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**Access to Land for agroecological way of farming -
selected case studies in Europe**

Diploma Thesis

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Objectives of thesis

The aim of this study is to explore the possibilities and obstacles through complex analyses about access to land issue in selected European countries and organizations in order to create recommendations and suggestions for initiatives focus on access to land issues in the Czech Republic. Based on the literature review, analyses of selected countries, such as France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic, analyses of three existing organizations which are dealing with access to land issue, the identification of constraints limiting access to land and the potential solutions will be made for the Czech Republic.

The main research questions are:

What type of initiatives are spread around Europe focus on the Access to Land issue?

How to facilitate access to land for new entrants to farming?

How the farm succession can be secured for new entrants?

Methodology

The author will make complex analysis about access to land situation in the selected countries in Europe together with analysis of chosen organizations within these countries based on structured questionnaire. With using an appropriate literature, statistical data and results from analyzes of the organizations, the author will define the potential for creation of similar initiatives in the Czech Republic and create recommendations for successful management of such initiatives.

The proposed extent of the thesis

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Keywords

access to land, new farmers, land tenure security, agroecology, Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG, Eco Ruralis

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, original work, except as cited in the text. The research was completed under the direction of Ing. Vratislava Janovska PhD.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on determining of the obstacles and constraints that potential new farmers face in Europe when trying to obtain access to land and starting a new agricultural business, particularly in France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic. Based on the literature review and analyzes of French, German and Romanian best practices of dealing with the issue of access to land, several suggestions and recommendations were provided for the Czech Republic, including a potential creation of an organization similar to those analyzed. The main obstacles for Czech farmers were recognized as following: an extreme ownership fragmentation, which do not allow to the owners of parcels to manage their land properly, a distinctly low awareness of the consumers about organic farming and last, but not least, a low economical viability of organic farms. Therefore the organization should pay attention to make land attractive and accessible, to raise the awareness about organic farming among consumers and to raise the economical profitability of organic farms.

Key words

Land tenure security, land grabbing, community supported agriculture, Eco Ruralis, Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá problematikou přístupu k půdě, jakožto jednoho z hlavních problémů pro nové a mladé farmáře, se zaměřením na Francii, Německo, Rumunsko a Českou republiku. Na základě literární rešerše a analýz ověřených postupů v podobě organizací, které se této problematice aktivně věnují a působící právě ve Francii, Německu a Rumunsku, byly vypracovány návrhy a doporučení pro vytvoření podobné organizace v České republice. Jako hlavní překážky pro nové farmáře v České republice byly identifikovány následující skutečnosti: extrémní fragmentace vlastnictví půdy, která farmářům nedovoluje obdělávat svou půdu tak, jak by chtěli, velmi nízké povědomí o ekologickém zemědělství ze strany konzumentů a v neposlední řadě velmi nízká životaschopnost ekologických farem fungujících v České republice. Proto by se organizace měla zaměřit na zpřístupnění pozemků, zvýšení povědomí o ekologických produktech u konzumentů a zvýšení ekonomické soběstačnosti ekofarem.

Klíčová slova

Vlastnická práva k půdě, land grabbing, komunitou podporované zemědělství, Eco Ruralis, Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development is one of the most discussed topics nowadays and is being applied in most fields of study and industries worldwide. One of the predominant fields is undoubtedly agriculture, which plays a very important role in the life of every one of us. However, the farmers' population in Europe is ageing fast and there is an urgent need for a new generation of farmers, yet the statistics are telling us that there is the shortage of young farmers in Europe as well as a decreasing number of agricultural holdings. The industrial corporations, whose agricultural practices are unsustainable, are taking over the sector due to the insecure land tenancy and land grabbing while the small-scale family farmers are forced to give up their land. On the other hand, the potential farmers who wish to set up their own farm are struggling with entering the sector.

The new generation of farmers, also called new entrants, need to face several obstacles when they want to obtain the land. The lack of available land, high demands on starting capital, insecure tenancy system and non-transparent land deals are making the access to land extremely hard. The organic agricultural methods, which are mostly practiced by small-scale farmers, are overshadowed by the intensive and large-scale corporations, for which to obtain the land is easier mainly due to the higher starting capital.

The issue of access to land is lately being discussed globally and the steps to ensure the access to land and food sovereignty are being taken. Europe started to support new entrants via subsidies within the first pillar of Common Agricultural Policy in 2015 and thus tries to motivate young farmers to enter the business. Moreover, a number of initiatives have been created in order to help young farmers to set up their business. They raise awareness about the importance of the source of our food, about the organic farming and its positive impacts on environment through their campaigns and programs. However, there is no such organization in the Czech Republic, where the access to land is hard for new entrants due to the extreme ownership fragmentation and insecure tenancy system.

In this thesis the author will describe the main obstacles and constraints for new entrants to access to land, as well as will analyze three organizations dealing with this issue. Based on the gained knowledge, the suggestions and recommendations will be created for potential similar organization in the Czech Republic.

2. Goals/Aims

The aim of this thesis is to analyze and explore the possibilities and obstacles through analyzes about the access to land issue in selected European countries and organizations in order to create recommendations and suggestions for initiatives in the Czech Republic. The comprehensive framework will be created by:

- Overview analyzes of the current agricultural state in the European Union with focus on France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic
- Describing the Access to Land Network in Europe
- Analyzing and comparing three organizations (Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG, Eco Ruralis) dealing with the access to land issue – one for each country mentioned above (excluding the Czech Republic)

The main outcome intended for this thesis will be, based on the literature review and the analyzes, to identify the constraints limiting the access to land as well as to propose potential solutions for the Czech Republic to create similar initiatives to the organizations mentioned above.

The main research questions of this thesis are:

- What types of initiatives are spread around Europe focused on the Access to land issue?
- How these initiatives facilitate access to land for new entrants to farming?
- How these initiatives help to secure farm succession for new entrants?

3. Literature review

3.1. Sustainable agricultural practices – agroecology

Agriculture is a vital activity for providing food, feed, fiber, fuel and other goods. Moreover it is an important driver, which affects the ecosystem services, such as water supply, water infiltration, soil quality and carbon sequestration and release. Besides that, agriculture provides jobs and livelihood for people all over the world (IAASTD, 2009; UNEP, 2012). The crucial agricultural element is land. Land, as a source of our food is an essential element of household wealth, a favorable investment and an instrument for local, regional and national economy all over the world (WORLD BANK, 2003). There is no doubt that agricultural sustainability needs to be achieved in order to ensure food and economical security for a growing population (FAO, 2010).

Today's agricultural schemes are mostly based on industrial and intensive practices in developed countries, which focus on high economic returns by using a monoculture system of growing crops, fertilizers, chemicals and over-production of food. In the long term, these practices lead to soil and water degradation, deforestation and furthermore to large land acquisitions, reduced access to land, vanishing of small-scale farmers and depopulation of rural areas (ALTIERI & NICHOLLS, 2012; UNEP, 2012; WIBBELMANN et al., 2013). In order to face and address the problems caused by industrial farming, many practices have emerged all over the world as an alternative way of industrial farming, like agroecology, permaculture, organic and biodynamic farming, low external input, among others. All of these alternatives aim to the same target – a sustainable agriculture and food security (IAASTD, 2009; MÉNDEZ, 2010; HILMI, 2012; WIBBELMANN et al., 2013).

Agroecology is most often described both as an ecological and a social way to address agriculture while respecting nature, its processes which contribute to sustainability, food sovereignty and farmers' independency from external inputs (fertilizers, pesticides and many others). The agroecological approach refers to the

way of farming which does not degrade the natural resources (soil, water and energy) nor obstructs the future production (WEZEL et al., 2009; MÉNDEZ, 2010; PARMENTIER, 2014). The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development in the Global Report (2009) presents “*agroecology as an answer to how to transform and repair our material reality in a food system and rural world that has been devastated by industrial food production (...)*” (IAASTD, 2009). Thus agroecology is tightly connected with traditional peasants and small-scale family farmers, who own a tremendous sustainability potential, as they have proven throughout the ages, and should be encouraged to maintain and increase that potential (PARMENTIER, 2014). More over, small-scale farmers are overall more productive profit and product wise (ALTIERI, 2009).

However, the successful expansion and integration of agroecology, while being an essential part of ensuring long-term sustainability, is subject to access to land, secured land tenancy as well as the natural resources available. If there is no guarantee of land tenure security, the threat of large-scale land acquisitions (also known as land grabs – see following chapter) is highly elevated (FAO, 2002; De SCHUTTER & VANLOQUEREN, 2011). Therefore the transition towards agroecological approach requires changes and innovations in social and institutional structures, communities and technology and need to be politically accepted as well (ALTIERI, 2004; FORESIGHT, 2011).

3.2. The issue of access to land for small-scale farmers

Access to land is the ability for farmers to obtain farmland, which meets the basic needs as being available, viable, affordable and ensure secured tenure (RIOUFOL, 2011). Currently, this is one of the main issues and barriers regarding sustainable agriculture and subsequent local and national development (WORLD BANK, 2003; RIOUFOL & VOLZ, 2012), as well as a major obstacle that affects both new entrants (see chapter 3.3) and already existing farmers (RIOUFOL, 2011; ZAGATA & SUTHERLAND, 2015). A proper and equal access to land indicates the extent to which individuals and/or families are able to be food secure (FAO, 2002). In the

following sections the main obstructions in obtaining land are explained with focus on Land Grabbing and Land Tenure Security.

3.2.1. The issue of land grabbing

Small-scale farmers are disappearing every day (EUROSTAT, 2015) on behalf of large-scale industrial corporations (UNEP, 2012), urbanization and artificialization (i.e. the loss of agricultural land in order to build-up artificial components and thus change the land use) (EEA, 2010; RIOUFOL, 2011) resulting mostly in large-scale acquisitions – also known as land grabbing (GRAIN, 2008; BORRAS et al., 2013). Although this phenomenon is known predominantly from developing countries like Africa, Asia and South America, large investments into the agricultural land are happening in Europe as well, particularly in Eastern Europe (BAHNER et al., 2012; BORRAS et al., 2013).

Land grabbing is the process of large agricultural field concentration for the purposes of growing food and biofuels for the global market (GRAIN, 2008; COTULA et al., 2009), as well as uptake of agricultural land for urbanization and infrastructures (BORRAS Jr. & FRANCO, 2010). There seems to be something of a “gray zone” as to what can be considered as land grabbing as well, since nowadays, the high demand on alternative energy cause so-called “green grabs” which also take big part on this issue (BORRAS et al., 2013). Another part of land grabbing is land concentration, which means that land is controlled by small number of actors, who are however dominant actors in the area (BORRAS et al., 2013; MINAUD, 2015). These large land acquisitions are typical for their non-transparent, national and supra-national land deals without considering the environmental and social impacts and the users or human rights (COTULA et al., 2009; WORLD BANK, 2010).

Although land grabbing has been done for centuries, the current land grabbing is lingering effect of the financial and food crisis in 2008 (GRAIN, 2008; von BRAUN & MEINZEN-DICK, 2009; BORRAS Jr. & FRANCO, 2010). The significant price shock from those crises is responsible for the development of large-scale investments in agricultural land in foreign countries, which emerged in order to fulfill the desire of developed countries to be less dependent on the international market as well as to ensure the security of food and energy supplies (De SCHUTTER, 2011). The

governments and private investors advertise and propagate these land investments as being means to ensure food security in their countries, economical and development opportunities for the rural poor, and to create on-farm and off-farm job opportunities. More than that, they claim to develop infrastructure, to bring new agricultural technologies into the host country as well as to help with poverty reduction (von BRAUN & MEINZEN-DICK, 2009; COTULA et al., 2009; BORRAS Jr. & FRANCO, 2010).

