

## 2nd European Herb Gathering 26-29 April 2018 in Transylvania, RO

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The gathering will be co-organised with Foundation for Life Quality - Transylvania/ Fundatia pentru Calitatea Vietii - Ardeal.



Dear colleagues and partners,

this year we will organise the 2nd European Herb Gathering in the region of **Odorheiu Secuiesc, Transylvania, RO**. We will discuss and focus on herbal projects in the context of sustainable rural development.

### Background

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The **Rural Actors for Health** initiative was started by Forum Synergies in 2012. The protection and promotion of health is a topic of increasing importance not only in the context of increasingly unhealthy lifestyles but also in the political debate in times of permanently increasing costs for the public health care systems. We state that rural actors, namely holders of traditional knowledge in healing methods as well as growers, producers of medicinal and aromatic plants, processors and active suppliers of this knowledge can contribute significantly to health by

- a/ offering products contributing to health in general
- b/ by offering and transferring traditional and scientific knowledge
- c/ by promoting a healthy lifestyle
- d/ by providing health care offers like e.g. the Eco-health farms

Besides that these actors can contribute by their activities and/ or projects significantly to sustainable rural development by

- a/ enabling peasants, esp. peasant women to create an (extra) income by growing herbs
- b/ creating new touristic offers in order to attract visitors
- c/ starting new networks interlinking actors from different economic sectors
- d/ running projects that involve socially disadvantaged people

At the same time we have to face all over Europe a more and more restrictive regulative framework whereas our traditional knowledge about healing and taking care for ourselves are threatened by loss and prohibition.

Our initiative therefore aims at strengthening a network of rural actors for health. Based on the existing knowledge and resources we want to:

- 1/ safeguard and promote the local knowledge related to health care
- 2/ give support to create the necessary conditions in order to ensure the transmission of the traditional knowledge
- 3/ enable mutual support in order to meet the legislative framework (national, EU)

### Results of the 1st workshop, held from 04-07 October 2012 in the Lesachtal valley, AT

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The intention of the first workshop was to sharpen our perception of important topics to deal with. On the one hand we focused on regulative frameworks on EU/ national level and their implications on the activities of "Rural actors for health" and consumers. We further agreed that mutual exchange, education and cooperation are important fields to work on.

The main outputs relate to the following topics (the whole report is available at our website [link](#)):

**Regulations:** understanding the jungle of regulations is one of the biggest and most demanding challenges in order to survive as a small producer. We therefore propose to

- 1/ work on a survey of relevant regulations on EU and national level.
- 2/ elaborate proposals that help to ensure that regulations protect our herbal quality instead of impoverishing their availability

**Professions:** This survey should also give an overview about already existing professions in different countries related to the wild collection, cultivation, processing and selling of herbs and herbal products.

**Capacity Building for small producers:** for small producers (rural actors for health) restrictive and continuously quickly changing legislation is one of the main kick-out arguments to stop any activity. Small producers would therefore urgently need support in order to continue their activity

**Education:** there is a strong need for education not only on a scientific basis but also as an offer for civil society in order to enable citizens to make the right use of herbs. There is a great potential which is not used so far.

**Communication & Cooperation:** we promote a constructive dialogue between different stakeholders on national and EU level including practitioners, scientists and politicians.

## Main objectives of the 2nd workshop

### TOPICS

As part of the preparation work we have conducted an online inquiry to select the main topics to deal with. On the basis of the feedback received we intend to focus on these three main topics:

- 1/ Herbal projects and their contribution to sustainable rural development
- 2/ Traditional knowledge about aromatic and medicinal healing as common goods
- 3/ The legal framework on EU/ national level and its implications on activities for rural actors for health

### GOALS

Main objectives are to discuss and promote

- 1/ Common proposals on how herbal projects can contribute to sustainable rural development
- 2/ Achieve some common understanding on the meaning of common goods in the context of traditional knowledge about aromatic and medicinal healing.
- 3/ Common proposals on how to improve the legal framework on EU/ national level and finding good practices on how rural actors for health can deal with the legal framework

## The region

Lupeni is located in Harghita County, Transylvania, Romania near to the second largest city in that county *Odorheiu Secuiesc* (*Odorhellen, DE; Székelyudvarhely, HU*). Harghita County has a population of 326.222 with the highest percentage of Hungarians in Romania.<sup>1</sup>



Harghita County has a total area of 6,639km<sup>2</sup>, consists primarily of mountains, connected to the [Eastern Carpathians](#), such as the [Ciuc](#) and [Harghita Mountains](#); volcanic plateaux, foothills, and the more densely populated river valleys.

