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**ESSEDRA**  
Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic  
Development of Rural Areas



**Slow Food®**  
a project implemented by

***Short food supply chain in Bulgaria?***

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**Short supply chain – the legal framework**

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- Order No 26/14.10.2010 for the specific requirements for direct sales of small quantities of food of animal origin
- Appeared after the pressure of the civil society in 2009-2010.
- Published in 2010. Since then ca. 200 farms have been registered of which more than 150 are bee farms and only 6 food processing places

## **Why is it important?**

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- Provide good quality food
- Reduces the depopulation and sustains local communities
- Preserves local culture and traditions
- Attracts young people
- Potential for artisan food to be sustained as a part of regular farming activities

## **Constraints - 1**

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- **Requirements to the consumers:**
  - Investments similar to the ones for big enterprises – no profit and added value for the small
  - Order No 26 is the last in a row – makes references to older legal documents that serve the big ones – contradictions in its essence
  - Somehow Order No 26 was designed from the very beginning as not to be effective because small-scale farms are considered old fashioned without potential for development?

## Constraints - 2

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- **Territorial restrictions** – only in the local or the neighboring administrative districts
- **Restrictions in quantities:** it is not clear why small-scale farmers cannot sell all their produce directly. Thus they are compared with the big who on the one hand can avoid the investments to meet the requirements of Order No 26 and on the other – selling 40% of their produce directly they add value to their production
- Questionable is also the fact that this quantity restrictions are made without considering the seasonal character of agricultural work

## Strengths of the short food supply chains

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- Offer high quality and diverse food that favours the environment and local traditions
- Independent of the corporate chains
- The food is fresh and tasty
- High potential - 255 105 small-scale farmers in Bulgaria
- High consumer demand
- Innovative partnerships between producers and consumers
- Consumers are treated personally and with great care
- Producers receive feed back from the consumers
- Strong ethic rules focused on local economies and environment
- Quick turnover and possibility for new investments
- A possibility for diversification of farmers' work and sources of income

## Weaknesses of the short food supply chains

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- Order No 26 is not suitable for the small, but there is also none relevant legislation for artisan food and producers of plant food
- Short chains cannot guarantee the sustainability of supply – due to small scale produce
- Food reaches limited number of consumers – personal acquaintances
- Small number of employees can cause overload for the people involved in the farms
- Urban people often do not know where to find farm food
- Limited development due to: access only to local small markets, growing is not the goal, small farmers do not consider themselves business entities, difficult to find reliable workers
- High hygiene rules related only to infrastructure, but they do not refer to quality
- Irrelevant high prices of farm food and lack of trust between consumers and producers
- Seasonality of farm food – consumers are not trained to accept it
- Farm food can be considered elitist

## Opportunities for the short food supply chains

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- Adequate legal framework that will move the producers away from the grey economy sector
- New Rural program supports small-scale farmers, hence short supply chain
- Increased demand for short food supply chain in Europe as a whole
- National/regional trainings for marketing and promotion
- Opening of new working places and overcoming seasonality of labor
- Cooperation between producers to access the market and access to the big supermarkets
- Establishment of regular farmers markets in big cities
- Local partnerships between producers and tourism entities
- Innovative ways of supply – internet platforms
- Nostalgia for the past childhood
- Building trust between consumers and producers; work at schools
- Cooperation among farmers to reduce transport expenses and energy consumption

## **Threats for the short food supply chains**

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- Many farmers are in the grey sector and do not like to change their statute
- Rapid change of legal documents and high pressure by the authorities
- Small-scale farmers often are not informed for the funding opportunities hence cannot avail of them
- Low capacity of permanent supply
- Low level of education at local level – both for farming and project management
- Reluctance for cooperation and neglecting the profits of it
- Small cannot compete with big
- Local state authorities reluctant to support new local initiatives, e.g. farmers markets
- Imitating local food to attract tourists
- Low command of internet skills and on-line production
- Low self-esteem of farmers
- Farm food is wrongly associated with possible danger for human health
- Bad road infrastructure hinders access to farm food

## **Possible actions**

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- Consolidation of small scale farmers in alliances for development
- Political pressure to create suitable legislation for the small and the artisan food producers
- Consolidation of relevant environmental and consumers NGOs in support of small-scale farming
- Promotion of the farm food at fairs and events; involvement of youth



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**Thank you for your attention!**