However, this rather continuously destroys natural ecosystems in grabbed countries by changing the land use, deforestation and merging farmland into the big monoculture blocks using chemicals and pesticides. Land grabbing does not fight against hunger, instead, it leads to food insecurity since the produced food in one country, while having the capacity to feed local people, is instead exported to the investor's country. (GRAIN, 2008; SHEPARD & ANURADHA, 2009; BORRAS Jr. & FRANCO, 2010; GRAIN et al., 2014). The prices of agricultural goods produced by large agribusinesses are being driven down and thus the farmers are forced to lower their prices and often become no longer able to compete with the cheap food from the corporations (BORRAS et al., 2013). Furthermore, land grabbing is closely linked with the degradation of water sources. Due to the broken property rights and massive agricultural operation, people are lacking water sources for their livelihood and farm activities (GRAIN, 2012).

When talking about land grabbing in Europe, it does not have the same appearance, meaning it is still a limited phenomenon quantitatively and geographically, as it has in the global south. However, the expectations of the propagation of land grabbing throughout Europe are quite realistic (BORRAS et al., 2013).

3.2.2. Land tenure security and the impact on the land's structure in Europe

One of the possibilities of obtaining farmland is, among others, through the tenancy process. The Food and Agriculture Organization defined land tenure as a "*relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land*" with a set of rules and rights defining access to land

its use and control over the land together with responsibilities and limitations (FAO, 2002). Because the purchase of farmland requires a high starting capital, the option to rent land, for becoming a new farmer or to enlarge the existing farm, is beneficial for its lower financial requirements. This fact is often essential for the beginning farmers since it allows investing in equipment and other needs essential to start a business (FAO, 2003). However, to ensure the food security as well as the ecological and economical profits, the land tenure has to be secured (for both the lessor and the tenant) and transparent (MEINZEN-DICK, 2009).

The owner of the land has various rights how to manage his farmland, such as the right to use it, sell it, lease it or just leave it untouched (FAO, 2002). Many owners decide to lease their land for several reasons, mostly because they do not want to manage the farmland, but on the other hand they do not want to sell the land either. These so-called absentee owners very often do not live close to their land (usually they live in different town or district of the country). There are several reasons why some become the absentee owner, like for example the owner inherited the land, which is located elsewhere, the owner bought the land for recreational reasons or the owner is the former farmer who retired or moved away (BUMAN, 2007). Usually the owners do not sell the land because of the cheap land market and simply wait for a better occasion to sell the land, like higher land prices or change of purpose of the land in a spatial plan and thus they choose to rent the land (ODY, 2013; SKLENICKA et al., 2013).

However, there are many reasons why incorrectly managed tenure can cause negative environmental and social consequences (FAO, 2002; FAO, 2003; MEINZEN-DICK, 2009; BORRAS et al., 2013). The high number of parcels owned by different owners results into land fragmentation of which there are four types: fragmentation of land ownership, fragmentation of land use, fragmentation within the farm or separation between ownership and the use (multiple owners renting the land) (Van DIJK, 2003). While for many reasons land fragmentation can have positive impacts on the ecological biodiversity (especially land use fragmentation), the ownership fragmentation often leads to the separation of ownership and use (Van DIJK, 2003) and contribute to land homogenization (JONGMAN, 2002), where parcels owned by different owners are rented to a single user as a production block

(SKLENICKA et al., 2014). The ownership fragmentation is typical for the Central and Eastern Europe (Van DIJK, 2003) due to their historical land management development, when farms went through collectivization and farmers lost their connection to their land (HARTVIGSEN, 2014). This has resulted, in some countries, into the broken property rights, when two generations of farmers were separated from their land for too long (SKLENICKA, 2013).

The reason why homogenized blocks are created is because of the poor spatial arrangement of the parcels, which are often kilometers apart without any road access (SKLENICKA, 2006), impractical configurations and sizes, and the economical unprofitability for farming (GÓNZALEZ et al., 2007). These conditions result into the situation, which SKLENICKA et al. (2014) named the Farmland Rental Paradox. The authors concluded, that below a certain threshold¹ “*the smaller the parcels are, the larger blocks they tend to create*” and highlighted, that even the larger rented parcels create usually smaller blocks than blocks composed of very small parcels (SKLENICKA et al., 2014). The bigger parcels are more likely to be farmed by their owners due to the higher economical profitability (GÓNZALEZ et al., 2007).

The ownership fragmentation can be alleviated by sales market, which helps to decrease the number of owners (SKLENICKA, 2013) or by land consolidation, which on the other hand helps to decrease the number of parcels per one owner (Van DIJK, 2003; FAO, 2003; SKLENICKA, 2013). Land consolidation is based on the relocation of scattered parcels within the rural area in order to create plots, which are more suitable and easier for maintenance. The land consolidation process respects the ownership rights and often improves the shape of plots in order to enhance better farming practices together with better accessibility of the plots (VITIKAINEN, 2004). Practically it means that an owner of a few scattered parcels (often a couple kilometers apart), with impractical configurations for viable farming, receive after the consolidation process one larger and compact parcel suitable for better farming practices (FAO, 2003).

¹ The authors identified the threshold for the Czech Republic as 1.07 hectares (SKLENICKA et al., 2014)

²The survey was processed within the EU-27 and Norway in 2013 (EUROSTAT, 2016)

³Ashoka is a network of social entrepreneurs all over the world who brought up innovative ideas in

Picture nr. 1: The example of ownership fragmentation, which resulted into the separation of ownership and use



On the left is the production block and on the right the ownership pattern (82 parcels)
Source: SKLENICKA et al. (2014)

When the owner decides to rent the land, the duration of leases need to be defined. The duration has also the influence on environmental (SKLENICKA et al., 2015) and social (FAO, 2002) security. To be able to ensure sustainable land managing, WORLD BANK (2003) stated that for a viable land tenure (both in economical and ecological point of view), the duration of such tenure should be at least that long that the returns from possible investment will appear and grow. The long-term secure land tenure rather contributes to a sustainable land use and environmental stability than the short-term lease. For instance, a person who has a lease for a short amount of time (for example two years) will most probably not plant a tree or invest in various installations, like irrigation systems or erosion control measures. SKLENICKA et al. (2015) proved that owners, who are farming their land by themselves, take care of their land in more sustainable and responsible ways than the tenants. This shows a clear correlation between the duration of the tenancy and sustainable land management, because while the tenure might be secured for short-term, it does not necessarily mean it is secure for the long-term as well (FAO, 2002). Therefore it is argued that only the owner can receive full security to farm because their rights to land are not time limited (FAO, 2002).

Secure land tenure, as mentioned in the beginning of this section, is one of the possibilities how to gain access to land and very often plays a crucial role for so called New Entrants, who will be addressed in the following chapter.

3.3. New entrants and the issues connected with entering the agricultural business

The farming population is aging rapidly and the majority of the current population of farmers will retire soon. The problem consists in that the number of young farmers in Europe is considered as being critically low (EUROSTAT, 2016). New entrants need to take over the old farmers' farms as well as invest their money into the agricultural holdings (EC, 2012). There are three ways of how to enter the agricultural sector – through the most common - inheritance, early retirement and ex novo (DGIP, 2012). Ex novo, i.e. farmers who are entering the agricultural sector without any previous experiences, also called new entrants (SUTHERLAND, 2015), are the subjects of the following sections.

New entrants can be of any age, even though they are in most cases associated with young farmers (ZAGATA & SUTHERLAND, 2015). But regardless of the age of new entrants, they need to face several issues before setting up their own business. First of all, farmers need to find a suitable land for their activities, which will provide a full-time employment with sufficient income. To find a land is for new entrants considered as extremely hard due to the fact that often the available land is rather acquired by neighboring owners who are seeking to enlarge their holdings and thus, among other reasons, obtain bigger subsidies (BORRAS et al., 2013; ZAGATA & SUTHERLAND, 2015). To be able to invest into land (in case he/she wishes to purchase the land), new entrants need to have a starting capital, which will provide enough sources for land as well as other inputs needed. However, the land prices are in most European countries high and will eventually rise even more (WILLIAMS, 2006). Therefore new entrants are forced to take a long-term loan from a bank (often for decades) and thus creating an additional burden to pay the loan back (RIOUFOL & VOLZ, 2012). Yet the accessibility of loans for new entrants are limited if the

farmers do not have the starting capital, proper business plans or are lacking previous agricultural experience (VOLZ, 2011). To obtain the land within the tenure system is also hard, because, as mentioned above, very often it is already taken by neighboring farmers.

Although farmers may find suitable land, they usually need to have another income due to the difficulty to establish a holding, which provides a full-time employment, and due to the long time investment return (DGIP, 2012; SCATURRO, 2013). The farm maintenance is expensive and requires high investments into machinery and other equipment especially in the beginning. Because the investments returns are not immediate, the farmers are working for long hours without income. Furthermore, they need to invest their money into their education and training, which is necessary to start the business as well as to receive the subsidies (BORRAS et al., 2013; MILNE & BUTLER, 2014).

Despite the difficulties the new entrants need to face, SUTHERLAND (2015) listed a couple reasons why are new entrants interested to become farmers. For many people farming represents a self-provisioning lifestyle, interaction with nature as well as a good environment to raise children. People seek to work outside and with social aspiration instead of working in the industrial zones. And despite the high investments farming often requires, new entrants seek the financial opportunities in farming (SUTHERLAND, 2015).

As mentioned above, the new entrants issue is particularly connected with young farmers, who are currently scarce (DGIP, 2012; EUROSTAT, 2016). There are also several reasons why they refuse to enter the agricultural sector. Most often they are more attracted by urban life, which is offering higher economical income (BORRAS et al., 2013). However, ZAGATA & SUTHERLAND (2015) studied deeper the shortage of young farmers in Europe, also called the young farmer problem. The authors, based on the literature review and statistical data from Eurostat, concluded that young farmer problem does not occur in all European countries and the shortage of young farmers vary depending on the regions and environmental conditions. The problem apparently occurs particularly in the countries with high share of small-scale farms (especially Eastern Europe). On the other hand, young farmers have bigger

entrepreneurial ambitions and in the agricultural sector they are seeking for profitable land management. Therefore young farmers are managing large-scale farms rather than smaller ones (EC, 2012).

3.3.1. Initiatives to assist new entrants when dealing with access to land issues

The issue of access to land is the main topic of many initiatives and movements as well as of worldwide, European and national institutions. In 2012 was by 125 member countries of the Committee on World Food Security approved the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security in order to *“serve as a reference and to provide practical guidance to governments to improve governance of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”* (FAO, 2012). This guideline provides instructions and advices for improving the international and national policy of tenure systems as well as the transparency of tenancies (FAO, 2012).

In the European level, new entrants are supported by the European Union in the form of subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) within the first pillar. The support is given to young farmers, who the European Commission defined as those under 40 years of age, who are setting their agricultural business for the first time and those with appropriate education or requirements (EC, 2005). The payments are granted for the maximum of first five years and the amount of payments may vary in different Member States (EC, 2015). The national institutions of the European countries are supporting new entrants as well as organic farming in general, however the payments vary across the European countries.

