
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN EUROPEAN FOOD POLICY

RESEARCH SUMMARY – BÉLA KUSLITS, SENIOR ECOLOGY OFFICER @ JESC



MOTIVATION



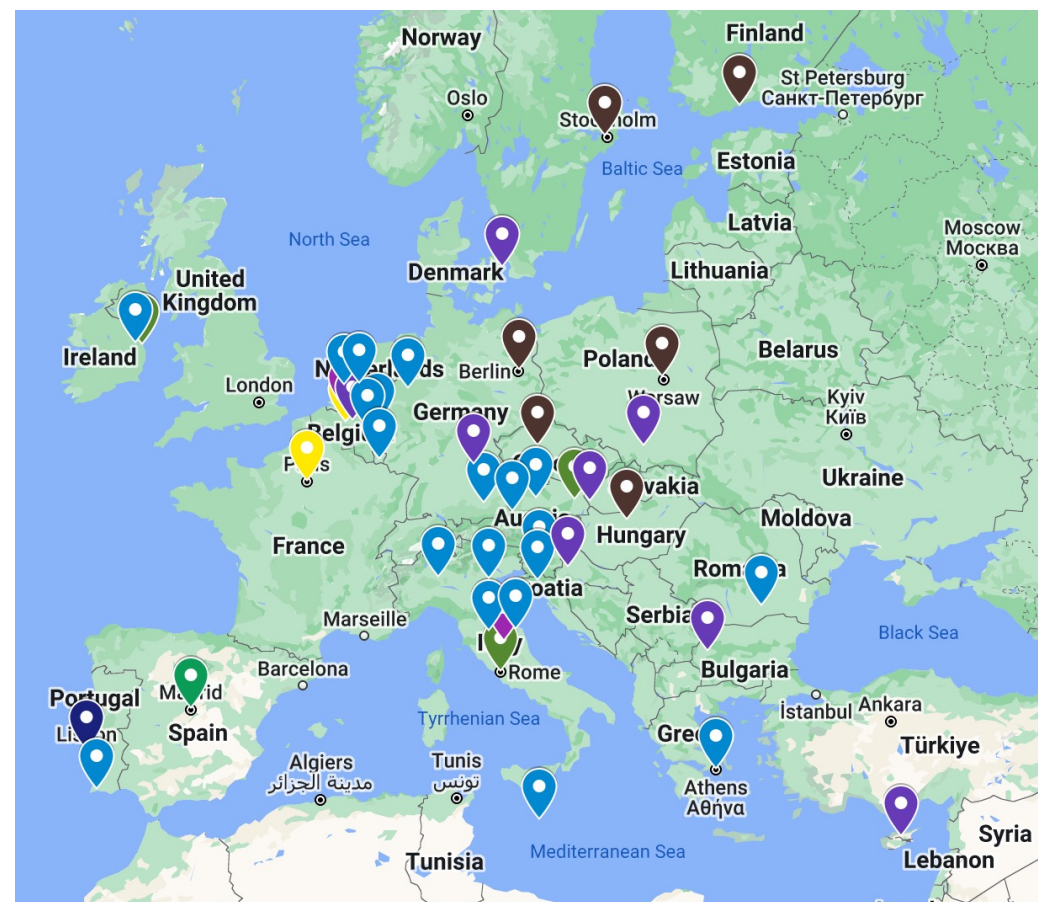
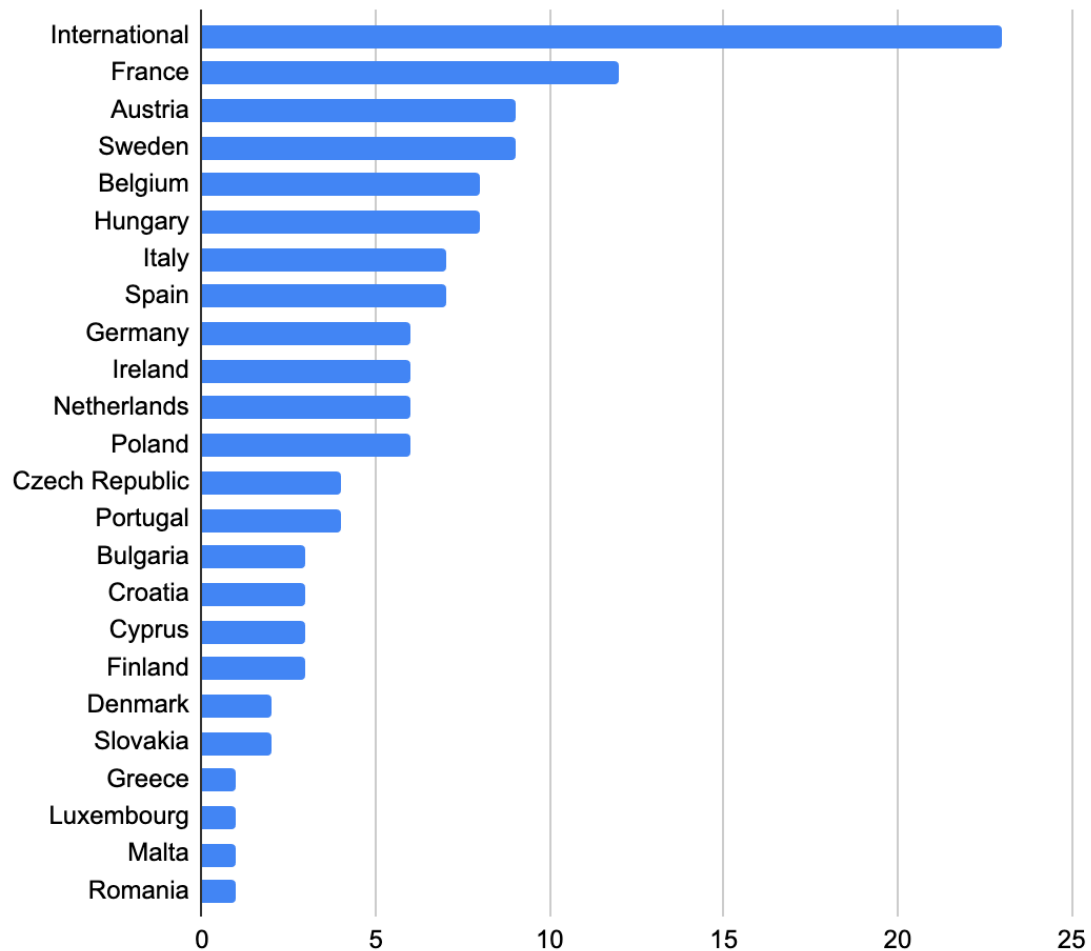
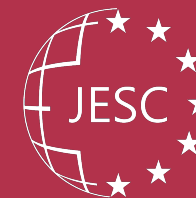
- Food Policy is one of the most important policy areas of the EU
 - Significant budget, significant ecological and social impact, fundamental importance to society and culture
- We believe that *Laudato Si'* would have a clear and relevant message, but FBOs are not strong in this discourse at the moment
 - CAP, NRL etc.
 - With *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis calls us to engage in key political processes
- Our goal is to facilitate FBOs to find a shared voice and contribute to the discourse on EU Food Policy – this study gives us a starting point for this work.

