



Commons in Bulgaria and some SE European states

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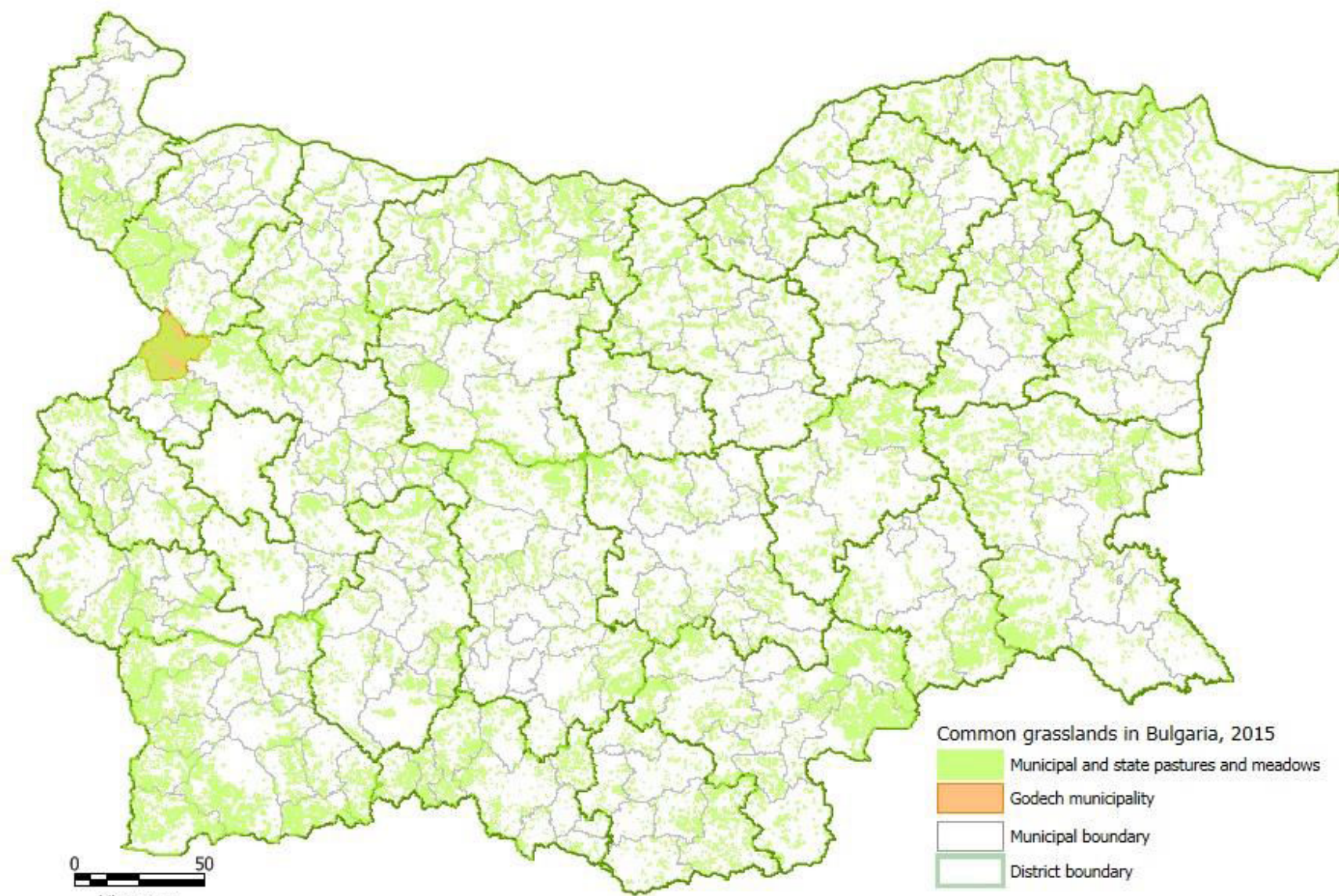
EUROPEAN FORUM ON
NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PASTORALISM



