



Dear members and friends of the European FIMARC movements

On behalf of the European coordinators I am happy to present the new FIMARC European newsletter.

Our ProRurE project is moving on very well. Thanks to all, who are involved and committed to it.

I am looking forward to the FIMARC world assembly next year in Senegal. Before that there is a lot to be done. Please start now to think about the next European Coordination team and the European delegates for the FIMARC Executive Committee. Please look for suitable candidates within your movements. We also need creative ideas, how we - as European movements - can contribute in different ways to the financing of the world assembly. I am pleased, if you discuss these items in your meetings and committees and send us your ideas and proposals.

Now please enjoy this newsletter. May God bless you, your movement and all your activities.

Wolfgang Scharl, FIMARC World President

FIMARC and the elaboration of a United Nations declaration in favor of the rights of peasants

FIMARC is engaged in the working group of the UN Human Rights Council for the elaboration of a declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. The first half of 2017 was marked by several events and advances in this process.

- An international congress in March brought together 500 people at Schwäbisch Hall (Germany), including more than 100 peasant leaders from around the world on the theme of "Global Peasant's Rights ". Wolfgang Scharl and George Fernandez represented FIMARC, as partner of this congress with the KLB, our German movement. A high moment of awareness towards our European countries, whose governments are still reserved on this declaration.
- At its General Assembly in May the German KLB voted a declaration calling for the adoption of a declaration on the Rights of Peasants by the United Nations and expressing its support for the engagement of its working group with the German government and the European Union.
- The 4th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Declaration of Rights of Peasants held in Geneva in May was marked by a consensual advance on the new version of the text. A final draft is expected in 2018, which will be submitted to the United Nations for adoption by the end of 2018. At the European level, this project is supported by Switzerland, while the spokesperson of the European Union has expressed reservations about the current wording.

In the present phase, our movements are encouraged to make their governments aware of their interest in the steps taken. Such a declaration, even if not binding, can be a reference and a tool for our movements in a period when we are called upon to redefine the modes of production in agriculture in order to maintain a society capable of living well in rural areas.



At the 4th session of the Working Group of the Human Rights Council, Wolfgang Scharl, Gaby Falc'hun and George Fernandez hosted a meeting on the right to food sovereignty and the use of peasant seeds.

Address allowing access to the present version of the declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RuralAreas/Pages/4thSession.aspx>

FIMARC and the right of farmers to seeds

At its Executive Committee (Exco) meeting in Assesse in May 2017, FIMARC organized a training seminar on "the peasant rights to seeds".

This seminar was an opportunity to recall the current abuses of the agro-industry system of production and marketing of seeds for agriculture. Regional selection systems, initially aimed at improving agricultural production and food supply, have evolved to a system whose the main stake is the profit margin of a small group of powerful agro-industrial firms. These groups control the entire seed market and impose their seeds and prices by seeking to prevent farmers from reproducing and marketing seeds from their traditional crops.

This seminar was also a reminder of how the farmers involved in our national movements and their associations are organizing to resist and maintain their autonomy in this field. They call for the establishment of structures for the preservation and reproduction of traditional varieties. They want to participate in selection methods to keep a free access to varieties adapted to the local contexts allowing farmers to limit their production costs.

While stressing the ethical character and value of the work of selecting by small farmers and scientists concerned about the common good, the strategic role of access and production of seeds was mentioned in order to ensure the food self-sufficiency of territories and rural communities.

The final resolution of this Executive Committee recalls that FIMARC and its member movements are firmly committed to the following points:

- studying and analyzing seed issues, the impact of seed regimes and their national framework (laws, rules and regulations), which deny farmers the right to seeds.
- to develop information and education for women and men, young people and children on seed issues and farmers' rights to seeds.
- to build local resistances to protect our own seed systems, knowledge and traditional practices.

- to challenge the corporatist control of seeds using private technologies and research.
- to develop information on the important role of family farming and in particular on the role of women in agriculture, seed preservation and protection of biodiversity.
- to inform on the ongoing process at the United Nations, in order to adopt a declaration on "the Rights of Peasants and other persons working in rural areas".
- to establish and deepen the links between farmers and consumers, in order to jointly avoid the seed privatization process.
- to foster the development of forums and exchanges at local, national and global levels to support the rights of smallholder farmers on seeds.
- to identify and apply seed preservation methods adapted to the regional characteristics of our movements.



During the Exco, visit of a farm and a workshop of production of peasant seeds in Belgium.

FIMARC Europe: the progress of the ProRure project



Following a FIMARC incitation and with the support of the German ILD, the "ProRure" project supported by the European Erasmus + Program enables 9 national associations and movements to share their experiences and investments in strengthening the civil society in rural areas in their respective countries.

The last meeting in June in Bulgaria reinforced our interest in exchanges between our movements of different countries of the European Union. The exchanges with our Bulgarian friends made it possible to appreciate the importance of the dynamic around the traditional cultures as a means of bringing together communities from different initial cultures.



Our discussions on our common priorities have allowed us to see that we can put different meanings under the same words. Aware of the role of agriculture in the functioning of rural territories, we agreed to start a joint reflection in the coming months on the content of the term "family farming" in our respective countries.

The next meeting of the partners of this project will be hosted from 17 to 19 November 2017 by the CMR, the French movement member of FIMARC.

Participants at the ProRure meeting in Bulgaria.

Our wishes to Father Tomas Spanghero for his recovery



Father Tomas Spanghero, an Argentine priest, is the FIMARC chaplain since the fall of 2016. He was in Europe last May and actively participated in our Executive Committee in Assesse. Suffering from various chest pain, he had to be hospitalized on his return to Argentina for the removal of a kidney and the placement of a prosthesis on the femur. Our thoughts are going to him and we wish him a recovery as quickly as possible.

The next FIMARC World Assembly in Senegal in 2018

At its meeting on 17-24 May in Assesse, the FIMARC Executive Committee decided to accept the candidature of MARC-Senegal for the organization of its 2018 World Assembly. This Assembly will be held in November 2018 in Thiès, on the general theme : **" Let's move together in harmony to create a just and dignified rural world caring for life"**.

This World Assembly will be a time for exchanges between our national movements in order to strengthen their interest in the international dimension of their national actions; a time for sharing for our movements of Catholic Action in rural areas on the themes of support for the development through peasant family farming and the respect for the rights of peasants, in response to the call of Pope Francis in Laudato si. It will also be a highlight for our friends of MARC-Senegal, confronted with the choice of the type of rural development they have to promote in Africa.

The FIMARC Bureau calls on national movements to mobilize with energy to participate as person and material support in this assembly. Each movement is

invited to solicit its potential donors to ensure the funding of this World Assembly.



Preparatory meeting in Senegal with Fr. André Gueye, Bishop of Thiès, Jacques Badji and Julien Badji, President and secretary of MARC Sénégal, Fr. Epiphane Mbenque, chaplain of MARC, and Jean Claude Germon, the FIMARC Treasurer.

Coordinator of the Newsletter No. 22 : Jean-Claude Germon

Comments and contributions to this newsletter are welcome on fimarc@skynet.be

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