There are many organizations and movements across the Europe, which are dealing with the issues of access to land, land grabbing, land tenure security and other problems related to agriculture. Besides the Food and Agricultural Organization, one of the most important organizations is the worldwide organization La Via Campesina, which brings together small-scale farmers, peasants, people without land

(...) and promote the sustainable agriculture to defend food sovereignty (LA VIA CAMPESINA, 2011). Another noteworthy organization is the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farming (WWOOF) - an organization connecting volunteers with organic farmers and growers in order to encourage experience and knowledge exchange in organic farming and agroecology working on the “guest-host” base (WWOOF, 2015).

There is also a significant increase of NGOs in Europe, which are dealing with the topic of access to land. For the purposes of connecting these initiatives, the network called Access to Land has been established in 2012. In the following chapters, the focus is given into the Access to Land Network and three organizations from the Network.

4. Methodology

4.1. Analyzes of current state

Before the case studies selection, the overview analyzes about the changes between 2003 and 2013 in the agricultural sector in France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic were made. The selection of the countries of France, Germany and Romania was purely random and without any intention. The countries were compared between each other as well as to the European Union. The comparison is based on the statistical data provided by Eurostat. The summary of countries is available in the annex nr. 2.

After the statistical comparison, each country (France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic) was analyzed from the point of view of current issues connected with the access to land issues, which occur in the selected countries. Therefore the information provided for each country is different. The detailed legal descriptions of the countries were not addressed since the scope of this paper and section is mainly to use the overview of these countries' situation as a point of reference for comparison with the Czech Republic and between each other.

Another part of this section is the analysis of the Access to Land Network, which is operating on the European level. The purpose of this analysis is to describe the main goals and activities of this network as well as the purpose of creation such network. Due to the fact, that the organization is relatively new and there is no available source on the academic level, all information was taken from the official website of Access to Land from the section "who we are" available online here: <http://www.accesstoland.eu/-Our-network->

4.2. Case studies selection

For the purposes of this thesis were chosen three organizations from the countries analyzed above:

- Terre de Liens from France
- Regionalwert AG from Germany
- Eco Ruralis from Romania

The organizations were chosen as examples of best practices of dealing with access to land issues in Europe as well as the examples of the Access to Land Network's members. In order to be able to fully understand the concept of the organizations, they were analyzed from the theoretical and practical point of view. The main focus was given to the information about their main activities and goals as well as the results of their work. Each organization was asked the same 15 questions for the purpose to compare the organizations between each other. The questions and their description are available in the Annex nr. 1.

The main outcome is the comprehensive description of the organizations, their activities and results. The purpose of the analyzes was to be able to fully understand the possibilities of dealing with the access to land issues as well as to gain inspiration for the potential similar organization in the Czech Republic.

4.3. Data gathering for analyzes

Each organization was examined with 15 questions. The answers were completed with the internal reports of the organizations as well as with their official websites. The list of sources is available bellow. To be sure that all answers are correct, the organizations' members were contacted via e-mail and asked to review the questionnaire. Namely it was Véronique Rioufol – the founder of Terre de Liens, Peter Volz – the representative of Regionalwert AG and Die Agronauten and Attila Szocs – the founder of Eco Ruralis.

The documents used for this analysis:

- For obtaining the conceptual framework of **Terre de Liens**, the case study written by RIOUFOL & WARTENA (2011) from the series of seven case studies about the access to land for community supported agriculture was used. For further understanding of the background of Terre de Liens, the additional information was taken from RIOUFOL (2013) where is the concept of Terre de Liens explained on the specific case study of young baker and farmer. Additionally, RIOUFOL (2012) provides the overall framework and goals of the organization. Furthermore, the information about the partners of Terre de Liens was taken from the official website www.terredeliens.org
- For **Regionalwert AG**, the conceptual framework and overview was also taken from the series of case studies about access to land for community connected farming, namely written by VOLZ (2011). For obtaining the detailed information was used the official English translation of the book *Mit Bürgeraktien die Regionale Ökonomie Stärken* (HIß, 2014) written by the founder of Regionalwert AG, as well as the document published by the research body of Regionalwert AG, *Die Agronauten*, about the indicators of sustainability of the Regionalwert AG (JÁKLI & VOLZ, 2014).
- For **Eco Ruralis** was not possible to obtain the information from the case studies as it was possible with the previous organizations. However, the conceptual overview was obtained from the official websites of Eco Ruralis www.ecoruralis.ro, and the information available on the website of Access to Land Network here <http://www.accesstoland.eu/-Eco-Ruralis->. Therefore the answers are mainly based on the answers of the founder of Eco Ruralis - Attila Szocs.

4.4. Processing of results

The goal of the thesis is to create number of suggestions and recommendations for the potential organization, which would deal with the issues of access to land in the Czech Republic. To be able to achieve this goal, the SWOT analysis was created by

identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Czech agricultural sector and the organic farming in the Czech Republic. After the SWOT analysis, the recommendations and suggestions were created based on the opportunities as well as threats for the future time. The main outcomes were chosen three priorities, which were furthermore concretized by the 1 – 2 sub objectives and specific activities. These activities characterize the steps of the potential organization put in the context of the Czech Republic and the actual agricultural issues there.

5. Analyses of current situation

In this chapter the focus is given to the changes of the agricultural census between the years 2003 and 2013. The main targets are the changes of the total area of the utilized agricultural area, the changes in the number of agricultural holdings, the changes of the average holdings area, the changes of total area of fully converted (or under ongoing conversion) organic farms as well as the average prices for agricultural land. Furthermore, the focus is on the age structure of the farming sector. Another part of this chapter consists the identification of the current agricultural issues connected with the issues of access to land in the selected countries – France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic.

5.1. The overview analysis of agricultural state in the European Union with focus on France, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic

The European Union is struggling with the loss of agricultural holdings, meanwhile the total area of utilized agricultural area (UAA) remains since the survey in 2003 almost the same, 40% of the total area. Even though the majority of farms in the EU-28² are considered as being small-scale, they occupy just 6 % of the UAA while farms over 100 hectares occupy more than half of the total UAA. The increase of average area per holding since 2003 by 38% confirms the ongoing increasing land concentration in the EU-28. The significant land concentration is recorded in France, where the number of agricultural holdings decreased by 23.1% but the total amount of UAA drop by just 0.2%. Similar trend is visible in Germany as well as in the Czech Republic. Another indicator is the serious increase in the average area of holding in the Czech Republic, which are currently 133 hectares and thus the biggest average area in the EU-28. The opposite situation is in Romania, which has the third smallest holdings in the EU-28.

²The survey was processed within the EU-27 and Norway in 2013 (EUROSTAT, 2016)

In 2013, the area that was fully converted to the organic farming (or under conversion) in the EU-28 was more than 10 million hectares, which is 5.8% of the total UAA. Within the selected countries, the highest share of total organic area within the EU-28 is placed in France and Germany, with slightly more than 10% share. However, the highest proportion of the organic area to the conventional area is in the Czech Republic, where the organic farming is applied on 12% of the UAA.

The agricultural sector in the EU-28 provides jobs for around 22 million people, however there is a significant issue with the ageing of farmers. Every third farmer is older than 65 years but just 6% of farmers are under 35 years age. Within the selected countries is Romania affected by farmers' ageing the most. Almost 65% of farmers are over 55 of age, albeit just 4.7% are young farmers under 35 years age. On the other hand, Germany has the lowest share of "old" farmers, just 6.5%.

The most expensive land within the selected countries will farmer purchase in Germany, where the average price for land ranges around 10 000 EUR. On the contrary, the cheapest land is in Romania, where land costs around 2000 EUR. Surprisingly, the land prices are also low in France, where farmers pay almost 6 000 EUR for the land.

The overview comparison is available in the annex nr. 2.

All statistical information was obtained through EUROSTAT (2015) and EUROSTAT (2016).

Table nr. 1: Comparison of the countries within the EU-28 with highlighted important information about each country

	UAA in thousands hectares		Number of holdings in thousands		Average area of holdings in ha		Total area of organic land in 2013 in hectares	Average price to buy farmland in EUR
	2013	% of EU	2013	% of EU	2003	2013		
EU-28	174 606.6	100	10 841.0	100	11.7	16.1	10 084 908	X
France	27 739.4	15.9	472.2	4.4	45.3	58.7	1 060 756	5 900
Germany	16 699.6	9.6	285.0	2.6	41.2	58.6	1 008 926	10 000
Romania	13 055.9	7.5	3 629.7	33.5	3.1	3.6	301148	2 000
Czech Rep.	3 491.5	2.0	26.3	0.2	79.3	133	474 231	5 000

Source of data: EUROSTAT (2016)

In this section I will be giving an overview of the situations in the mentioned countries. Detailed legal descriptions will not be addressed since the scope of this paper and section is mainly to use the overview of these countries' situation as a point of reference for comparison with the Czech Republic and between each other.

5.1.1. France

France, as one of the main agricultural countries in the European Union, is struggling with the problem of artificialization and land concentration. Due to these issues, the access to land for new and particularly young farmers is becoming more difficult by each day. More than 60.000 hectares of highly productive and fertile agricultural land are being lost every year due to the conversion to non-agricultural purposes (ODY, 2013). This is strengthened by the fact, that the agricultural land in France is considerably cheaper in compare with the neighborhood countries. For instance, the average price for agricultural land ranges around 5. 900 EUR per hectare (depending on the region) while in Netherland the average price for one hectare of agricultural land ranges around 40.000 EUR (EUROSTAT, 2012). The relatively cheap prices make the business of buying agricultural land and selling it as a non-agricultural purposed land as 100 times more expensive extremely attractive. Therefore many landowners rather keep their land untouched for the future possible reclassification of the land's purpose than rent it or sell it to the farmers. Taken into consideration that one must be educated in agriculture, find an available land and then get the license to farm to receive a state support, it makes the access to land much complicated (ODY, 2013).

About 80% of farmland in France is managed under the tenancy (BAHNER et al., 2012). However, it represents obstacles to access the land for those who do not own a land already. French land market is highly regulated with ensured tenancy rights. That basically means that newcomers have very little chance to find a suitable land because of the regulated property rights. The loan is provided for 9 years, which is the minimum time to rent the land. The long-term leases are either for 18 or 25 years, eventually career-long leases. Unless the landowner wants to farm his land by himself (or alternatively by his family/inheritor), the lease has to be extended for another 9 years with the condition, that the tenant will be farming the land. The

contracts are either written or verbal, as long as the tenant pay the rent, it is considered as a verbal contract with the same power like the written ones. At the moment that landowner decides to sell his/her land, the renter has the pre-emption to buy the land (MERLET, 2008b).

This extremely secure tenancy system is criticised from the side of the landlords. They point out the lacking respect to their private property, as they are „forced“ to extend the tenancy contracts. It eventually leads to reject to lease the land at all or do it without a proper lease by asking the rent in cash (MERLET, 2008b; ODY, 2013). However, the implementation of such regulations led to the modernizations of small-scale farms as well as it did not require the agrarian reform (MERLET, 2008b).

A land market is regulated with the regional bodies responsible for rural land management – Land Development and Rural Settlements Associations, also known as SAFER (RIOUFOL & WARTENA S., 2011). These associations (SAFER is spread throughout the whole France) are key components of French structural policy and are involved in all farmland transactions. The purpose of SAFER creation was to help young farmers to equip and settle farm, the contribution to landscape diversity and the protection of natural resources. They acquire the farmland for subsequent sale in order to prevent the farm's abandonment or selling the agricultural land for other purpose than agricultural (MERLET, 2008a).

