

Commons, Commoners and Food Sovereignty in Romania

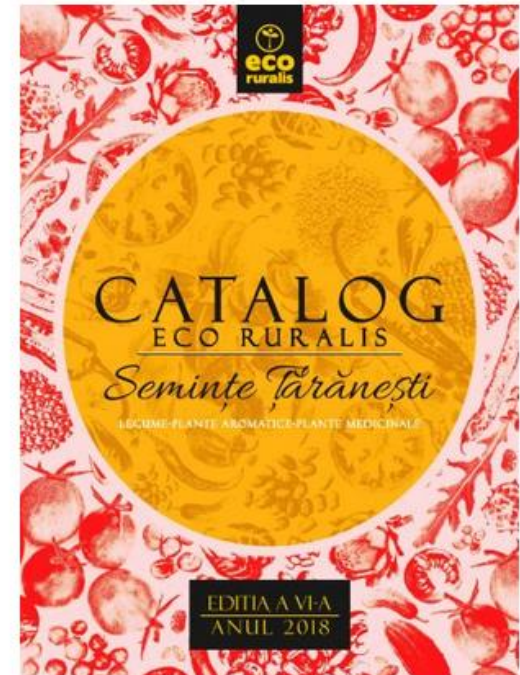
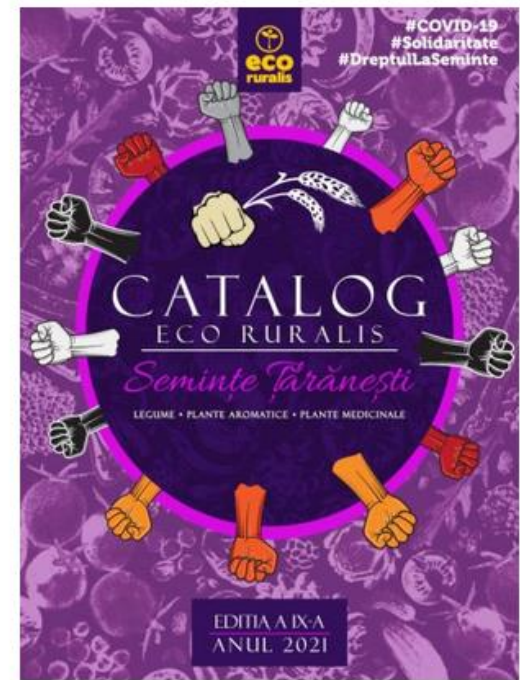
**Common property regimes and management of communal
pastures in Transylvania**

Ana-Maria Gătejel



EcoRuralis

- Active since 2009
- 17,000 members
- 9 working groups
- Member since 2020
- Participated in the General Assembly 2021 (online)
- Member to Rights to Land Working Group since 2022





The agrarian question in Romania

- Highly fragmented landscape (95% of farmers work between 1 and 5 ha of land, covering 50 % of total agriculture land)
- 33 % of EU farmers are Romanian (small-scale) farmers
- Romania is part of the EU Common Agricultural Policy
 - Per hectare subsidies
- Only 36% of Romanian land is registered in the Cadaster – 2015 Land Registration Campaign
- Ageing farming population



What are (land) commons? Romanian context

- Forest and pasture with customary rights (neither private nor public ownership);
- Local customs that became normative (*devălmășire* ~ *property in common*);
- Collective-action institutions (obște; composesoriat; farmer associations)
- Land area under customary rights? UNKNOWN
 - Approx. 1.7 million ha pasture (half of total national area)
 - 14% of total national forests



Biodiversity protection
(habitats, genetic
diversity)

Natural and historical
heritage and aesthetic
value

Access to Land/ Land-
based resources (wood,
grass, non-timber
products)

Community Economies
(food and land
sovereignty, knowledge,
skills)

Why are they important?

- The state (legislation)
- State agencies (distribution, monitoring & evaluation)
- Municipalities (distribution & management)

- Historical associations: obste; compossessorat (distribution & management)
- (Livestock) Farmer Associations (NGO) -> newly formed institutions after 2013 (distribution & management)
- Cooperatives (?)

Farmers (access & management)

Who is managing the commons?

