

# Workshop 1: Structural Change or Land grabbing: the rapid transformation of the agrarian family farm system in Europe and the role of agroecology

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## Impulse talks:

- Daniel Mühlleitner (BUND, Germany) – “Key facts and figures about land restructuration in Western Germany”
- Bernd Müller (University of Giessen, Germany) – “Land restructuration and its impacts on subsistence economy and the farmer-environment relationship”
- Stephanie Domptail (University of Giessen, Germany) – “Land restructuration or land grabbing: Towards a working concept of land grabbing for western Germany”
- Bernd Müller (Farmer, University of Giessen, Germany) – “Where agroecology comes in: the case of the Bündnis Junge Landwirtschaft e.V in Brandenburg, Germany”

During the last 20 years we have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of family farms in Germany. This trend goes along with an increasing average in the size of farmland holdings and less employment in the agricultural sector. Should we consider those consequences as normal processes within the land market or can we talk about land grabbing or land restructuration in Europe?

The many drawbacks of land grabbing for social communities, local employment and environment were generally agreed on. However, in the case of land consolidation, the impact on local ecology and communities connected to the land could also be positive. This has to be considered on a case-by-case basis and depends on the buyer's specific interest in the land.

The concepts of land grabbing and restructuration were discussed during the workshop. The terminology around land acquisition in Europe is still not well defined and includes different perspectives related to the diversity of actors dealing with the issue. Economists are more concerned with data collection on land distribution changes to describe a market trend. Other stakeholders such as civil society organizations and political parties also consider aspects such as fairness of the transaction and changes in the production systems following the land transmission to a new owner.

Agroecology was proposed during the workshop as a paradigm to charge the issue of land restructuration in Europe with social and political meaning. Farmland should not merely be considered as a tradable good that can be transferred from one actor to another. Farmland is deeply connected to human life and natural environments and thus transactions must be regulated in a way they do not impact adversely on such dimensions.