SAFER must be notified about any rural transaction, they can use the pre-emptive purchase rights and decide to whom the land will be sold (MERLET, 2008a; RIOUFOL & WARTENA S., 2011). However, the SAFER face to criticism over the past years for favoring the large-scale and/or intensive farms rather than helping the small-scale and family farmers and they have been found as dysfunctional (RIOUFOL & WARTENA S., 2011).

On the other hand, France is a hinterland of many civil society organizations which are promoting the sustainable agricultural practices and are helping new entrants. The French nationally wide community supported agriculture organization AMAP is one of the biggest movement in Europe (BASHFORD et al., 2013). What more, they are helping the young and new entrants, who represents about a third of all new

farmers in France, to establish their own farm business. They contribute to public's awareness about organic farming and sustainable land management and by cooperation with the institutes on regional and national level, they are more successful by each day. Regardless the organic and sustainable way of farming is still a minority in France, the amount of organic farms increased between 2013 and 2014 by 5.5% (EUROSTAT, 2016). France is also a country with second largest market with organic products in Europe and is in top ten countries with the highest consumption of organic products per capita (WILLER & MEREDITH, 2016).

5.1.2. Germany

Germany is, like France, one of the main agricultural countries in Europe. Food is produced on more than half of the German total area. However, Germany struggles with land concentration like many others European countries. While the UAA decreased only by 1.7% since 2003, the average area per holding increased by 17.4 hectares since 2003 (EUROSTAT, 2016). The land concentration is particularly characterized for Eastern Germany, which was under the communist regime and thus victim of collectivization (SCATURRO, 2013). Despite the relatively high transparency of land deals in Germany, the increasing number of land grabbing cases is recorded there, mainly due to the greater demand on biofuels and bioenergy (HERRE, 2013). As HERRE (2013) highlights, 40% of small and medium-size farmers will vanish within the next 20 years, if the trend of land concentration will continue in the same speed like it does until now. However, Germany is one of the main supporters of The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the German law Grundstückverkehrsgesetzes regulates the land transactions and can refuse them if they result into unhealthy distribution of land (HERRE, 2013).

Although the German agriculture is mainly managed under large-scale and industrial corporations (RUETER, 2016), Germany is the country with the largest market of organic products in Europe and the second largest in the world and has grown dynamically in the past years (WILLER & MEREDITH, 2016). Also the demand for organic and regional products grows fast in Germany, which due to the agricultural intensification and lack of small-scale farmers results into the immense need of

import of organic products (WILLER & MEREDITH, 2016). SCATURRO (2013) says that the increasing demand for regional and organic products is higher than ever before, however the small-scale farmers are being squeezed out their land.

The access to land for new and young farmers is difficult mainly due to the high land prices, which ranges around 10 000 EUR per hectare (depending on region) and accessibility of land. The main way of accessing to land is via inheritance. However since 2008, the farm transfer outside of the family is easier in Germany due to the exemption regulation. However these transfers are still marginal. Around 60% of farmers accessed to land through tenancy contracts.

5.1.3. Romania

Although Romania is being known for its typical landscape composed of traditional small-scale family farms (one third of all holdings in EU are located in Romania) (EUROSTAT, 2016), currently they are threatened by the industrial and large-scale farming more than ever before. The traditional peasant farming has been practiced in Romania for centuries (SZOCS et al., 2015). During the communist era the small farms were converted into state owned productive blocks. However after 1989, the land reform was done through restitution and the former owners got their land back (HARTVIGSEN, 2014). Romania is thus composed mainly from farms smaller than 2 hectares (EUROSTAT, 2016) and the land use fragmentation is considered as being very high as well as the ownership fragmentation (HARTVIGSEN, 2014). Therefore, Romania is one of the European countries, which are affected by land grabbing the most (BOUNIOL, 2013; PAGE & POPA, 2013; SZOCS et al., 2015)

Land grabbing in Romania is mostly caused by the cheap land market in compare with other European countries. The price for one hectare of agricultural land ranges around 2000 EUR (depending on county) which is in comparison with the highly fertile soil with chernozem extremely low (SZOCS et al., 2015). This is a great opportunity for international investors, which are allowed to invest in Romanian land since 2014 without any bigger obstructions (BOUNIOL, 2013). Therefore, due to the expansion of international investments, the land prices skyrocketed (and it is estimated it will grow by another 500 percent within next few years) since the

agrobusinesses are willing to pay more for land than local people, who are no longer able to afford the land also due to limited access to bank loans. What contributes to land grabbing more is that Romanian Government is making significant effort to attract these investors and thus move towards large, and mainly export oriented, agriculture (BOUNIOL, 2013; SZOCS et al., 2015).

There is also a significant issue with the CAP's subsidies. For instance, in 2008 less than 1% of farms bigger than 100 hectares consumed half of all subsidies, the rest 99% which were smaller than 100 hectares shared the other half of the subsidies. This huge uneven distribution causes the abandonment and vanishing of many small farms (KNIGHT, 2010). It is proven by the difference in number of holdings between 2003 and 2013, which fell down by 19.1 % (EUROSTAT, 2015).

Another issue of Romanian agriculture is the rapid ageing of the farmers. More than 64% of Romanians are older than 55 years which is after Poland the second highest share of old farmers in the EU-28. Oppositely, the share of farmers under 35 is just 4.7% and that is even less than the average in whole EU-28 (EUROSTAT, 2016). The unwillingness of young farmers to start their agricultural business is also caused by, among others, higher income in urban area than in rural areas (BOUNIOL, 2013). When considering the fact, that almost 90% of farms are managed by family labor force, Romania might struggle with the problem of not passing the family farms to their heirs a lot within the next years (EUROSTAT, 2016).

In order to highlight the increasing non-transparent international investments into the agricultural land, the non-governmental organization Eco Ruralis started to raise the awareness about the Governmental corruption as well as helping the farmers to fight against uneven and unfair agrarian procedures. More about this organization in the chapter 6.3.

5.1.4. The Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has the largest agricultural plots in the European Union – 133 hectares in average per one holding (EUROSTAT, 2016), albeit the average size of one parcel ranges around 0.4 hectares (SKLENICKA & SALEK, 2008). The huge

ownership fragmentation is caused by the historical land development of the Czech Republic. After the end of communist era in 1989, the land was restituted to the former owners and resulted into the high ownership fragmentation (HARTVIGSEN, 2014), often with unfavorable size and shape as well as without proper access to the parcels. These conditions very often do not allow to landowners to farm or sell their own land. Mostly the owners are not even able to identify their land in the landscape, because they are part of the production blocks and usually without the access road. Therefore the owners are forced to rent their land, usually to industrial corporations using conventional agricultural practices (SKLENICKA, 2006; SKLENICKA, 2013). For that reason, the Czech Republic is strongly affected by the Farmland Rental Paradox, which affects up to 40% of the Czech farmland (SKLENICKA et al., 2014). In order to alleviate the ownership fragmentation, the land consolidation processes have been carried in the Czech Republic for more than two decades (SKLENICKA, 2013).

The Czech agricultural business is based on the tenancy system. More than 80% of the agricultural land is rented (LOSOSOVÁ et al., 2013), which is one of the highest shares of rented land within the EU. Besides the unfavorable conditions for owners to farm or sell their land, the reason of the high share of rented land in the Czech Republic is weak land market and low land prices. The land prices are the reason why the owners do not sell their land but rather rent it. The prices are also tightly connected with the duration of leases, which is mostly for short-term, usually from one to five years. The reason of the short-term leases is the price for which is land rented, which are, unless agreed otherwise according to the Czech law, around 1% of the official price of farmland (around 47 EUR/ha/year). Therefore the owner rather rent his land for shorter amount of time and than tries to find another tenant for higher price or higher price to sell the land (NĚMEC, 2005). The average price for agricultural land ranges around 5 000 EUR (FARMY.CZ, 2015), which is in comparison with other European countries also very low. The land prices in the Czech Republic are dependent on the evaluated soil ecological units and other circumstances, for example the attractiveness of the locality, accessibility of the land or how far is the land from the urban area (SKLENICKA et al., 2013). However, the prices increased rapidly during the past years and it is expected to rise even more (the land with degraded soil is excluded from this estimation) (FARMY.CZ, 2015).

Despite the huge agricultural blocks used mainly for conventional agriculture, the Czech Republic has the fourth highest proportion of ecological agriculture to the conventional agriculture (after Austria, Sweden and Estonia). In 2014, the ecological practices were applied on 12% of the UAA (EUROSTAT, 2016). However, Czech agriculture, and especially the organic one, is very dependent on support from the European Union as well as from the state itself. Around half of the inputs in ecological farming are reimbursed from the subsidies. The low economical viability is strengthened by the high prices of organic products and the low awareness within the Czech society about organic farming. People do not trust the organic products and often see them just as a marketing move. Therefore the organic products are usually exported to other countries on behalf of the domestic market development. Generally, the use of organic products is way behind the standards of other European countries in the Czech Republic (MoA, 2016).

However, the number of ecological farms is increasing as well as the increasing interest from the NGOs. Several organizations, like community-supported agriculture, are working on support for local farmers and thus enhance their economical security. The effort to raise the awareness about organic farming is supported by many Czech universities, which are offering study programs of sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, organic farming is financially supported through the Rural Development Program via European subsidies as well as the national subsidies and the Ministry of Agriculture's budget (MoA, 2016).

5.2. Analysis of the Access to Land Network (A2L)

Access to Land Network has been founded as an informal network in order to share experiences and strengthen the practical knowledge about agroecological issues, mainly access to land. Currently, it consists about 15 grassroots organizations particularly from Western and Eastern EU countries. All of them have very similar vision and with various approaches they are directly working with farmers and communities to promote sustainable and ecological farming, together with securing land for future generations. To make it happen, the member organizations work mainly on acquiring land, preserving farmland and farm ecosystems, advising and

supporting farmers. They as well provide various other supporting activities for farmers and public, such as educational and informative activities.

A2L has been supported (not just financially) by several private foundations, which are the key operational partners at the same time. Also, A2L is to some extent funded by number of EU programs, particularly educational programs for adults. Currently, nine member organizations take part on Erasmus+ partnership for fostering Access to land (2014 – 7).

The main goals of A2L Network are:

- To connect grassroots organizations and share their experiences, ideas and practical tools to encourage local farmers and the emergence of new ones
- To spread the information about land issues, agroecology, issues connected with conventional farming among public, organizations and policy makers
- Connecting and networking civil society organizations and social movements with similar ideas, goals and insights
- Supporting of new generations of farmers and new entrants

5.2.1. The main activities of A2L Network

As mentioned above, Access to Land Network serves primarily as a connection between grassroots organizations with similar goals to achieve. The A2L's main activities are:

Experience sharing

The importance of experience and knowledge sharing among each other, besides avoiding mistakes, is the proliferation of working practices used within the organizations. In order to learn about various countries, their issues, approaches, tools and working processes, A2L organizes bilateral and/or multilateral field visits together with workshops and seminars. All the information gathered is then published in the official website of A2L Network. This experience sharing is helping the already existing organizations, as well as to create like-minded initiatives.

Communication and awareness rising

Closely linked with experience sharing activities, A2L organizes and provides presentations, videos, photographs, notes and so on to create relevant educational tools to inform and raise awareness about agroecological farmers and their daily challenges, environmental protection as well as food chains and systems. These tools are available for everybody, including general public and policy makers.