Current Definition of common grazing in Bulgaria

Traditional practice of the inhabitants of settlements with small livestock grazing farms on public “meri” and pastures, including by forming one or more “collective” herds for grazing

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Common grasslands in Bulgaria, 2015

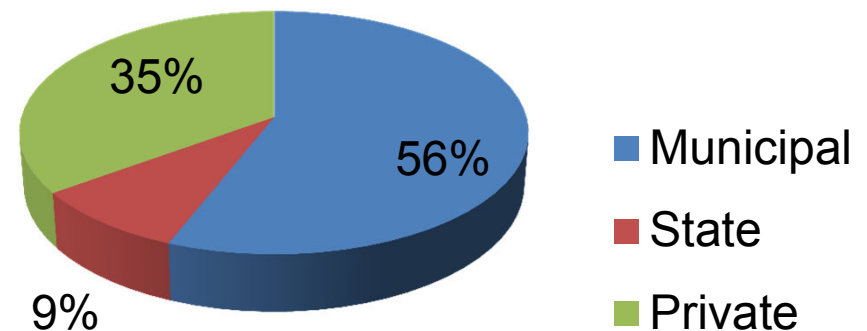
- Municipal and state pastures and meadows
- Godech municipality
- Municipal boundary
- District boundary

0 50
kilometres



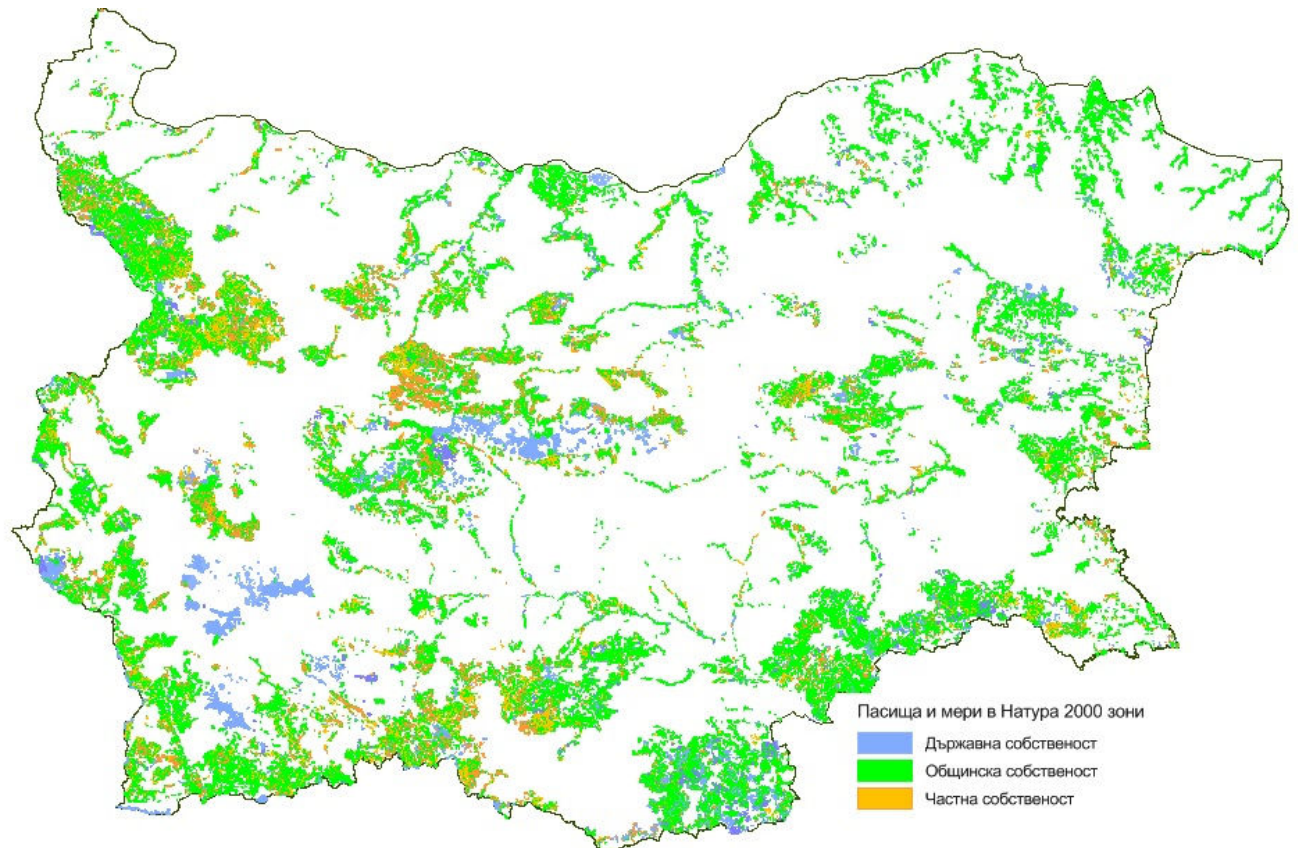
Why are the common grasslands important in BG (1)

