Agri-environment subsidies for semi-natural grasslands in Romania

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Aims of the talk

- Agri-environment (AE) for semi-natural grasslands
- Study area
- Discussion of characteristics of AE programme
- 2 Proposals

Semi-natural grasslands Romania

- Introduction
- Study area
- Concerns
  - Data basis
  - Rationale
  - Quality
- Proposals
  - Top-down
  - Bottom-up
- Conclusions
Semi-natural grasslands Romania

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Situation in Romania
AE subsidies for semi-natural grasslands

Agri-environment (AE) – reward for ecologically friendly farming

- RO: simple programme, positive outcomes
- semi-nat. grasslands (HNV type 1) targeted on geographical basis
- macro-level data (land cover); criterion: 50%

→ AE not available for all communes in RO

Hills of Cluj
Study area

Dominated by semi-natural grasslands...

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Biodiversity hot spot

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...despite this, agri-environment payments for semi-natural grasslands are NOT available.
Data basis for area selection

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**Corine Land Cover (CLC)**

- Interpretation of satellite images
- No distinction extensive/intensive grassland (Paracchini et al. 2008)
  → not sufficiently accurate to be main basis for targeting AE
- Should be complemented / substituted by other sources

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Own mapping</th>
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<td>51%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassland</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
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Own mapping:

```
Arable: 29%
Grassland: 66%
```
Rationale of selection

- Eligibility for support payments would depend on simple criteria applied at the level of the farm holding, such as livestock density. It was not intended that support payments for low-intensity farming should be provided in delineated „HNV areas“. (Guy Beaufoy, paper about HNV farming)

- Ecological reasons to protect grasslands in whole country

- „[…]it would have been too costly in relation to the payments to be made, to determine eligibility at a smaller scale, although that would have been more precise“ (European Court of Auditors 2011, Special Report No 7)
Quality criteria

Only called semi-natural, but valid for all permanent grasslands

⇒ because of LPIS land use classes

Same payments for:

– Extensive / intensive
– Old / new
Proposal 1: Top-down approach

**NATIONAL MAP OF SEMI-NATURAL VEGETATION**

Data basis: field data + modelling

Rationale: exact targeting

Quality: can be considered (+different grassland types)

→ requires many resources

→ should be started as soon as possible

Additional advantages
Proposal 2: Bottom-up approach

**SEPARATE LPIS CATEGORY OF SEMI-NATURAL GRASSLANDS**

Data basis: Declaration of farmer
Rationale: exact targeting
Quality: can be considered (intensively / extensively)

→ package for semi-natural grasslands eligible in whole country

**Advantages**

- Better targeting
- Less administrative costs for targeting
- in short time and with comparatively small effort

**Precondition**
Definition has to be very simple to use by the farmers
Conclusions

• RO implemented in a short time a simple scheme

• some weaknesses:
  – data basis
  – rationale itself
  ➔ valuable semi-natural grasslands outside
    Mozaic study area as example
  – inside no quality criteria

• Trend: additional sub-packages to increase eligible area

• Introducing LPIS land use category semi-natural meadows and pastures would solve several problems in an easy way

• would be starting point for a better targeting of EU money towards HNV semi-natural grasslands
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