

# Agri-environment subsidies for semi-natural grasslands in Romania

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# Aims of the talk

- Introduction
  - Study area
  - Concerns
    - Data basis
    - Rationale
    - Quality
  - Proposals
    - Top-down
    - Bottom-up
  - Conclusions
- Agri-environment (AE) for semi-natural grasslands
  - Study area
  - Discussion of characteristics of AE programme
  - 2 Proposals



# Situation in Romania

## Semi-natural grasslands Romania

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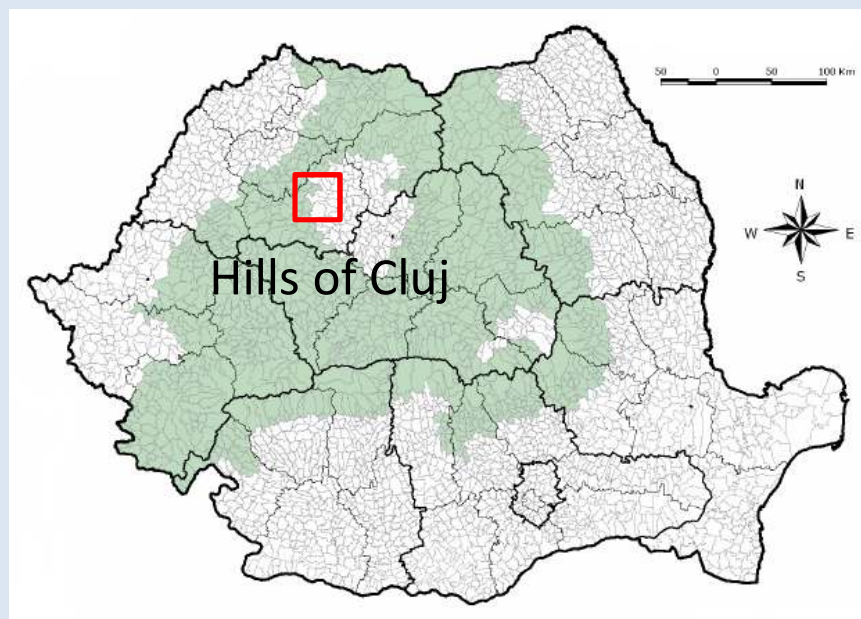


# AE subsidies for semi-natural grasslands

## 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

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## Study area

Dominated by semi-natural grasslands...

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# Biodiversity hot spot

## Semi-natural grasslands Romania

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WILSON ET AL. (2012): Plant species richness: The world records.  
*Journal of Vegetation Science* 23: 796-802.



# Natura 2000 area

## Semi-natural grasslands Romania

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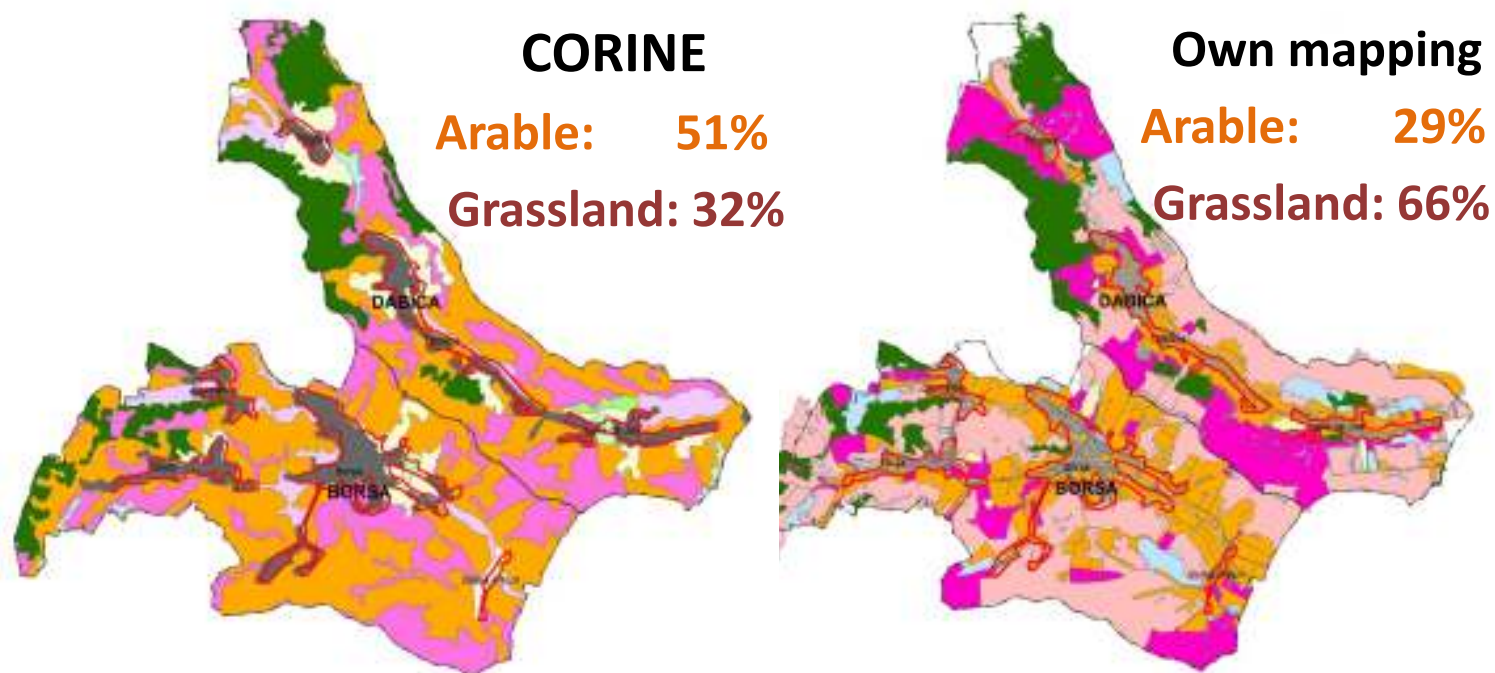


...despite this, agri-environment payments for semi- natural grasslands are NOT available.

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## Data basis for area selection



### 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



# Rationale of selection

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- 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*)

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## 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

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  - Quality
- **Proposals**
  - Top-down
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## 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



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## 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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## Thanks to:

- Mozaic team
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- You for your attention!

