

Towards a European CSA Declaration!

The steps of the Declaration writing-process - 2015/2016.



BACKGROUND

In February 2007, in Nyeleni (Mali) social movements, farmers and activists, gathered during the Forum for Food Sovereignty and draw the first definition of the food sovereignty concept as a political tool to regain the control of peoples' right to food. Four years later, in August 2011, the first European Forum on Food Sovereignty was organised in Krems (Austria), with the aim to create a solid vision of food sovereignty for Europe. Urgenci took there the lead on the food distribution axis. In October 2012, the First European meeting on CSA and Emerging Distribution Systems for Food Sovereignty took place in Milan (Italy) to connect CSA initiatives right across Europe, so that mutual support can be provided, CSA knowledge and stories can be shared in a decentralized and open way.

In February 2014, during the second European CSA meeting in Villarceaux (France), the need for a European declaration is addressed.

WRITING-PROCESS

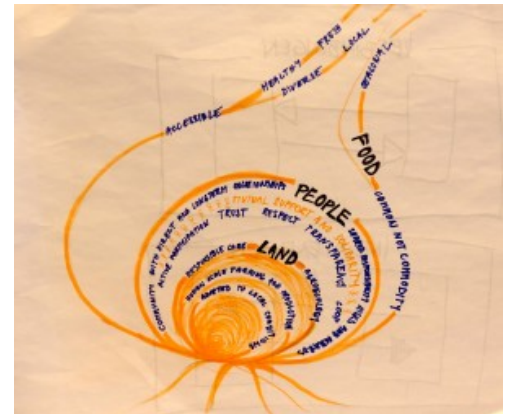
In 2015, the « Common Ground for Community-Supported Agriculture in Europe » project is launched by Urgenci, to build up a shared vision-process among the CSA community in Europe. It provided means to 15 local and national CSA networks to facilitate "Charter writing workshops", going back and forth with the European kernel who launched [the call "Let's write a European Declaration on Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\) !"](#)



On June 6-7, 2015, during the **1st European Charter-writing workshop**, in Milan (Italy, during the Expo dei Popoli event), 19 participants from 16 countries meet to acknowledge the need for a Common Declaration that states what we stand for and how to share it widely for purposes of Advocacy, Dissemination and Mass-Mobilization! They also reckon this

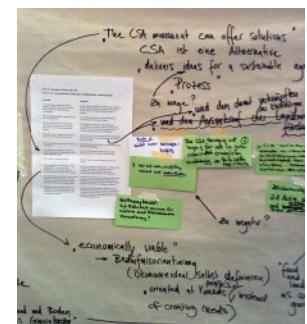
work can help facilitating the links between the European CSA platform and the specificities of the local and national networks to which they belong. Some participants from « experienced CSA networks » share their experience of Charter-writing processes they've led and on the benefits and the pitfalls to avoid.

Then on September 10-12, 23 participants from 15 countries attended the **2nd European Declaration-writing workshop**, in Berlin (Germany, during the Solikon Forum). They first decided what would be the structure of the Declaration, then split into small working groups to discuss intensively on the content and phrasing of our Declaration draft. They set an agenda and guidelines for the organization of the upcoming « National consultations », talked about the final editing process and how to amend the Declaration during the Ostrava 3rd CSA meeting?



From September to December 2015 (Common Ground was a one-year CONCORD project, in the framework of the European Year of Development 2015), “**National Consultations**” have been organized in 13 participating countries – with more than 400 CSA activists involved in discussing and commenting the Declaration draft. The guidelines set in Berlin were:

- To translate the declaration draft into each national language, and send it to the future participants of the national workshop beforehand,
- To agree that, at national level, different methodologies could be used according to the countries
- To organize the feedbacks: we would limit the number of modifications to 5 maximum per country, but to accept endless comments!



During the Preparatory meeting to get organized for the 3rd European CSA Meeting in Ostrava, on April, 19-21, 2016, the Steering committee decided it was time to finalize the draft.

DEFINITION

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement.

CSA GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. Each CSA partnership has autonomy.

We also agree on these basic principles as our common ground to grow the CSA movement.

- Responsible care for the soil, water, seeds and the other commons through the agroecological principles and practices as found in this declaration and the Nyeleni Declaration 2015
- Food as a common good not a commodity.
- Human scale production rooted in local realities and knowledges.
- Fair working conditions and decent income for all involved.
- Respect for the environment and animal welfare.
- Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse food accessible to all.
- Community building through direct and long term relationships with shared responsibility, risks and rewards.
- Active participation based on trust, understanding, respect, transparency and cooperation.
- Mutual support and solidarity beyond borders.

BUILD - DEVELOP – EMPOWER

We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe to:

- Strengthen the CSA movement and help new CSAs to flourish.
- Enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries.
- Conduct and promote participatory research on our farms and in our networks.
- Empower and educate people to act for and develop the movement
- Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society.
- Advocate for CSA communities at international, European and local level to implement our principles.
- Engage in local food governance.
- Work together with the food sovereignty movement and strengthen our alliance with social and solidarity economy movements.

We are a grassroots movement: we believe that the power of CSA is in pragmatic, everyday action and face-to-face relationships. We are connecting with each other, with the producers in our communities, and with the living soil beneath our feet.

This is our Common Ground.

