



Erasmus-



Asociația tinerilor și tinerelor din România

WORA ERASMUS+ Project: The 4th Transnational Meeting – Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 27th - 29th of July 2022

- newsletter n° 4 -

The last week of July saw the partners in the Erasmus+ WORA reuniting in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, for the 4th and last transnational project meeting. Organized and hosted by EcoRuralis, the activity brought together all the partners, the AgriNatura, the Kisleptek association from Hungary and AMA Centar from Serbia.



The activities were kicked off by an official dinner as the partners arrived in Cluj-Napoca in the evening of the 27th. It was a good opportunity to catch up since 2 months ago when the meeting in Serbia took place, and get to know the participants in this meeting. As it was the last transnational meeting, the partners went all the way to ensure that they send the number of delegation members, in accordance with the project requirements. As such, the Polish delegation consisted in one participant, the Romanian organizers involved 2 participants, the Hungarian one three participants, with the Serbian one being the most numerous, with six persons.

The project meeting - which took place on the 28th of July - was particularly important as it was the last in person meeting for the partners. As such, it was quintessential in order to assess the current state of play. At the same time, we took this opportunity to clarify the remaining tasks and confirm their distribution among the partners, in order to ensure a smooth conclusion of the project. The dissemination of the results of the project regarding IT&C usage by women in the rural areas was a particularly important topic and it prompted us to reflect on the project, as well as possible follow-up projects based on our findings. Lastly, the project meeting concluded with the partners getting on the same page regarding the reporting phase and agreeing on



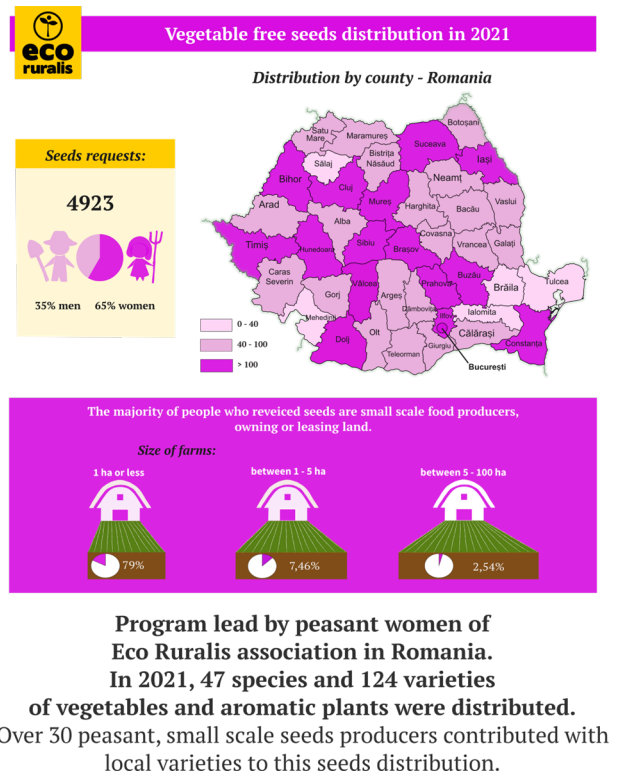
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After a copious lunch and a short stroll from the sunny city center to the EcoRuralis office, we dove into the topic of our meeting. The second part of the day started with a presentation of the EcoRuralis history, activity and political positioning. It was particularly relevant for the organizers to stress the complexity and heterogeneity of living conditions for the people in rural Romania, thus highlighting the need and drive for EcoRuralis to engage with the advancement of peasant rights in the country and region, in accordance to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in

Rural Areas (28 September 2018). This situation is mirrored at EU and European level, thus making it essential to keep having these transnational exchanges which help us ground our activities and create networks of cooperation across borders and regions, finding commonalities in both the challenges as well as solutions. EcoRuralis stressed that the IT&C instruments are essential in order to maintain a good communication with its large, nationally distributed member-base. This became even more evident during the 2020-2022 period of Covid-19 pandemic related restrictions. As such, unable to meet in person and living in villages and localities in the four corners of the country, the members of the Coordination Committee, as well as of the working groups on different topics, among which the right to seeds and rural feminism, resorted to online tools (Zoom meetings) in order to keep their activity going.



Seed saver and EcoRuralis Coordination Committee member Stela Zămoiu gave a presentation on the yearly seed distribution campaign of the association. However, given that she was recovering from Covid-19, and lives at a significant distance from Cluj-Napoca, her intervention was done by Zoom, thus showcasing how the use of information technologies. Stela spoke about how she saves seeds, manages one of the EcoRuralis seed houses and distributes the seeds to the members in the spring, together with her family. The yearly seed distribution campaign – a staple of EcoRuralis activity and member-gathering – has been ongoing since 2013. The campaign is highly reliant on information technologies, as the catalogue, seed request forms and overall management are done online. While this presents some limitations, particularly in terms of access to internet, it also allows for the seeds to be distributed nationally and in significant numbers. As such, in 2021, for example, almost 5000 requests were fulfilled, 47 species and 124 varieties of plants seeds being distributed. The participants to the meeting engaged in a revealing discussion about the current peasant/traditional seed reproduction legislation in Europe, and its limitations.



The second presentation focused on the Peasant's Box, a regional Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative supported by EcoRuralis. Eniko Butyka, producer involved in the initiative and member of EcoRuralis coordination committee talked about the gardening legacy in her "hoștezeni" family – the hoștezeni were a community of Cluj-Napoca inhabitants who, until a few years ago, used to garden and provide the locals with vegetables and other food produce. As their access to the traditional peasant markets got restricted, they had to find different ways to reach their customers in order to be able to maintain their lifestyle. The Peasant Box initiative provided this opportunity. It consists in an online platform which matches local, traditional food producers with consumers who wish to subscribe for weekly deliveries. The participants shared experiences with CSA in their particular context, exchanging good practices and knowledge about this type of production and distribution.

The day ended with an informal dinner where we continued our discussion and exchanges. The next day, the partners had the chance to explore the city of Cluj-Napoca in the heart of Transylvania.

We want to thank our partners in this project—Ama Centar, Kisleptek and AgriNatura—for their collaboration in this project! We are looking forward to working with you again and strengthening our networks in Europe and the Central and Eastern-European region!