Research and documentation

A2L have documented a series of case studies showing the experiences of member partners in order to illustrate the good practices and innovations in the agroecological sector. By mapping of selected case studies of member organizations, A2L is connecting the agroecological farmers with public as well as is spreading out the knowledge about environmental responsibility and access to land issues.

Networking and advocacy

Finally, A2L's organizations, in order to strengthen and promote the collaboration between farmers, public and organizations themselves, share information and analyzes with their local partners. Besides that, A2L cooperates with organizations at European level, which are actively involved in the transition of agriculture towards environmental protection including agroecological and peasant farming and other related issues.

5.2.2. The member organizations

Today, A2L is composed of 15 organizations from 8 Eastern and Western European countries (see table nr. 2 and picture nr. 2). Also, A2L maps over 20 other grassroots organizations dealing with access to land issues.

Table nr. 2: The member organizations of A2L Network

Italy	Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica del Lazio (AIAB Lazio)	http://www.aiablazio.it/
	Campi aperti - Accesso alla terra	http://www.campiaperti.org/
Spain	Rurbans - School of Shepherds	http://www.escoladepastorsdecatalunya.cat/
	Terra Franca	http://www.terrafranca.cat/
	Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori	http://www.custodiaterritori.org/ca/english.html
Germany	Regionalwert AG	http://www.regionalwert-ag.de/
	Kulturland eG	info@kulturland-eg.de
France	Terre de Liens	http://www.terredeliens.org/
England	Biodynamic Land Trust	http://www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk/
	Real Farming Trust	http://www.feainetwork.org/who-we-are/real-farming-trust
	Soil Association	http://www.soilassociation.org/landtrust
Belgium	De Landgenoten	http://www.delandgenoten.be/
	Terre-en-vue	http://www.terre-en-vue.be/
Romania	Eco Ruralis	http://www.ecoruralis.ro/web/en/
Lithuania	Viva Sol	http://www.vivasol.lt/

Source of data: the official website of access to land <http://www.accesstoland.eu/>-Members-

Picture nr. 2: The distribution of member organizations of A2L Network in Europe



Source of data: the official website of access to land <http://www.accesstoland.eu/-Members->

All information about Access to Land Network has been taken from the official website www.accesstoland.eu

6. Outputs

In this chapter the answers of questions from the questionnaire are presented. In the end, all organizations are summarized in the table and compared between each other – see Annex nr. 3. The suggestions and recommendations for the Czech Republic are listed in the chapter 6.5.

6.1. Terre de Liens

Description

To refer the difficulties in securing agricultural land which organic peasants and farmers need to face, Terre de Liens (TdL) is working on contribution to environmental sustainability, mainly by reducing the problems connected with access to land and conventional farming. With support from 12 500 investors, individuals and local authorities that brought up to 44 million Euros, Terre de Liens currently owns around 102 farms with 150 farmers who are working on 2500 ha.

The simple idea of TdL is to bring the land as a common good back to our mind as a main purpose of land. To preserve agricultural land, environment and dealing with access to land issues, TdL is pointing out the importance of local organic farming. The concept of Terre de Liens is based on renting of farmland or buildings to farmers for long-term lease. The organization first buys a land or farm, which meets the conditions of TdL Charter, and then rents it according to locally regulated prices. By these steps they contribute to supplying local consumers and creation of social services. With all the activities, Terre de Liens supports people to take action and be part of local food chain by investing in farmland, volunteering in a local group and, mainly, spread the information about land issues.

Main goals of the organization

- Ensure the sustainable land management and land maintenance and encourage the environmentally friendly agriculture
- Facilitate the process of access to land issues especially for newcomers and young farmers

- Raise the awareness about access to land issues including land ownership, management and land use among public, local authorities and companies
- Collecting donations for acquiring land and buildings
- Freeing the land from commodity market in order to preserve the agricultural land
- Development throughout the national level to become part of the non-profit agricultural and rural development sector
- Cooperation with other organizations with the same or similar goals throughout Europe
- Rising funds
- Contribute to short supply chain and direct relations between consumer and producer

Scope

National

Currently Terre de Liens operate in all French regions

Type of organization (legal status)

Civic movement composed of:

Civil society organization (National organization) – not for profit organization including one national association and 19 regional associations bounded together with founding Charter and governance ties

La Foncière – a private company limited by shares collecting savings from public and buying agricultural land and buildings. These items are then rented out to farmers on long-term lease.

Le Fonds – An Endowment Trust collecting donations in cash or kind from individuals or companies. Le Fonds also rents out the farms (which were bought or donated) to farmers.

When did the organization start its activity?

In 2003 started its activity the national organization.

In 2006 was established La Foncière.

In 2009 were established Le Fonds.

What are the main activities and who do they support?

Main activities of Terre de Liens:

- Finding a suitable land for farmers, acquisition of land, renting of farmland to local farmers, monitoring good land stewardship, setting up a collective land ownership structure
- Management of buildings, especially farms and other agricultural constructions
- Protection of agricultural land and its maintaining in sustainable agricultural use
- Raising awareness about access to land issues, promoting local and organic farming
- Research, analyzes and diagnosis about land available for new farmers
- Organizing of various meetings and trainings about access to land issues as well as training of farmers and employees itself
- Cooperation with local authorities as well as working on European level to support interactions and cooperation among other organizations from various countries

Terre de Liens supports biodynamic farming and farmers who are committed to respecting environment, newcomers who do not have enough experiences or capital to start their own business, farmers who are not interested in owning their own land and also farmers, who do not have anybody to take over their farm after they retire.

Who can become a member/shareholder and what are the conditions to do so?

Everybody, who is interested to become a member and of Terre de Liens needs to fulfill following conditions:

- Farmers do not wish to own their own land but are ready to be tenants instead
- Farms are economically profitable, sustainable and respect the environment
- The project fits the Terre de Liens goals
- Farmers farm organically, biodynamical or are in process of adaption to do so
- Other conditions can be set according to each farm and its current state (soil prevention, crop rotation, harvesting techniques and others)
- Farmers receiving local support, including the interest from municipality, group of supporters or consumers and local fundraising)

A share costs 100 EUR (minimum) and there is no guarantee of any other redemption than sustainable land management and enhancing of local farming.

How many members/shareholders does the organization have?

Currently, there are 12 500 (2014) investors who are supporting the idea of Terre de Liens. 150 farmers are working on 110 farms which are owned by Terre de Liens (either fully or partially). Terre de Liens is also giving technical support to about 1000 farmers.

With an initial capital of 57 200 EUR and 47 shareholders, Terre de Liens raised the savings up to 4 million EUR from 2200 shareholders just in five months. To take in account that the objective was to collect 3 million in nine months, Terre de Liens exceeded all expectation and proved the strength. In 2012 the capital was over 28 million EUR, which were owned by 7500 shareholders.

Who are the existing entrepreneurs of the organization?

Since TdL works nationally, the list of all entrepreneurs has not been completed

How is the organization financed and who can be involved in financing?

Terre de Liens rents the farms (buildings and land) according to locally regulated prices. Individuals, companies and local authorities can buy share, which costs 100 EUR, or donate money or other kinds such as for example building. There is no interested paid by the investors. For managing the finances, Terre de Liens has created two financial tools:

La Foncière:

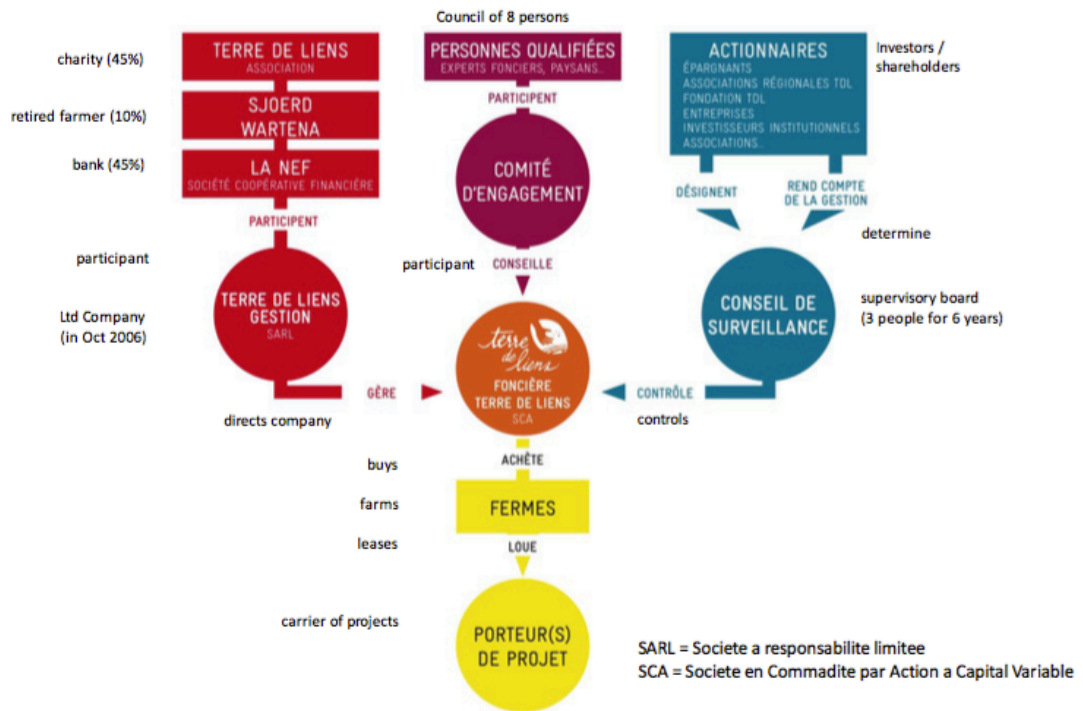
A private company limited by shares is dedicated to collect savings and investments to buy agricultural land and buildings. These items are then rented to farmers for long-term lease. To ensure the economical sustainability, la Foncière decided to reserve 25% of its capital. This reserve is used to allow the exit of shareholders.

Le Fonds:

In compare with La Foncière, Le Fonds collects donations in cash or kinds and rents the farms to farmers. It is conducted as not-for-profit and in later became a land trust.

How is the management of organization?

Picture nr. 3: The organization chart



Source: BAHNER et al. (2012)

How is development of the organization measured?

Terre de Liens asks its farmers to review every 3 years the environmental state of the farm. Otherwise the development is measured with the increase of members and shareholders as well as the increase number of acquired land.

Does the organization organize another supporting activities?

- Organizing of agro tourism
- Educational activities (including vocational training and training of apprentices) and cooperation with schools
- Organizing of cultural events and open days
- Conservation of rare or traditional breeds
- Job creation

Does the organization have any partners?

Since Terre de Liens is operating national wide for more than 10 years already, a number of public authorities, foundations, associations and companies cooperate with them. Some of them are financing (or helping with financing) the organization and the operational activities; some of them are part of food distribution or educational sector. See the list bellow of all partners.

