Mals / Malles Venosta Referendum

Koen Hertoge
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Mals / Malles Venosta – The village

• Italian village in the Provinz Bozen-Südtirol
• 5113 inhabitants (97% german-speaking // 3% italian-speaking)
• 247,1 km² (second largest village in South-Tyrol – in terms of area // 3,5% of total area)
• 1051m above sea-level
• Located 23km from austrian border / 10km from swiss border
• Main industries: tourism, handcraft, agriculture (both industrial farming and organic farming)
• Located on the largest alluvial fan in the alps (13,5 km²)
Italy / Provinz Bozen-Südtirol
Mals – The windy village / Vinschger Wind

- Constant wind from the north over the «malser haide»
- Makes it impossible to use pesticides
- Without causing drift on the neighbors’ field
Mals / Malles Venosta – The referendum

- WHY did we do a referendum against the use of pesticides in Mals / Malles Venosta
- WHO made the first steps towards the referendum
- CHRONOLOGY / ROUTE TO THE REFERENDUM
- WHAT was the polling question of the referendum
- WHEN did the referendum take place
- LEGAL FRAMEWORK
- CAMPAIGNING
- RESULT of the referendum
WHY

• Guidelines for co-existence of different production methods (orchard, cattle, organic)
• Increase of intensive fruit growing business around Mals / Malles Venosta
• Threat to established organic farmers
• Change of the cultural landscape
• Positive results of sample of hay on agriculture fields
• Ban of pesticides guarantees regional and sustainable development of organic farming, but also other industries in the village
• Health of citizens – mainly children
WHO

• Umweltschutzgruppe Vinschgau / Bioland
  – Research institute apollis carried out a survey in Mals
  – Majority was against intensive fruit-growing industry
  – In favor to ban pesticides in Mals

• Initiative to promote Direct Democracy
  – Adaptation of local rules / statuto del comune to allow referendi with binding results
  – To improve the rights of co-decision

• Promotion Committee
CHRONOLOGY / ROUTE

• 2008 – Installation of watering system Upper valley
• 2010 – Guidelines for co-existence
• 2011 – First samples of hay in Mals
• 2012 – Public opinion survey done by apollis
• 2013
  – Appeal coldiretti rejected by Council of State (Malosco)
  – First proposal (May) DECLINED / Second proposal (August)
  – Acceptance of second proposal (December)
  – Campaigning by various groups
• 2014 – Campaigning + Referendum
Mals – video testimony I
Mals – video testimony II
WHY 2

• Elementary school / Playground in Tartsch
• Sample of hay – 2013
• 9 active substances in relevant amount (e.g. Chlorpyriphos, Imidacloprid, Penconazol, Dithianon, ...)
• Prof. Irene Witte – University of Oldenbourg
• Prof. Hermann Kruse – University of Kiel
• Expressed concern about the kids and teachers affected by drifting pesticides through skin and respiratory tract
The polling question is: “Are you in favor of the implementation of the following amendment to the articles of the Township of Mals? The precautionary principle with the objective to protect public health lays down that all precautions that help prevent hazard to the health of man and animal have to be taken. The township of Mals is specifically aiming to protect the health of its citizens and guests, to maintain the sustainability of nature and waters, as well as making it possible that different forms of economy can coexist in its territory in a fair and respectful way. In conformance with these goals, Mals promotes the use of biodegradable plant protection products within its municipal boundaries. A regulation will be issued that describes the details of this provision. Independently from this provision, the use of toxic and highly toxic, as well as chemical-synthetic substances and herbicide, that are harmful to the health and the environment is prohibited within its municipal boundaries. The municipal authority is responsible for monitoring the implementation and the compliance of the referendum outcome.
WHAT 2

- Precautionary principle
- Protect public health
- Sustainability
- Economy can coexist
- Biodegradable plant protection products
- Ban on Very Toxic (T+), Toxic (T), Harmful (Xn), Irritant (Xi), Very dangerous for Environment (N+), Dangerous for Environment (N)
WHEN

- 22 AUG 2014 – 05 SEP 2014
- Postal mail, personally, 24h/day village hall
- All inhabitant of Mals >16 years
- Before, during and immediately after the referendum various political parties and organisations tried to stop the referendum by stating that it is illegal
LEGAL FRAMEWORK

• EU Directive 2009 / 128 (sustainable use of pesticides)
• Decreto legislativo 2012 / 150 (Italian ratification of EU 2009 / 128)
• Leitlinien Abstandsregelung South-Tyrol (2011)
• South-Tyrol State law 1992 – Mayor is responsible for the health of the citizens
• Italian Constitution – Art. 32 – Health is fundamental right
• Precautionary Principle – «public health vs. Economic health»
CAMPAIGNING

- Various action groups (Hollawint, Adam & Epfl, USGV, PAN-Italia, ...)
- Social media (Facebook, ...)
- Press releases (PAN Italia, USGV, political parties, ...)
- Information events (with guest speakers, experts, ...)
- Public presence
- Banners in the village (approx. 100)
- Information brochure
- Manifest
- Support Letters (PAN Europe / Italia, Biovision, Livelihood)
- Cultural event (Adam & Epfl, ...)
- Support political parties (Verde, M5S)
Gesunde Heimat! Unser Lebensraum FREI!
zur Volksabstimmung
von Pestiziden
HOLLAWINT.COM
Fondazione *Ilse Waldthaler* Stiftung

*Per il coraggio civile e la responsabilità sociale*
The community of Malles in Val Venosta has voted for a future free of pesticides. I do support the outcome of this referendum.

It is a strong signal for other communities to gather up the courage – and to liberate themselves from the dangerous use of pesticides.

The future of our planet depends on its biodiversity, its health and the wellbeing of all of its inhabitants.

Malles has made the first step, and a very important one.

Padua, Oktober 12th 2014, Vandana Shiva
Aber die Chancen, die eine nachhaltige ökologische Landwirtschaft bietet, sind enorm. Und sie werden weiter wachsen mit der Erkenntnis weltweit, dass wir die Menschen auf unserem Planeten nur mit solchen Methoden mit genügend und gesunder Nahrung versorgen können.

In diesem Sinne wünsche ich Ihnen und Ihren Mitkämpferinnen und Mitkämpfern viel Erfolg bei der kommenden Abstimmung!

Freundliche Grüße

Dr. Hans R. Herren
Präsident der Stiftung Biovision
RESULT

• 3.348 voting people (i.e. 69% of all people > 16 years)
• 2.377 in favor of a ban (i.e. 75%)
• 764 against a ban (i.e. 25%)
• 207 invalid votes
Future for Mals / Malles Venosta

- Village council – implementation of referendum (adaptation of «statuto del comune»)
- Official Working group / Steering committee to support the implementation, installed by mayor
- Action groups re-positioning / initiatives
- Further political support – local, regional, national, EU
- Legal support
Our Goals and Expectations

• Create awareness in South-Tyrol, Italy, Europe
• Motivate and support other action groups
• Support farmers to start organic farming in Mals
• Reduce the dependancy of pesticides in agriculture
• Political actions and Lobbying (locally ➔ europe)
Questions and Answers

Thanks for your kind attention