Stories from the field(2022)

Prejmer, Braşov (770 ha/1,400ha)

Prejmer Town Hall

Livestock Association AgroZoo

- Membership based
- Pasture goes to AgroZoo to be distributed to members based on the nr of animals

Hosman, Sibiu (1,409ha/4,122ha)

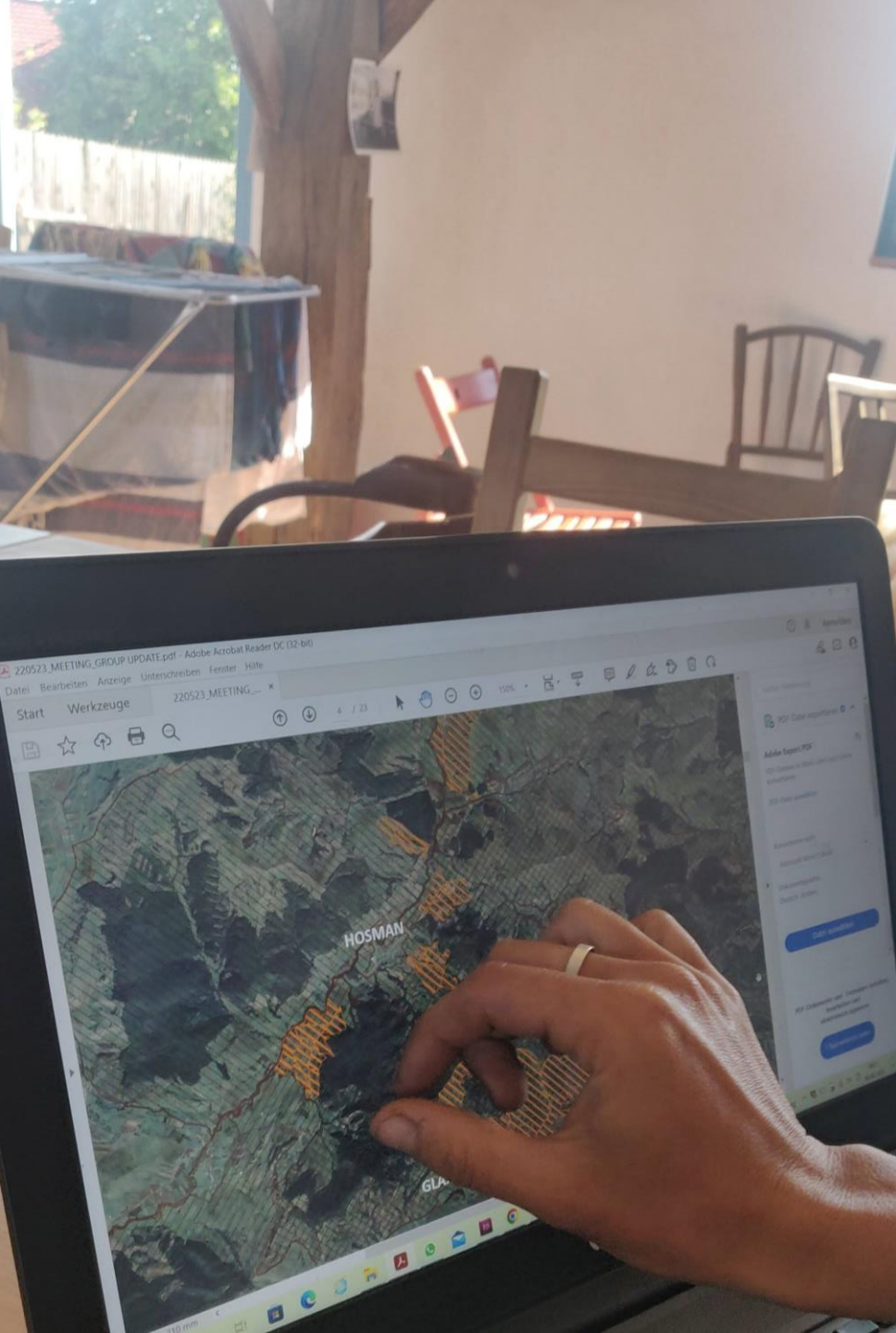
Nocrich Town Hall

Tenant farmers

- Pasture is distributed through an auction system-> goes to the highest bidder

Threats

- Land/ green grabbing
- Rent-seeking (CAP subsidies)
- Mismanagement
 - Overgrazing, under-grazing
 - 'Modern' techniques (seeding, chemical fertilization)
- Regulatory complexity
- Ageing population



Reflection points

- To what extent are these forms of community-based land management systems truly transformative? (e.g. class, gender, ethnicity)
- What can be done at local/regional/national/supranational-international level to protect the right of peasant farmers(implicitly the commons)?
 - > think beyond the resource aka land – access to labour, markets, capital, knowledge, authority





Questions?