Public authorities:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Regional Development
- Ministry of Sport, Youth, Education and Associative Life with the Voluntary Development Fund
- CGET (Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires) – General commission for equal territories
- European Social Fund
- Avise (Portal for for development of social economic)
- GRUNDTVIG (an EU program supporting of life cycle education)
- ERASMUS+
- GROUP Caisse des Dépôts
- Réseau Rural (French rural network)
- EAFRD (European Agricultural Fond for Rural Development)
- AESN (Agency for water protection in Siena basin in Normandy)

Foundations: Fondation de France

- Fondation Abbé Pierre
- Léa Nature Fondation
- Lemarchand Foundation
- MACIF Foundation
- Patagonia Foundation
- The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress
- Triodos Foundation
- AG2R La Mondiale

- RTE Fondation
- Fondation un monde par tous

Associations:

- Association la Nef
- Bio consom'acteurs
- Festival de la Transition
- FINANSOL
- FNAB
- Movement of biodynamic farming
- Rural Christian Youth Movement
- RELIER
- National Federation of urban architecture and environmental advice
- Federation of conservatories of natural areas in France
- French Society of Rural Economy
- AMAP

Companies:

- Biocoop
- La Nef – the financial company
- Léa Nature – family company

What are the results so far?

Terre de Liens exists more than 10 years and during this time it has already acquired 2200 hectares of land, which is designated to be agricultural land. They set up the regional branches in all French regions, has become to have political influence and started to work internationally. For instance, TdL is currently involved in the ERASMUS+ program and enables the educational mobility of adults in order to educate them in the field of organic farming as well as access to land issue.

Terre de Liens is supported by about 12 000 citizens and is thus successfully raising the awareness about the access to land issues as well as the organic farming among local people. By cooperating with school and creating a number of campaigns, Terre

de Liens is educating young people about the importance of our land and its sustainable management.

Terre de Liens is one of the coordinators of the Access to Land Network and is helping many similar organizations to achieve their goals, which are similar to the goals of Terre de Liens. Moreover, Terre de Liens is sought by farmers from all over the France in order to receive help and share their practices and experiences with other people. Also, TdL received the attention from national and international institutions and authorities.

6.2. Regionalwert AG

Description

Regionalwert AG (RWAG) has been established as a citizen shareholder corporation, which contributes to develop regional sustainable environment, raising the awareness about land issues, promote organic farming and regional economy. The main idea is to support small and medium sized entrepreneurs by buying a share in RWAG and realize the supporting activities with these investments. RWAG is basically a middle part between investor and entrepreneur who wish to start a business in sustainable agriculture. Focusing on regional development, RWAG allows to local people take part in land planning, landscape managing and closed food chain system.

RWAG's concept of the organization is the interconnection of all entrepreneurs, wherein each works independently but all connected though RWAG, they are part of a closed system. This can be shown in an example of direct selling of products (produced under RWAG organization) in stores, which are also maintained by RWAG or reusing of organic waste from cowshed to fertilize vegetable farm. This, among others contributes in shortening way between producer and consumer.

Currently, RWAG is in increase period and trying to implement its practices also in different German regions – Hamburg and Munich. The members of RWAG are not just farmers and peasants who are farming the land, but also horticulture, food businesses such as drying fruits, wine and liquors and number of organic food stores.

Main goals of the organization

- Securing land for agricultural purposes, producing of sustainable and ecological food
- Increasing of socio-ecological value of the region
- Create and foster the network of different entrepreneurs of RWAG
- Creates wider societal benefits
- Promotion of regional natural value
- Ensure the regional supply

Scope

Regional

Currently, RWAG operates in three German regions

Type of organization (legal status)

Citizen Shareholder Corporation

When did the organization start its activity?

Founded in 2006

What are the main activities and who do they support?

- Acquiring, renting and managing of farmland and businesses
- Providing a starting capital to organic farms and businesses
- Helping the entrepreneurs to entry market
- Organizing of meetings, trainings and other educational activities
- Collaborating with other organizations with similar ideas
- Supporting of farm succession
- Research
- Selling of products in local store
- Guiding inexperienced entrepreneurs during first years
- Financial consultations, creating (or helping with it) of business plans

RWAG supports mainly small or medium sized farmers and food businesses that struggle with starting their own business because of access to land issue or lack of capital in the beginning.

Who can become a member/shareholder and what are the conditions to do so?

To become a member might be interesting for everybody, who wants to be part of regional planning and agriculture, invest his money into regional sustainable development and who wishes to set up a business under RWAG's leadership. However, the idea of entrepreneur needs to be assessed by executive staff of RWAG and approved if the project is realistic and if the entrepreneur is able to implement it

How many members/shareholders does the organization already have?

Currently, RWAG is composed of 600 shareholders and owns about 3 million EUR. 19 enterprises are working under RWAG's support

Who are the existing entrepreneurs of the organization?

Agricultural:

- Breitensweger Hof KG
- Gärtnerei Querbeet
- Obstgut Siegel KG
- Obsthof Kiechle
- Marktstallhof
- Wiengut Dilger

Marketing:

- Regionalwert Frichekiste GmbH
- Regionalwert Biomarkt Breisach GmbH
- Regionlwert Biomarkt Waage GmbH

- Biowelt Konstanz GmbH
- Regionalwert Vesperbox GmbH
- Großhandel für Naturkost Bodan GmbH

Processing:

- Trokimanufaktur
- Regionalwert Biomanufaktur
- Zwergenküche GmbH

Service:

- Die Argonauten
- Regio Werk UG
- Regionalwert Dienstleistungs GmbH
- Regionalwert Truehand UG&Co.KG
- Regionalwert Immobilien Vermietungs UG&Co.KG

How is the organization financed and who can be involved in financing?

Everybody from individuals, companies and foundations can invest their capital in RWAG and become a shareholder (who is then a partner of RWAG). A share of RWAG costs 500 EUR and shareholder cannot withdrawal this share. In case he/she wants to sell the share, it will be transferred to new shareholder. A financial stability and the sustainability of RWAG are guaranteed then.

Every investor knows where his money goes, who works for it and under what conditions. Also there is no guarantee of redemption of dividends (even though RWAG is officially for profit organization). Instead the payback is more in natural values, such as ecological and societal ones.

Besides the financial support, RWAG plays important role when trying to get loan from bank for agricultural purposes as a small entrepreneur. Thanks to RWAG, to gain access to bank loans is easier and sometimes banks even recommend the participation of RWAG.

How is the management of organization?

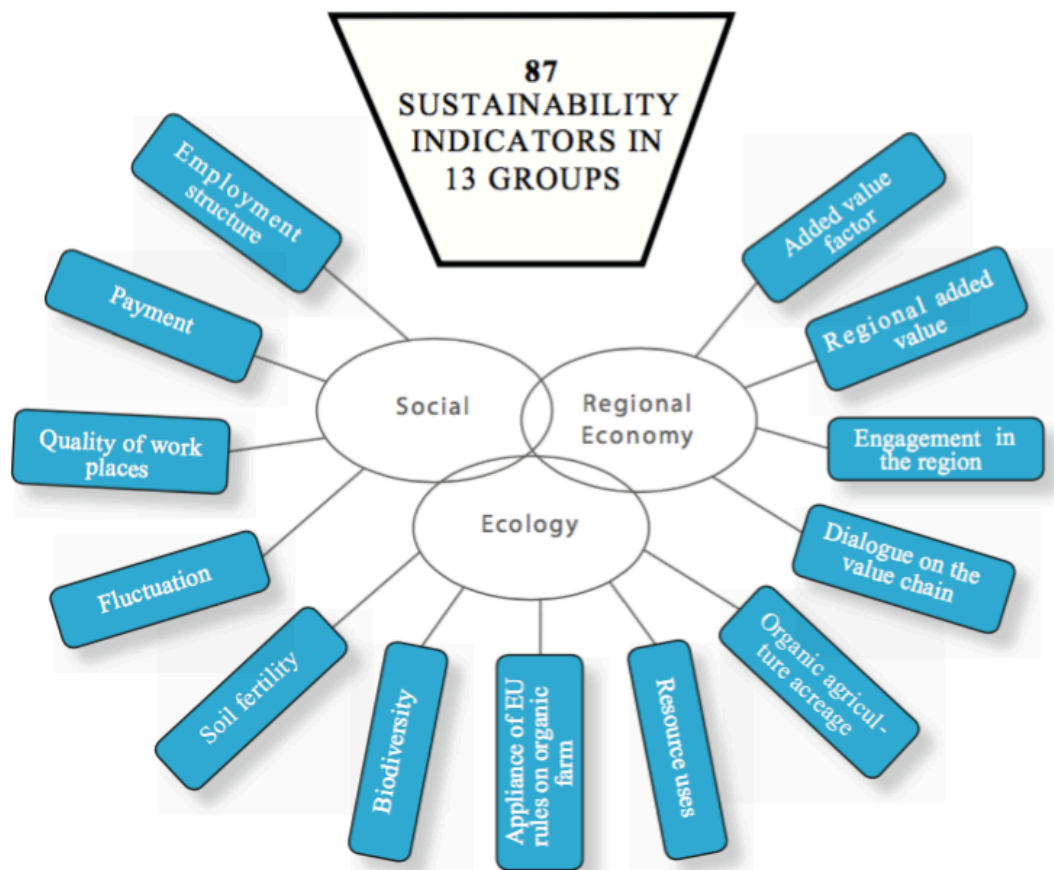
RWAG is composed of Managing Directors, Board of Directors and shareholders. The Managing Directors, who are the founder Christian Hiss and the banker Volker Schwarz, are running the company and are elected for 5 years by the Board of Directors, who works as a controlling body. The Board of Directors is also elected for 5 years by shareholders at the Annual General Meeting, which is happening every year. Shareholders have their rights to say and vote in proportion to their shareholding.

How is development of the organization measured?

To measure the economic, social and ecological impacts of the enterprises and the employees, RWAG set up 87 qualitative and quantitative indicators (see picture nr. 4). With the help of the indicators, the annual business report of each enterprise supported by RWAG is completed and submitted. Every year are the results presented to shareholders and published for public. In order to exchange the experiences and other information (and also to get to know each other better), the entrepreneurs meet informally every two months.

For further research activity, RWAG has created a non-profit research body called Die Agronauten

Picture nr. 4: The RWAG's sustainability indicators



Source: VOLZ (2011)

Does the organization organize another supporting activities?

- Consultancy services for farms
- Design business
- Capital plans
- Seminars
- Creating new job opportunities

Does the organization have any partners?

- Die Agronauten
- Emils Manufaktur
- Markstallhof
- Regiowerk UG
- Obsthof Kiechle

- Biowelt Konstanz
- Regionalwert Dienstleistungs GmbH
- Demeter Gärtnerei Querbeet GBR
- Breitenweger Hof
- Bodan – Grosshandel für Naturkost
- Obstgut Joel Siegel
- Biohöfe – Frischekiste
- Weingut und Brennerei Andreas Dilger
- Regionalwert Biomarkt GmbH Breisach
- Regionalwert Biomarkt Waage
- Troki Manufaktur
- Zwergenküche GmbH

What are the results so far?

Regionalwert AG captured the attention and positive reaction not just from the Freiburg region. In 2009, the founder – Christian Hiss received an Ashoka Fellowship³ for establishing RWAG, the German Government Council for Sustainability Award and the model of RWAG has been highlighted by Ministry of Agriculture as an innovative network.

Besides spreading the idea and concept of RWAG into other regions (Hamburg and Munich), over 600 citizens became shareholders and many more people are supplied by RWAG produce. A lot of young farmers and projects considered as being risky by banks have received money support from RWAG and several farmers and businesses in Freiburg region have been successful in the access to land issue and have received the land.

