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Forum Origin, Diversity et Territories
Workshop n°5, Session n° 3

Climate issues: an opportunity to support a transformative vision of the agricultural and food system in Biovallée

Agriculture represents about 25% of carbon emissions in the Biovallée. Like everywhere else in the world, the consequences of climate change have already been visible for decades in this rural territory, whose development has been guided by the river; actors in this territory have initiated adaptation and mitigation strategies for agriculture; these dynamics have been analysed in the framework of a study conducted in 2018-2019 by the Alpine Ecology Laboratory.

Following this study, which highlighted 3 major strategies deployed within this territory, the 3 communities of communes (CCVD, CCCPS, CCD) and the Biovallée association decided to bring together some sixty Biovallée structures in order to set out together a desirable and coordinated vision for agriculture and food for 2050.

This forward-looking approach has resulted in "a global agro-ecology project and the creation of coherence between agricultural production and food in the region; the 2050 vision reverses the order of necessity between supply and demand, between sectors and consumers-citizens. The latter wish to participate and have a say in the choice of crop rotation and marketing channels; that production methods comply with the requirements of respect for living soils, biodiversity, landscapes, water resources and climatic challenges; that the food supply be conducive to healthier and more balanced food that is close to home, affordable and non-elitist; that there be inter-knowledge and recognition between farmers and inhabitants on the subject of agricultural multi-functionality

The territorial demand for local agriculture is not to focus on food self-sufficiency, but at least to increase the territory's supply autonomy. The desire for local supply (the majority - idea of 70%) for 2050 therefore implies a major effort to promote local processing workshops, short circuits, local and organic supply in collective catering and food shops.

There is very little mention of water reservoirs in this vision, although this is a much-discussed subject in the region at present. This choice represents a departure from the historical guidelines centred on the capacity to retain and mobilise water resources in the face of increased needs due to drought. The vision emphasises diversification, the need for equipment in water-saving irrigation technologies, prioritised irrigation based on criteria to be redefined, new productions adapted to climate change (evolution of fruit varieties, grape varieties, ppam, legumes, etc.) - with food processed and coherent with these productions - and the generalisation of alternative methods to irrigation, notably through agroforestry; and finally, the development of a circular economy.

Of course, there is nothing revolutionary about these ideas, which are in the air at the moment, and many initiatives exist in the region (networks for exchanging practices, grazing in the undergrowth, grazing of vines, training in agroforestry, integrated biological control, producers' shops, consumers' cooperatives, food gardens, etc.), but it is a challenge to put them into practice and to generalise them in the region. Moreover, this vision implies, above all, numerous transformations in terms of mediation and governance: significant territorial and inter-territorial coordination, and therefore an unavoidable "meta-project" for the three inter-municipalities and the Biovallée association.

Following the writing of this vision, essential projects have been identified in order to support the development of the territory towards this vision:

- Water management programme in agriculture
- Carbon sequestration (development of agro-forestry, hedges, soil cover, organic matter, etc.)
- Relocation of agricultural and food products (especially vegetable products)
- Access for all inhabitants to local, quality food
- Support for the maintenance and development of pastoralism conditions that affect us.