- *In 2011 there are more than 800 thousand ha – 65% of all grasslands in BG*
- *LPIS data in 2015 reports 541368 ha of common grasslands (Kazakova,2015) (61% of all grasslands in LPIS)*



Why are the common grasslands important in BG (2)

- 69% of all common grasslands are in Natura 2000 (Kazakova, 2015)
- 40% of common grasslands are both in SPAs and pSCIs



Currently municipal and state grasslands

can be for “common” or “individual use”

Firstly the pastures for common use have to be defined based on the livestock of the ‘small farms’, then the individual use should be decided



Prior 1945	Post socialism prior 2007 period	2007 - 2013	2014 -
Use rights decided in the common village assembly with 2/3 participants	Informal agreement by livestock breeders in the settlement	Municipal general assembly decision supervised by the district Governor	Municipal Council decision supervised by the district Governor
Grazing was divided by the type of animals	Informally	Grasslands divided to individual and common use	Grasslands divided to individual and common use
		Associations of livestock breeders encouraged for common use of grasslands Tender procedure for individual use of grasslands	Livestock breeders in the settlement have the right to use the grasslands individually –without tender depending on their stock For the remaining grasslands – tender procedure
		Grasslands have to be maintained in Good A&E condition	Grasslands have to be maintained in Good A&E condition

What are the main changes that CAP brought?

- *Constantly changing legal base for the rights and the rule for governance and the use of the commons*
- *There is no interest in using commons together, while the interest for “using” commons individually is increasing - this is also leading to conflicts within the community*
- *Only 71 % of the common grasslands are eligible for SAPS support in 2015*



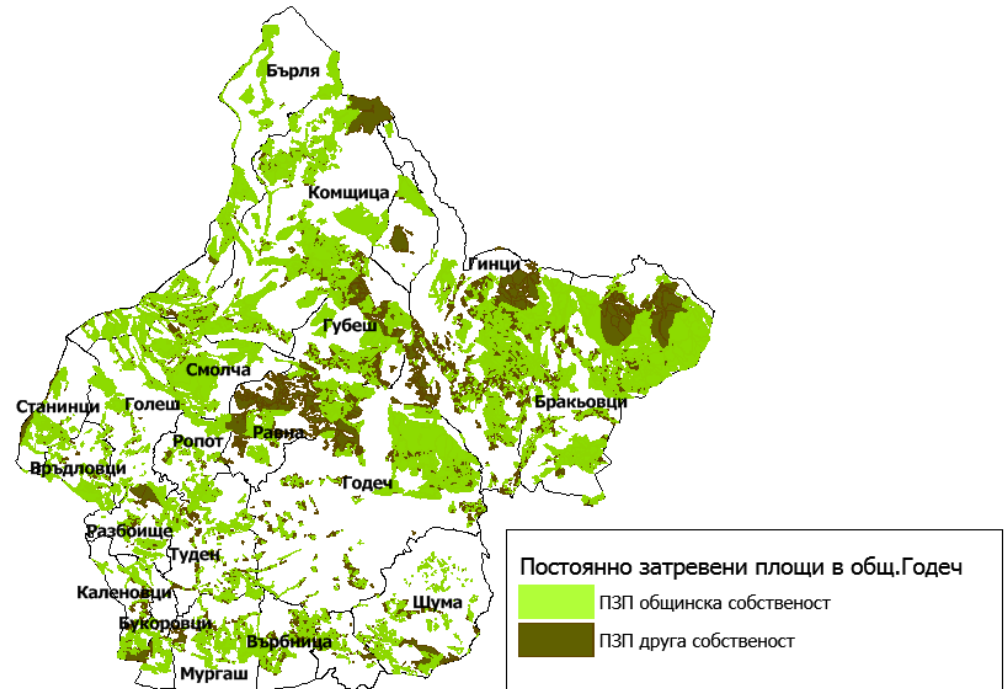
What are the main changes that CAP brought?