³ Ashoka is a network of social entrepreneurs all over the world who brought up innovative ideas in social issues and contributes to well-being of society. More information on www.ashoka.org

6.3. Eco Ruralis

Description

Eco Ruralis, a grassroots organization, is composed of small farmers, peasants, gardeners but also academics and agricultural activists from all over Romania. Besides working on national level to promote organic and family farming, Eco Ruralis also cooperate with organizations from diverse European countries. As a member of the worldwide organization Via Campesina, Eco Ruralis together with small farmers works towards food sovereignty and gender equality in the term of farming. By showing and publishing several cases of land grabbers, Eco Ruralis highlights one of the main threats of peasant and traditional farming in Romania.

Main goals of the organization

- To support agroecology and movement of young farmers
- Promote small-scale family farming
- To preserve traditional farming practices
- To practice non industrialized sustainable agriculture
- To assert farmers' control over food production and land rights
- To create environmentally sustainable society
- Create a system, where peasants are the main source of food
- To take responsibility for implementation of suitable policies in respect to peasants by Romanian authorities and political leaders

Scope

National

Type of organization (legal status)

Non-Government organization

When did the organization start its activity?

2009

What are the main activities and who do they support?

- Organizing several programs and campaigns around the concept of food sovereignty (1. Access to Seeds, 2. Right to Land, 3. Access to Markets)
- Protection and propagation of peasant agro-biodiversity (traditional seeds, local varieties, non-industrial plant genetic resources)
- Coordination of the WWOOF Romania program
- Cooperation and knowledge exchange with other organizations with the same or similar idea
- Research and advocacy work around the issue of access to land and markets
- Creating transparency around the Romanian land tenure system and land grabbing
- Supporting the development of the agroecology movement and its connection to traditional, peasant farming practices
- Promoting small-scale, family farming
- Raising awareness about the issue of access to land by young farmers and new entrants in agroecological farming
- Collecting, propagating and distributing traditional seeds
- Standing for farmers` rights to be able to practice non-industrialized and sustainable agriculture
- Helping local farmers to defend themselves against unfair and unequal actions of corporations and governments
- Advocating for the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in Romania

Eco Ruralis supports peasants and small/medium farmers, gardeners and agricultural activists who work through agroecological and traditional practices.

Who can become a member/shareholder and what are the conditions to do so?

Eco Ruralis is a members based association but does not charge any fee for becoming a member and all agroecological food producers and supporters who are

interested and wish to become a member need to fill a membership form available on the official website of the organization.

How many members/shareholders does the organization already have?

Currently Eco Ruralis operates in all regions of Romania. All together it brings around 2500 members

Who are the existing entrepreneurs of the organization?

Eco Ruralis considers all people, such as food producers, coordination committee members and staff alike who are connected with Eco Ruralis as the entrepreneurs. All of them are parts of the organization, management and risk taking in developing Eco Ruralis

How is the organization financed and who can be involved in financing?

Eco Ruralis accepts only the EU's funding grants and private foundations, which is being checked by Eco Ruralis before entering into a partnership. The important rule of the association is that it does not accept funding from private companies (grants, sponsorship) nor does it enter into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects.

Eco Ruralis on the other hand does accept funding from Romanian citizens willing to donate or directing 2% of their revenues to Eco Ruralis through a Governmental scheme.

Currently, Eco Ruralis is involved in two EU grants (EuropeAID and ERASMUS+) and is receiving funds from several private foundations.

How is the management of organization?

The main decision making body of Eco Ruralis is its yearly General Assembly (GA) of Members. The General Assembly debates and creates consensually the goals and

priorities of the Association and elects the Coordination Committee (CC) of the Association, which usually has a 2-year mandate. Eco Ruralis has two kinds of members: “peasants and agroecological food producers” and “supporting members”. Only the first category can vote during the GA but all members can participate in the debates and bring up priorities and proposals. The CC is made up by active members of the organization (also respecting gender and generational balance), which declare their candidature prior to the GA. The CC meets periodically to steer the general actions of Eco Ruralis and also to create strategies on the different campaigns.

Besides the two decisions making bodies, Eco Ruralis also has an administrative body, which is composed of 4 staff members. Currently, 3 of the staff members are also part of the CC, thus working on administrative (fundraising, accounting, logistics) as well as on campaigning (political strategy, advocacy, lobby, transparency etc.) matters.

How is development of the organization measured?

Eco Ruralis measures the development through the increasing number of members, projects and grants that facilitate the development of the specific activities and outcomes as well as the outcomes of their campaigns. Also the measuring is done through improvements on the EU and Romanian decision-making and policies around the agroecological farming and food sovereignty.

Does the organization organize another supporting activities?

- Enabling and facilitating volunteering for grass-roots organizations
- Creating alternative food networks (direct marketing, CSA)
- Running of an internship program (having 10-12 long term interns from all over the world, providing experience and knowledge-exchange)

Does the organization have any partners?

- La Via Campesina – International Peasant’s movement (being member of ECVC – European Coordination Via Campesina).
- FIAN groups from Europe

- Friends of the Earth Europe and EU country organizations
- The Transnational Institute
- InfOMG Romania
- Alburnus Maior
- Slow Food Turda
- Hosman Durabil
- Cutia Taranului

What are the results so far?

Eco Ruralis has managed to become well known nationally and thus create a network of diverse members, such as food producers, agroecology activists and conscious consumers. Eco Ruralis is first and main peasant association in Romanian with a national outreach and membership addressing the root causes of the current agricultural and rural problems. The significant result is the constantly growing membership. Eco Ruralis started in 2009 with 5 members and got in 2016 around 2500 members.

Through campaigns, Eco Ruralis brought a holistic approach towards agroecology and food sovereignty:

Access to Seeds campaign: the staff of Eco Ruralis farms its own collective seed saving garden, a steadily growing network of seed guardians (members taking care of propagation of specific species and varieties), yearly national seed distribution since 2012 (in 2016 the association distributed seeds to more than 2000 members and supporters, distributing in total more than 7000 packs of seeds). On a political level, Eco Ruralis was the primary voice advocating for keeping peasant seeds free and accessible to all.

Land Rights campaign: Pioneer work in investigating the effects of land grabbing on the Romanian rural space and peasants. Eco Ruralis participates in the creation of several European wide reports on land grabbing (TNI report, EESC report, COMAGRI report). Eco Ruralis created transparency over Romanian land grabs through several case studies and a fact-based report. Networking with International

and EU level organizations (La Via Campesina, Hands on the Land for Food Sovereignty, Access to Land) for a better international strategic approach over the topics of tenure and land rights. Addressing the topic of access to land by developing a report on farm succession in Romania (soon to be published) and positive case studies on accessing land by agroecological farmers.

Access to Markets campaign: Supporting the development of several alternative food networks, advocacy on a regional level (Cluj county) in enhancing the role of floating markets in the local food system. As it is a young campaign (established in 2015), Eco Ruralis is working on developing it further in the future.

6.4. Summary of the analysis about selected organizations

All three organizations are working on the issues connected with access to land and the significant progress in improving the situation in France, Germany and Romania is considerable. While Terre de Liens and Regionalwert AG are more focused on the process of acquiring land and providing the starting capital to the new entrants, Eco Ruralis is working on ensuring the transparency of land deals and to promote the traditional Romanian peasant structure. However, the goal of raising the awareness within their regions and countries about the difficulties for current and new farmers to access to land as well as the issues connected with the conventional farming, is the main agenda of all of them. With their campaigns and promotion of small-scale family farmers, they have received the outstanding attention of the society as well as the national legal institutions. Terre de Liens and Eco Ruralis are both cooperating with the national policies as well as with other significant organizations on the international level. Although the Regionalwert AG normally works at regional level, it has started to spread out into two other regions and the German Government has noticed and valued the pronounced RWAG's contribution to the regional economy and sustainable development.

The sustainability of farming, the regional economy, the ecosystem services and our food is the cornerstone of all three organizations. They have realized that currently there is a need of new and particularly young farmers, whose access to land is

extremely hard and whose business plans are often considered as being too risky to receive loans from bank. So Terre de Liens and Regionalwert AG acquire directly the land and subsequently lease it to the young farmers, while ensuring long-term and secured land tenure. In the case of Eco Ruralis, instead of acquiring the land, the access to land is provided by ensuring the transparency of tenure systems and land grabbing, standing for the farmers' rights to defend themselves against the unequal actions of industrial corporations, and standing for the farmers' rights to farm sustainably.

The full comparison of the organizations is available in the annex nr. 3.

6.5. The suggestions and recommendations for the Czech Republic

6.5.1. SWOT analysis

Based on the analysis of the Czech Republic and the information gained about the organizations, the SWOT analysis was created.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Increasing number of organic producers</p> <p>Increasing interest about the organic production from consumers</p> <p>Increasing interest from NGOs about access to land issues</p> <p>Increasing number of CSAs</p>	<p>Low awareness about organic farming/products within Czech society</p> <p>Lack of research about access to land issues</p> <p>Distrust in organic products from the Czech society</p> <p>Unwillingness to pay higher prices for organic products from the society</p>
<p>Support of new entrants via subsidies from EU</p> <p>Interest about organic farming from Government and other institutions</p> <p>Examples of best practices from other countries</p> <p>Relatively high number of Universities with educational programs about sustainable agriculture</p>	<p>Weak market with organic products</p> <p>Economical dependence of ecological farms on subsidies</p> <p>Import of organic products for the Czech market and export of the Czech products to foreign countries</p> <p>The average consumption of organic products is much lower than in other European countries</p>
<p>Ongoing consolidation processes which are helping to improve the spatial arrangement of parcels and thus improve the ownership pattern</p>	<p>Weak promotion of organic farming and its effect on the environment</p> <p>High prices of organic products due to the low prices of conventional products</p> <p>The biggest production and industrial blocks in the EU</p> <p>Enormous ownership fragmentation</p>

Opportunities	Threats
Increase of awareness through national campaign, education, media etc. Easier access to information Educational programs in schools Ensure research activities Interest of media Internship and job creation Agrotourism Change of mind about ecological products in Czech society	Increasing prices of organic products Decrease of subsidies Increasing prices of land Even lower prices of food from the international market Unstable political situation and thus lowering the support
Cooperation with political parties Inspiration from international best practices Cooperation with other organizations with the same idea	Cultural differences in comparison with other European countries Unwillingness to learn about organic farming Lack of interest of farmers as well as consumers Lack of interest from medias
Cooperation with other organizations with the same idea Supporting of CSA and formation of cooperation Direct product selling	Prolongation of the consolidation processes and thus continuous ownership fragmentation Deepening land concentration
Supporting access to land through land market Land acquisition Ensuring long-term tenancy for small and medium-scale farmers	

6.5.2. Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the SWOT analysis, three main priorities for the proper functioning of the potential organization in the Czech Republic have been determined. These will be divided into (1-2) sectional objectives along with relevant activities. All the priorities relate to the main issues of the Czech Republic, which were identified as the following: the extreme ownership fragmentation, weak land market and tenancy system which results in land homogenization; the low awareness of consumers about organic farming; the unprofitability of the organic farms.

The organization should focus on the following 3 priorities:

- To ensure and enhance the access to land
- Raise awareness about organic farming
- Raise the viability of organic farms

PRIORITY 1: To ensure and enhance access to land	
Objective 1:	Activities
<i>Make land attractive and available</i>	Land consolidation
	Direct acquiring of land and subsequent leasing
	Strengthen the tenancy security by providing the long-term tenures
	Providing of starting capital for new entrants
	Cooperation with banks to access the loans
	Providing of economically viable land (size, shape, access road etc.)

