In 2016, AEEU was established, and right here in Budapest, the FAO organized the regional Agroecology European meeting that marked a crucial step towards shaping the policy and technical trajectory of agroecology within the FAO and various UN agencies, including The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Now in 2023, as we gather here again, our community has significantly expanded. With a diverse representation of farmers, pastoralists, youth, and academics coming from 36 countries, including 26 from Europe, we embody the rich fabric of people, agricultural and food systems, and challenges that define agroecology. This diversity unites us in a shared vision, dreams, and a commitment to future actions.

In only seven years, we've achieved significant progress, fostering a sense of strength, unity, and alignment that is truly uplifting. The prospect of bringing agroecology into a new dimension and making it a cornerstone of a revitalized Europe fills us with great happiness and joy.

The EU and international institutions increasingly recognize agroecology as the pathway to eradicate hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition and health. This political support is echoed by many countries in Latin America and Africa.
During these intense and emotional two days, we delved into the three dimensions of agroecology: science, practices, and movements. Discussions spanned from the field and farm level to national, European, and beyond.

Over 300 participants embarked on a journey of intense dialogue and exchange, addressing a multitude of topics, including:

- **The pivotal role of youth** in promoting agroecology as the future paradigm for our food systems.
- **The central role of women in agroecology**, contributing to the reproduction of life and emphasizing the inseparable connection between people and nature within economic and political systems.
- **The significance of pastoral systems and lifestyles**, advocating for the integration of crop/livestock practices to sustain our delicate natural ecosystems and foster alternative food systems beyond intensive meat and milk production.
- **The rich diversity of production systems and people's alliances**, representing millions of farmers and hectares throughout Europe. Agroecology serves as a voice and identity for these millions of farmers, pastoralists, and fisherfolk.
- **The acknowledgment of agroecology living labs** as safe spaces for developing transdisciplinary and multistakeholder approaches.

In Workshop 1, we formulated our dreams and vision for the upcoming 2024 election, posing thought-provoking "What if" questions.

**What if**

...**we engage** policymakers in regionalizing agroecology policies, adopting a bottom-up approach for better policies and higher adoption rates? What if we safeguarded farmers' rights to utilize neglected crops, aligning them with traditional food systems?

...**we reshape** CAP Pillar 1 and move away from hectare-based direct payments and shift towards agricultural working units

...**we reverse** soil degradation, address pollution, and restore ecosystems' productive capacity

...**we foster** together the transformative power of agroecology to usher in a new era of well-being for all within planetary boundaries.
What if …we challenge existing structures and reinvent our approach to community-building and collective decision-making? Agroecology embodies social innovations and modes of equitable, inclusive, and participatory governance to ensure the regeneration of our Commons, landscapes, and ecosystems.

…we measure the performance of our economy, moving beyond GDP, and place significant emphasis on the value of traditional peasant knowledge. By combining this traditional with scientific knowledge, Agroecological approaches forge new pathways and innovative solutions.

…we collectively acknowledge and celebrate peasant agroecology’s importance in Central Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa. In times of political, environmental, social, and economic crises, agroecology emerges as the most resilient system, paving the way for a peaceful future for Europe and beyond, grounded in human rights, justice and dignity for all.

As we look forward, the invitation is extended to join and become members of AEEU, fostering continued collaboration towards shared goals and visions. The hope is to meet, work, and evolve together in the coming months and years.

THANK YOU!

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