by the CAP will just as soon be inhibited by the regulations on food safety.

This calls in the first place for a thorough assessment of the way these regulations (some 80 different laws and regulations are momentarily in the make or already effective) will effect organic and local producers and processors. Subsequently a lobbying strategy from within the network has to be developed to make politicians at all levels clear what the consequences of this policy will be.

Apart from food safety issues, the questions concerning the relationship between food and health should be the core of European food policy. Recent reports of the WHO confirm unambiguously that a growing proportion of the population in the Western world suffers from obesity, especially amongst children. Research has shown that adults who are obese at the age of 20 have a life expectancy 20 years below average! Also, more and more experiments show a distinct influence of food on behaviour.

This calls for a fundamental re-evaluation of the relationship between food and health and also of the way children are educated on this theme. At the Teruel conference it was agreed that the way the food system works, lies at heart of the problem. So a change in the food system should be connected to a change in diets and in the way we teach children.

### **Valencia meeting**

The Teruel workgroup is preparing a next meeting for which will be invited representatives of a number of organizations and which will be held at Valencia in March.

It will be a preparatory meeting for the conference to be held in Venice at the end of this year, which will be the follow up of the 2001 Teruel conference.

### **Venice conference**

This currently is planned for November 2003 and will focus on Public Sector food provision as one of the principal means of creating actions and policies that combine health, economic, social and environmental benefits. It will involve all stakeholder groups and will build on the local achievements of the El Tamiso producer co-operative that now ensures that 1,800 schoolchildren in Venice are eating local, organic and fairly traded food every day

#### *Programme*

##### *The conference will*

- a) examine current best practice in Europe
- b) Examine what makes a successful sustainable public sector meals system focusing on:
  - Local, sustainable and co-operative supplies which reflect local to global cultures
  - Education and training support services (for staff; schoolchildren; parents, patients etc)
  - A tendering contract system that encourages the participation of local, co-operative and sustainable supplies
  - Direct links to suppliers at all geographical levels
  - Integration of cooks and kitchen staff
  - The creation of a sustainable food culture
  - Food and health policy
  - The potential secondary health and economic benefits
- c) Produce the first draft of a European charter for collective catering
- d) Visit projects and initiatives in the region

#### **In the news!**

In November BBC Radio broadcast a half hour programme about East Anglia Food Link and El Tamiso and their work creating local and organic school meals systems in Cambridgeshire and Venice. It also focused on the way two groups of farmers were co-operating on trading, training and information exchanges helping to create the type of fair and co-operative food system that the Teruel partners are trying to promote.

For full details go to

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/beyond/factsheets/changing4\\_prog6.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/beyond/factsheets/changing4_prog6.shtml) or [www.eafl.org.uk](http://www.eafl.org.uk)

We'll be keeping you up to date with progress on all project areas and welcome your comments and any suggestions you may have – thanks for your patience Bart, Clive, Marina and Sophie

**Food is everybody's business**