The activities to make land attractive for both current owners and potential future farmers, and to make the land available are crucial for the changes needed in Czech farming. The land consolidation is already happening in the Czech Republic, although the process is quite lengthy. However it is a tool, which can motivate the owners to farm their land by themselves, because it will provide more economically viable land as well as land with access road and better configuration. Also, the selling price would rise with the acreage and the accessibility (SKLENICKA, 2013), which motivates the owners to sell the land to the potential candidates. However, the process itself would not be managed by the organization, but the organization can cooperate on the organization with the municipalities as well as with the landlords.

In order to speed up the land consolidation process, the organization could use the direct land acquisition method in order to create “usable” land, which can be rented

as a whole to the candidates. The rents might be secured for long term as it is in the case of Terre de Liens or Regionalwert AG, where the leases are usually for decades. By direct land acquiring and providing the long-term leases, the risk of another ownership fragmentation and thus land use homogenization will be reduced. The organization could also provide the starting capital for new entrants as well as to ensure the access to loans by cooperating with banks.

PRIORITY 2: Raise the awareness about organic farming	
Objective 1:	Activities:
<i>Raise the awareness and provide the education</i>	Create and propagate campaigns about organic farming
	Create educational programs which can be implemented at schools
	Training of teachers
	Support of non-productive activities like agrotourism, internships, "open doors" etc.
	Enhance research activities in the organic farming sector
	Ensure the transparency and accessibility of research results
	Compare the results with other countries
Objective 2:	Activities:
<i>Access to information for farmers</i>	Open up consultancies for farmers about organic practices, market etc.
	Ensure the exchange of practices and insights among the farms
	Provide research and its results about accessible land, prices etc.
	Providing consultation for business plans
	Inspiration from the best practices from other countries in order to gain "know-how"

One of the main issues about organic farming in the Czech Republic is the lack of awareness of consumers. With objective 1, the organization can help to raise the

awareness about organic farming and its positive impact to the environment. By creating campaigns and/or programs that could be implemented at schools, particularly elementary and high schools, the awareness will increase among young people. Similar activities can be seen in Terre de Liens, which actively cooperates with the local schools. Eco Ruralis creates every year or two new national campaigns in order to raise awareness about organic farming and the issues of the conventional farming. The raising of awareness can be even more enhanced with the support of non-productive activities within the farms, such as agrotourism, internships, open doors and others.

However, to be able to organize such activities, there has to be more research within the field of organic farming as well as access to land. Also a recompilation of existing research in organic farming as well as their results should be easily accessible and should provide the objective comparison of the organic farming to the conventional farming. The organization can contribute to the research and recompilation activities by providing the information (statistical numbers) about the farmers as well as initiate its own internal research activities and thus publish the results.

With the objective 2 the organization will provide various information for the farmers, such as consultancy about the farming practices, markets and others. In order to help to find suitable land, the organization can provide research about the land market and the prices. The organization can also provide professional consultancies for their business plans, which are necessary to obtain the loan and/or subsidies. Another important activity is the cooperation between farmers in order to exchange experiences and knowledge. Similar activities are provided by Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG as well as Eco Ruralis.

PRIORITY 3: Raising the viability of organic farms	
Objective 1:	Activities:
<i>Secure the short supply chain</i>	Ensure the direct sales through street markets, farmer markets, own stores etc.
	Collaboration with local/regional stores and ensure the supply chain
	Cooperation with community supported agriculture and other NGOs
Objective 2:	Activities:
<i>Secure the best management practices</i>	Provision of guidelines for the first years
	Cooperation between farmers
	Minimize the waste of products as well as other commodities

The farms in the Czech Republic are unprofitable and thus dependent on the subsidies. The demand of organic products is low and the products are exported. The goal of the priority 3, objective 1, is to ensure the short supply chain in order to provide the secured sales and income. This can be secured by the street and farm markets as well as by the sales in their own stores like it is in the case of Regionalwert AG or by collaboration with local/regional (or national as well) stores like it does Terre de Liens with Biocoop. The fast spreading trend of community supported agriculture can be even more supported with the increasing number of farmers.

With objective 2, the organization might help to secure the best management practices by providing the guidelines with consultancy for the first years and the periodical meetings organized in order to discuss current situations and how to address them together as a community. It is necessary to minimize the waste of products as well as to repurpose organic waste. Farmer communities, along with the organizations, can set up internal trade schemes where the product which is not chosen for selling in stores (“perfect product”) can be traded among the farmers for their own consumption; the same trade scheme can be applied to bi-products and

wastes. Similarly like it does Regionalwert AG, the organization should work like a closed system.

It is important to highlight that all priorities, objectives and activities are connected between each other and should not be understood as independent units. For instance the periodical meetings are part of both priorities 2 and 3 as well as the collaboration with local/regional stores is interconnected with the awareness raising. They are either not meant to be implemented at once but rather continuously and according the needs of land, farmers as well as consumers.

7. Discussion

The struggle of new and young farmers to obtain a piece of land for their agricultural enterprises has emerged as one of the biggest agricultural issues nowadays. Although one might think about access to land as being only a process of purchasing or leasing a land, the scope of this issue is much larger and it affects every one of us. As HILMI (2012) says, “*we are all nested within agriculture, and like all things too familiar to us, we do not realize it fully*”. However, the recent rush for ensuring the food sovereignty, which resulted into a large and intensive agriculture, is suppressing our most important sources and producers of our food – the small-scale farmers and peasants. Now is the time to realize that land and agriculture should not be taken for granted. The European Economic and Social Committee in the Own-initiative Opinion paper stresses that Europe, and the rest of the world, should understand this situation as a warning call and that the appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the sustainability of our future (EESC, 2015).

From the results of this thesis it is evident that organizations are a big part of the preservation of land and its agricultural purposes by helping new farmers gain the access to land. These organizations have also emerged particularly as a response to inadequate dealing of the issue of modern agricultural practices, for instance, the inappropriate land distribution and land transactions within their countries. Their significant prosperity is based on the fact that they have succeeded to raise awareness about access to land issues and the importance of organic farming among the general public as well as the national policymakers, who then joined the organizations as farmers or shareholders.

I am convinced about the fact that the reason why Europeans have started to realize the importance of sustainable agriculture over the past years (CAP, 2016) is mainly because of the hard work and propaganda of organizations like Terre de Liens, Regionalwert AG, Eco Ruralis and others similar to them. To compare it to the current and often-discussed topic about palm oil and its negative impact on the environment, this issue has been ongoing for a very long time, but only a huge propaganda all over the world about the awful consequences has resulted into a raise

of awareness on the consumers as well as the suppliers. Propaganda in the media is not the only means of informing the masses, word of mouth and the sharing of opinions and experiences plays a huge role as well. This is where the strength and potential of these organizations lie, and also why the suggestions and recommendations for the Czech Republic were focused on raising awareness about organic farming and its products through educational, cooperation and sharing initiatives.

The Czech Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has recently implemented the Action Plan for Development of Organic Farming for the period 2016-2020 (MoA, 2016) where it mentions, among other topics, the missing long-term and systematical campaign and propaganda of organic farming in the Czech Republic. MoA also admits that it failed in achieving several goals from the previous action plan (for the period 2011-2015), such as to raise education about organic farming, training of farmers, as well as the concept of coordinated promotion and education in the field of organic farming (MoA, 2016). Although WILLER & MEREDITH (2016) are talking about strong development of the organic sector in the Czech Republic, the majority of the organic products are being exported to the neighboring countries, particularly to Germany and Austria. There is clearly a lack of interest about organic products from the consumers but probably with the new action plan, adding to the efforts of the organization, this can be reverted and as a direct or indirect consequence organic products could end up remaining inside the country.

The current situation of undermining the importance of agriculture and food production in the Czech Republic may be seen as the result of the historical land development during the last century, when farmers were separated from their land for more than 40 years, thus losing their connection to the land. SKLENICKA (2013) points out that the broken connections between Czech farmers and their land resulted into the loss of motivation and also the loss of agricultural skills. Furthermore, this history has resulted into apathy for farmers from the consumers and this also can prove hard to resolve. Therefore I perceive the issue of access to land in the Czech Republic to be just as much a social issue as it is a regulatory one, since even if lost property rights and access to land are recovered, few people are interested in farming. As LEZVAROVÁ (2013) proved in her diploma thesis, the

number of landowners that have received proper parcels after the land consolidation process and have started any agricultural activity was negligible. Nevertheless, land consolidation still would serve as an important tool to hinder the creation of homogenized agricultural blocks in the Czech Republic, and could also motivate new entrants to start their agricultural businesses.

As a final remark in this discussion, I would like to make mention of the first movement in addressing the current issue of land as a source of our food in the Czech Republic. It is a recently created organization called “Nadace pro půdu” (endowment for soil), which aims to protect the environment and contribute to sustainable agriculture. The organization set its main activities as following: direct acquiring and leasing of land, promoting organic and sustainable farming, connection between farmers and cooperation with similar organizations. Nadace pro půdu has been officially registered in January 2016, therefore results cannot be measured in this thesis, but maybe this organization will become one of the reasons why we will be able to buy local products in our stores in the future.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis I have studied the constraints and obstacles for farmers to obtain access to land. Based on the examples of three organizations dealing with access to land issues from different European countries, I have identified the possible tools for dealing with the issue of access to land for agroecological ways of farming. Based on the acquired knowledge, suggestions and recommendations for a similar potential organization in the Czech Republic were provided. The goals of this thesis were thus completed.

Among the results of the analyzes done, the most predominant outcome has been that the organizations studied have a high impact on creating awareness, improving the organization and regulation of the land in their respective countries, and the processes that new entrants must go through to achieve their goals of becoming farmers.

Addressing the issue of access to land in the Czech Republic, as well as in Europe, is in its beginnings and the Governments, organizations and general public are increasingly becoming aware of this situation with every study and initiative that is set in motion. Therefore, this thesis can serve as a basis for further investigation on the subject and also probably as inspiration for the creation of a potential future organization within the Czech Republic.

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10. Annexes

Annex nr. 1: The questionnaire for the organizations

Description – A general description of the organization, what is the main idea/mission and the field of interest

Main goals of the organization – A list of main goals of the organization and what the organization wants to achieve

Scope – A scope of activities – local, regional, national

Type of the organization (legal status) – what is the official kind of the organization

When did the organization start its activity? – When was the organization established and if, when was the organization's sub parts established

What are the main activities and who do they support? – A list of the main activities of the organization and the determination of who is being supported by the organization (individuals, groups, organizations and etc.)

Who can become a member/shareholder and what are the conditions to do so? - What are the conditions to become a member/shareholder of the organization? Does it require any specific steps? Is it for free or is it charged?

How many members/shareholders does the organization already have? – How many farmers, entrepreneurs and investors have already joined the organization?

Who are the existing entrepreneurs of the organization? – A list of individuals and entrepreneurs who are supported by the organization in any direction

How is the organization financed and who can be involved in financing? – A determination of how is the organization financed. Does the organization accept

donation? And if yes, from whom does it accept? Does the organization cooperate with any international programs to get funding?

How is the management of the organization? – What are the inside rules of the organization and how is the organization managed on the general scope

How is the development of the organization measured? – How is sustainable development guaranteed and what are the indicators for it's measuring?

Does the organization organize another supporting activities? – A description of all supporting activities, which correspond to concept of the organization and which are helping to accomplish the goals of the organization

Does the organization have any partners? – A list of all partners included in the business of the organization

What are the results so far? – Summary of all significant results so far. Finding answers to questions like: Is the organization successful? Is the organization well known in its country? Does the organization have any impact on the social life, local economy or other organizations?