

Introduction – Background and Objective of the Conference

Notwithstanding the remarkable success of the land reform process in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), land fragmentation exists as a side effect with detrimental implications for private and public investments, sustainable economic growth and social development, and natural resources. Less-favoured and least developed regions with economies still depending on agriculture have witnessed negative growth rates, soaring unemployment, increasing rural poverty and as a result, serious social and economic disintegration and wide-spread disappointment among local actors and stakeholders.

The agricultural sector is adversely affected by land fragmentation. Although the experiences of land tenure and its reforms varies widely across the region, most countries are characterised by similar features. The majority of farms are small (1-2,5 ha), and are frequently divided into many parcels which are often badly shaped for agricultural purposes. As a result, it is difficult for farmers to implement new production patterns, and to utilise machinery and appropriate technologies. Most private farmers are restricted to subsistence agriculture and cannot participate in commercial production, which leads to migration and the abandonment of farmland, especially in areas distant to markets.

The small and fragmented parcels, sometimes scattered over different political, juridical and administrative boundaries obstruct spatial/territorial planning especially in terms of land administration, land use planning, and land management. This hampers the implementation of rural regional development policies, strategies, programmes, and projects aimed to improve rural livelihoods.

Recently, FAO in co-operation with GTZ prepared case-studies on land consolidation in Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. In addition, strategies for land consolidation and improved land management have been prepared for Armenia and Georgia. These case-studies have been presented and discussed during the conference in Munich.

The conference aimed to attain three objectives:

1. Offering a platform for discussion and exchange of experiences to develop **guidelines for land consolidation practice**. The above mentioned case-studies will form a valuable basis for the development of these guidelines.
2. **Contributing to the World Bank's regional workshop** on Land Rights, Institutions, and Policies in Eastern Europe, focussing on lessons learnt and recommendations in relation to rural land reform and land consolidation.
3. Establishing a **network of competence for education and research** on land management with TUM as focal point.

During the four days conference, case studies from CEEC have been presented and discussed. Plenary sessions of the second day focussed on Western European experience. The afternoon had been reserved for focussed discussions during break-out sessions. On the third day a field trip led the participants to Lower Bavaria where they got informed on the results of land consolidation in several villages. The last day was dedicated to the formulation, discussion and approval of the Munich Statement on land fragmentation and land consolidation.

Throughout the conference, an **open space** has been provided where participants presented their innovative approaches, showed posters and videos and distributed information material.

Members of the steering committee were Paul Munro-Faure and Fritz Rembold (FAO), Willi Zimmermann and Christian Graefen (GTZ), Holger Magel and Babette Wehrmann (TUM). Major resource persons for the conference concept were Paul Munro-Faure and Fritz Rembold (FAO), Willi Zimmermann and Reinhold Bäuerle (GTZ), Michael Stumpf (ARGE Landentwicklung) and Babette Wehrmann (TUM). Holger Magel, Babette Wehrmann, Michael Klaus, Lika Tchanturia (all TUM) and Michael Stumpf (ARGE Landentwicklung) have been responsible for the organisation of the conference.

The conference took place from Monday, 25/02/2002 to Thursday, 28/02/2002 at Technische Universität München, Arcisstr. 21, 80290 München, Germany.