

SLOVAKIA and agriculture after EU accession

Slovakia belongs to EU middle-east „new member-states“. Agriculture, after accession to the EU in 2004, develops in this country in two different directions. The first – rural areas are under strong abandonment, rural population get still older, young people run to towns or to west countries and it is really very difficult to find any good employees for agriculture. The second – after the socialization of agri-sector in 60ties (almost no private farmers), we have relatively big fields – average about 1500 ha, which bring intensification, supported by EU funds in last years. Agricultural land in Slovakia is about 50% from all area of 4,9 mil. ha, from which ca 30% is arable land, 1% orchards and vineyards and ca 20% grasslands (mostly mountainous). So for intensive agriculture there are 1,5 mil ha of arable land, orchards and vineyards and after EU accession there is renaissance of intensive agriculture as farmers have again money for agro-chemicals, pesticides inclusive.

On the other hand, thanks to EU funds grow organic farming also promisingly. In 2007 we had above 6% of all agricultural land certified as organic, unfortunately mostly grasslands and without product finalization, you can very rarely find our organic products in Slovak store shelves.

SLOVAKIA – Centre for Sustainable Alternatives (CEPTA) and pesticides in 2007 www.cepta.sk

In march 2007 we took part at the national conference organized by MEP – Irena Belohorska and presented our attitude in the lecture “**Sustainable use of pesticides in the EU?, Challenge in 21st century**”. In

June 2007 we participated in two workshops organized by the Ministry for Environment and Dutch twinning partners. As a NGO representative we shared our positions in discussion to the National pesticides infocentre in our lecture “**Pesticides & Nature, Humans and Environment**” where we stress also necessity of effective, on-time and transparent monitoring of pesticides use and residues and its sufficient financing.

In beginning October 2007 we organized *Days of organic farming* in two middle Slovak towns – Zvolen and Banská Bystrica. We prepared different actions beginning with public discussions, via tasting, info-stands, questionnaires... with help of students and colleagues from Technical University in Zvolen.

In the end of October we actively participated on PAN – Europe cyber action. We aimed at our MEPs, created web-sites, informed different stakeholders and published articles called for public participation – with relatively good results. Outcomes from the European Parliament vote on important pesticides legislation in plenary session of 23-24 October 2007 we also plan to publish.