- *Grasslands that are left for common use usually are usually not eligible for CAP support – less than 0,1 ha; with lots of scrubs, bushes and trees. They are not maintained in good agricultural and environment condition*
- *There is no real care for the common grasslands in most of the cases - they are not given to only active farmers but also to ‘subsidy’ hunters*



Example from Godech municipality

- 6999 ha of common grasslands in Godech municipality
- In 2015 only 149 ha were left for common use



Main challenges for common grasslands in Godech municipality

- *Developing plans for municipal pastures' management when their exact area, location and condition is not known;*
- *Designing fair rules for use of municipal pastures to meet the needs of local livestock owners within the national-level framework;*
- *Improving the eligibility for CAP support of municipal pastures;*
- *Understanding the natural values and needs for Natura 2000 grassland habitats management;*
- *Developing monitoring schemes for municipal pastures which integrate their farming and natural values*





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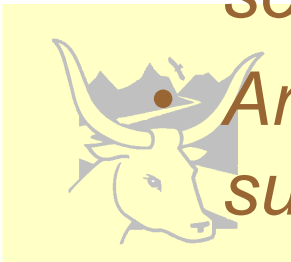
Final thoughts on the common issues for the commons

- *Common grasslands are very important for biodiversity and landscape conservation, but currently that fact is less and rarely recognised by the community*
- *Even in Natura 2000 areas the "nature-friendly" farmers don't know which habitats have to be protected*
- *Main threat is still abandonment , encroachment and conversion to forest or non-agricultural lands*



Final thoughts on the common issues for the commons (2)

- *CAP brought changes in the way the commons are used and in practice CAP eligibility rules and criteria are not encouraging the “common” land use*
- *There is lack or mismatch of data on the real status of the commons*
- *Lack of monitoring and indicators for the commons*
- *National support schemes – are they a solution?*
- *Are coupled payments (per LU) a way to support the commons?*





Albania



Serbia

Common land in other SEE countries



Macedonia



Montenegro

Common traditional practice

- *Important mainly for marginalized (mountain) rural areas, with traditional animal production;*
- *Summer and winter pastures*
- *Different governing responsibilities : Local government (AL); State enterprise (MK); State property used by village community (SR); Collective land - katuns and communes (MN)*
- *Certain provision in the legal framework, but the framework is not really functioning*



Common traditional practice

- *Overgarzing of the grasslands near the villages and threat of abandonment in remote areas*
- *Except MN, not eligible and not getting any national support*
- *Limited funds and resources for common grasslands,*
- *Combination with tourism is seen as a possibility for revitalization*



National support scheme in MN

- *Support for sustainable use of mountain grasslands: (2012)*

Implementation: Livestock Selection Service,

The amount per Livestock Unit 10 euro

Criteria: animals must be ear tagged and registered, minimum 5 LU, min. staying in katuns 2 months, movement permit issued by Vet. Directorate

