

Annual Meeting
CEI Wholesale Markets Foundation
10–14 April 2005

Outcomes summary

1. Report on foundation activities and finances

The Executive Officer presented the report on foundation activities and finances. The budget of the foundation is divided on the CEI grant funds (at the FAO accounts) and foundation internal account (in Poland). The financial statements of the internal account showed a small loss at the end of 2004. The president of the foundation started a discussion on how to balance the incomes and costs without external sponsors. All the members agreed that, as new members join at slow rate, it would be necessary to increase the membership fees. It would make foundation self-sustainable as far as the office maintenance and administration costs are concerned. It would still be necessary to attract additional funds for covering costs of workshops and meetings.

It will be done in two phases. At first the fee will be increased by changing the currency from dollar to euro, at the same time leaving respective amounts at 500 and 1000. This will allow compensating for the losses resulting from decreasing of the dollar exchange rates against polish zloty, which is the currency of the foundation banking accounts. During the next meeting members will discuss on further changes in respect to the membership fees.

2. New members

In the previous year 2004 two new markets joined the foundation. These were Albanian markets: Lushnje and Korce. According to the representatives of the Albanian Agricultural Service Project another two markets that are built in Albania might become members in near future.

Representatives of Bulgarian Union of Producer Markets and a governmental project involved in wholesale markets were present at the meeting. They were very interested in future cooperation with the foundation. They especially consider becoming a member of the foundation as a group.

3. Prospects for the nearest future

Two workshops were planned for the nearest future. The first one to be held in Italy in the beginning of June. It would generally be a study tour of Italian markets in Roma, Naples and Fondi. The second one will be organized in September in Poland and will focus on EU accession experiences.

The idea of creating an Internet newsletter came up. The member declared to send information about changes in their institutions to the foundation office. All the information gathered and edited would be then published quarterly in the form of the newsletter. Some of the members are willing to start again publishing of the prices on the foundation websites. Up to now links to prices on members pages are provided but those are only in local languages. The foundation could start with providing visitors with a glossary of fruit and vegetables on its web page to facilitate understanding of the price lists. In the future an engine could be creating, which would allow members to enter price information directly through the web page and publish it on the foundation website.

4. Study tour, presentations

The Annual Meeting also included a study tour. Participants were able to visit Bucharest Wholesale Market as well as an assembly market located in Cuza-Voda. It is one of six assembly markets belonging to the Bucharest Wholesale Market. It is located in southeastern part of Romania.

Representatives of each institution presented short summaries of its activities. Member markets focused on recent changes in their operations. Representatives of the Institute for Agricultural Economics presented an overview of the changes in agriculture sector and food supply chains in Romania.

Other discussions focused on relations between wholesale markets and supermarket chains, groups of producers, EU accession etc.