The economy of the region is based on activities in the field of building materials, primary exploitation and processing of wood, trade and agro-tourism. However, the basic activity remains agriculture through plant cultivation and animal husbandry.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Wikipedia

## The context

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The region of Transylvania has a long tradition in carrying out projects and running activities related to the use of medicinal and aromatic plants, collection of traditional knowledge ranging from old recipes to gardening, farming skills, collection and saving seeds and old fruit varieties, etc.

The workshop will be co-organize with our local partner, the Foundation for Life Quality. The foundation's goal is to support family farming via

- Development of personal competencies of the people
- Rural development through education and cooperation
- Promoting sustainable economy through small scale investments.

Several projects were carried out related to the collection, processing and using herbs, and their contribution to sustainable rural development, integrating social, environmental and cultural (traditional knowledge) aspects. Main activities cover trainings and knowledge transfer mainly on a regional level. In 2013 it was created a documentary about the traditional herbal medicine in that region, which can be seen on youtube [link](#).

For more detailed information please visit our website [link](#)

## Gathering Information

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### Travel and transfer

The nearest airport we recommend is Sibiu International Airport. Shuttle buses will be organised according to the arriving time of participants, one around noon and one later during the day. The trip from Sibiu to Lupeni will last around 3hr. Participants should arrive at Lupeni not later than 19:00 on Thursday, 26.4.2018. Please inform us about your exact arriving and departure time. Please make use of our online registration form [link](#). Detailed travel information there will be available at Forum Synergies' website

### Accommodation:

The venue will take place in Lupeni near Odorheiu Secuiesc. Accommodation will be provided in small pensions.

### International Sustainable Buffet:

All participants are invited to contribute a speciality from their region for our international sustainable buffet that will be offered on 11\_11-2016.

**Market of initiatives:** During our "market of initiatives" we offer you the opportunity to share your project/experience with other participants in a "market place" (with tables to put posters, leaflet etc.) and also to make a brief presentation of your initiative (with video or power point).

**Costs :** There is no fee for attending the workshop. Meals and overnight accommodation will be funded by Forum Synergies and the local host organisation. Participants are asked to pay for their travel to and from Sibiu. The organisers may be able to make a contribution to these travel costs, where participants have good reason to ask for such help.

**Transport:** The organisers will be able to arrange to pick up participants arriving at Sibiu airport.

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**DRAFT PROGRAMME**

plenary



working groups



fieldtrips, outside activity



special FS methodology

**Thursday 26th: Welcoming participants**

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- 1-  **Welcome** from FS and hosts + overview on the program + logistics (30')
- 2-  **Who are the participants**
- 3-  **Goals of the workshop:** overview and proposal on how we want to get there

**Friday 27th: BLOCK I: HERBAL PROJECTS in the context of rural sustainability**

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The first day is dedicated to projects and concrete experiences from different countries. The goal is to get a clearer picture about the main topics that need to be addressed in order to support herbal activities in the context of sustainable rural development

- 4-  **Herbal projects: benefits, beneficiaries, experiences and challenges:** field visits to different projects, inputs from participants.
- 5-  Findings from the field visits - Rapporteurs will report back (a list of main questions will be proposed)
- 6-  **European buffet**

**Saturday 28th: BLOCK II: LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

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The second day will focus on exchanging and becoming more concrete with regard to action/ next steps

- 7-  **Legal Framework - the situation in Romania and in other countries:** Plenary session on findings  
INTRODUCTION: speech on the legal situation - general remarks and overview
- 8-  **Legal Framework - different realities and creative solutions:**  
Working groups exchange and try to complete the picture of different legal realities on the basis of their own background. Each working group should bring forward:
  - 1/ at least one concrete aspect related to the legal framework allowing to describe the situation in different countries.
  - 2/ describe the main constraints related to the legal situation in different countries.
  - 3/ describe solutions or the way they deal and work within that framework
  - 4/ make proposals for change
- 9-  **Market of Initiatives**

**BLOCK III: COMMON GOODS**

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- 9-  **Feedback on the Market of Initiatives:** What I want to take home, what I can offer, what I want to explore further.
- 10-  **Walk on the spot** to open our sense for the place, to deepen our findings, possibility for mutual exchange
- 11-  **Common Goods:** Open Space session to identify working groups. Possible topics: threats for traditional knowledge and the free access to herbs/ What do we mean by common goods - why is this an important topic/ What do we suggest in order to promote the relevance of common goods in the context of herbs and health
- 12-  **Herbs and herbal knowledge as common goods:** workings groups reporting and plenary discussion - boiling down to concrete proposals for further action

Key messages related to the main topics: relevance, needs (synthesis)

Sunday 29th: departure

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