

Promoting the Slow food concept for a better Common Agriculture Policy and Environmental Protection

Ruxandra M. Petrescu-Mag

Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Cluj-Napoca,
pmalina2000@yahoo.com

Abstract. Slow Food is an international movement which came into being in Paris in 1989. It fights for a sustainable and quality agriculture. Biodiversity, reanimation of local cultures and habits, the intelligent use of technology are some of its objectives, next to safeguard the environment and the land, to endorse sustainable agriculture, to protect small producers and their communities. Some of these desiderata are settled as CAP objectives, but few are put in practice and really defended by the EU policymakers.

Key Words: slow food, agriculture, environment, food safety.

Rezumat. Slow Food este o mişcare internaţională care a prins contur la Paris în anul 1989. Luptă pentru o agricultura durabilă şi de calitate. Biodiversitatea, reînvierea tradiţiilor locale, folosirea inteligentă a tehnologiei sunt câteva dintre obiectivele mişcării, alături de care amintim şi protecţia mediului, promovarea unei agriculturi durabile, protejarea producătorilor şi a comunităţilor din care aceştia fac parte. Dintre aceste deziderate, unele se află printre obiectivele PAC, dar puţine sunt puse în practică şi realmente susţinute de decidenţii politici ai UE.

Cuvinte cheie: slow food, agricultură, mediu, siguranţă alimentară.

Short Communication. The importance of European policies regarding agriculture, and especially food and nutrition has been determined by historical events. After the second world war agriculture policies focused on the food supply need. The reestablishment of a strong agriculture sector and the food security were the first aims of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Once these objectives were accomplished, CAP was confronted with new challenges, such as food safety, environmental protection or animal welfare. Nowadays consumers have other expectations than when the CAP was initiated. 91% of the EU citizens believe that one of the essential activities of the Common Agriculture Policy is to guarantee food safety. 89% consider environmental protection to be another basic function (Petrescu-Mag 2007). The role of the CAP should be to give farmers appropriate incentives to deliver European public goods demanded by society, particularly in the environmental realm. This includes the fight against climate change, the protection of biodiversity and water management (avoiding pollution, scarcity and flood) (Petrescu-Mag 2009). Currently, the public health challenges facing Europe include high rates of noncommunicable disease such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer and other chronic degenerative pathologies, as a result of nutrition transition. Moreover, the rise in foodborne disease and the appearance of new pathogens have captured the attention of policymakers (Román Viñas et al 2009).

The interest of the civil society for a non industrialized agriculture, for environment protection, for promotion local traditions, preservation of rural landscapes, food security were shaped under Slow Food movement. Slow Food (as opposed to Fast Food) is an international movement which came into being in Paris in 1989. It is part of a larger concept, that of Slow Movement. It fights for a sustainable and quality agriculture. Slow Food is based on the idea of ecogastronomy, recognizing the solid connection between food we eat and Planet Earth. Slow Food forwards the concept of coproducer, overstepping the passive role of the consumer, promoting those who are producing our

food, the way they are making it and the problems they are confronted with (Bucharest Slow Food Manifest 2007). Slow Food movement consider ourselves co-producers, not consumers, because by being informed about how our food is produced and actively supporting those who produce it, we become a part of and a partner in the production process (http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/philosophy.lasso). Last year (2009), Slow Food celebrated 20 years of the international association. Biodiversity, reanimation of local cultures and habits, the intelligent use of technology are some of its objectives, next to safeguard the environment and the land, to endorse sustainable agriculture, to protect small producers and their communities. As it is proclaimed on the Slow Food website, this current works to defend biodiversity in our food supply, spread taste education and connect producers of excellent foods with co-producers through events and initiatives. As we can see, some of these desiderata are settled as CAP objectives, but few are put in practice and really defended by the EU policymakers.

The recent CAP reform proposals are a step in the right direction, meaning new provisions on health, nutrition, environment and social justice in Europe. Food safety has become a top priority for CAP. But, CAP costs too much and benefits relatively few people. The current overall funding package for CAP was fixed from 2007-2013. More subsidies will be transferred to rural development and conservation. From a total of euro 133.8 Billion, 31% went to Natural Resources, that include Environmental, Agriculture expenditure and direct aids, Rural development and Fisheries (Petrescu-Mag 2009). The real steps for quality food are always postpone for future reforms. Thus, the European stakeholders have stated that after 2013, CAP will mainly focus on the need to have a strong EU policy for agriculture and rural development which will: address concerns about food security, ensure land management, support balanced development in rural areas, tackle the problem of climate change (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/index_en.htm). The role of the CAP should focus on encouraging a new type of agriculture respectful of the environment, of human beings and of taste, this is what we, the beneficiaries, are expected to.

Acknowledgements. Acknowledges to associated professor Raúl Blas Sevillano, National University of Agronomy La Molina, Lima Peru, for information on Slow food concept.

References

- Petrescu-Mag R.M., 2007 [Common Agriculture Policy: past, present and future]. EFES, Cluj-Napoca. [In Romanian]
- Petrescu-Mag R. M., 2009 The compared analysis of the agricultural legislation from the European integration perspective. The Iberic and Northern models. *AAB Bioflux* **1**(1):15-36.
- Román Viñas B., Ngo J, Ribas-Barba L, Serra-Majem I., 2009 Food and Nutrition Policies in European Countries. *European Nutrition and Health Report 2009*, (eds.) Elmadfa I., S. Karger AG, Basel, **62**:202-229.
- Bucharest Slow Food Manifest 2007, available at <http://slowfoodromania.blogspot.com/2007/05/manifestul-slow-food-bucuresti.html> (last view 22.12.2009).
- ***, http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/philosophy.lasso
- ***, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/index_en.htm

Received: 12 December 2009. Accepted: 29 December 2009. Published online: 31 December 2009.

Authors:

Ruxandra Mălina Petrescu-Mag, "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Faculty of Environmental Science, 30 Fântânele street, Cluj-Napoca 400294, Cluj County, Romania, EU, e-mail: pmalina2000@yahoo.com

How to cite this article:

Petrescu-Mag R. M., 2009 Promoting the Slow food concept for a better Common Agriculture Policy and Environmental Protection. *AAB Bioflux* **1**(2):51-52.