METHODS



- We created a database of 150 FBOs and interviewed all who were available to us: 27 across Europe.
 - Data collection: web search and personal recommendations from our existing network
 - We focused on EU27 countries + some international organizations that have a focus on Europe
 - We included explicitly faith-based organizations from Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist churches – with a large majority being Catholic.
 - We do not know the total relevant population, but lately we found it very hard to add new entries to the database. Missing FBOs probably focus on local action with a light digital footprint.
- We conducted interviews focusing on some key topics
 - Main activities, Audience, Networks, Inspiration, Further Partners, Reflections on Collaboration

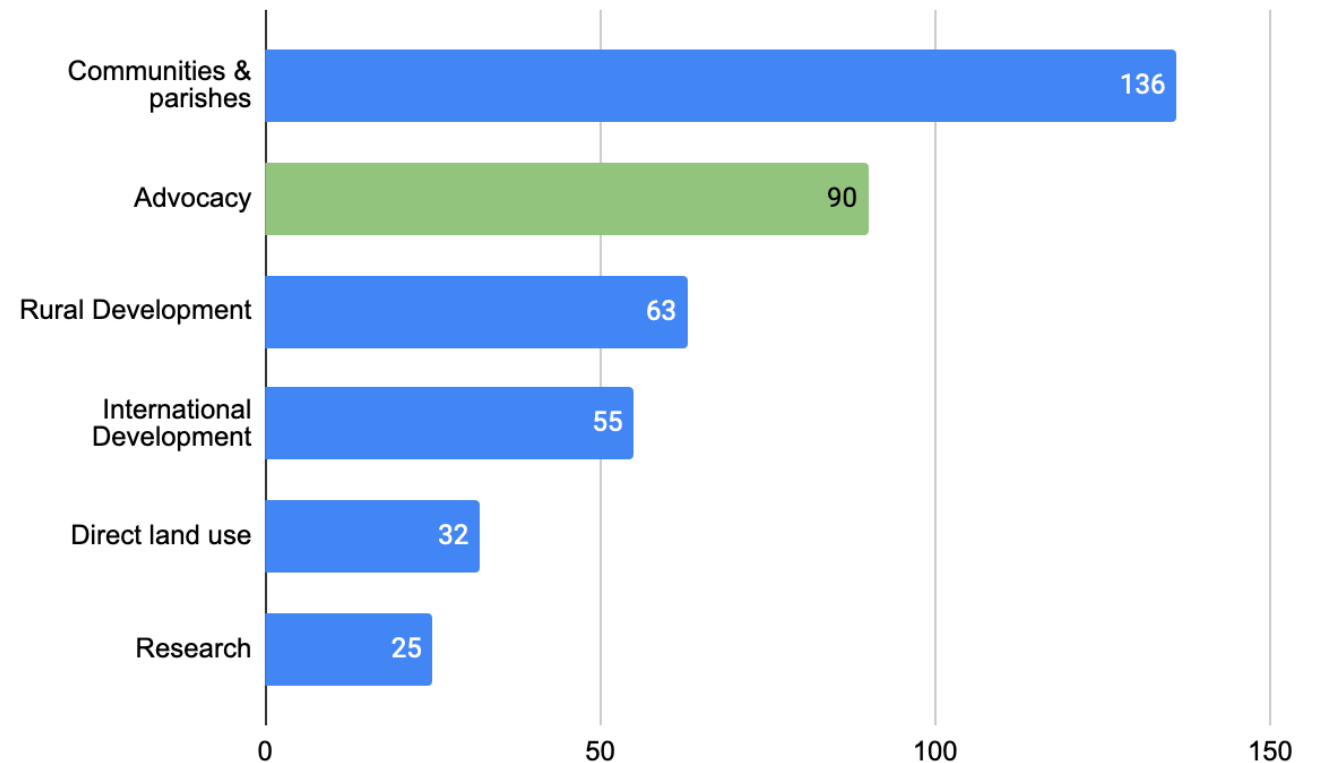
FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE EU



MAIN WORKING AREAS



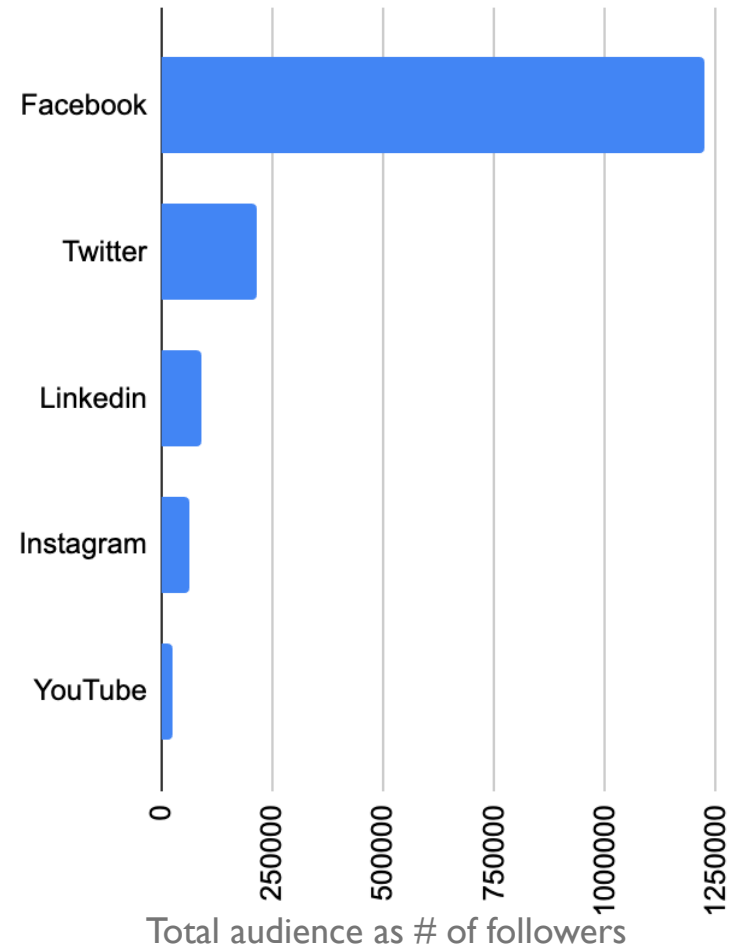
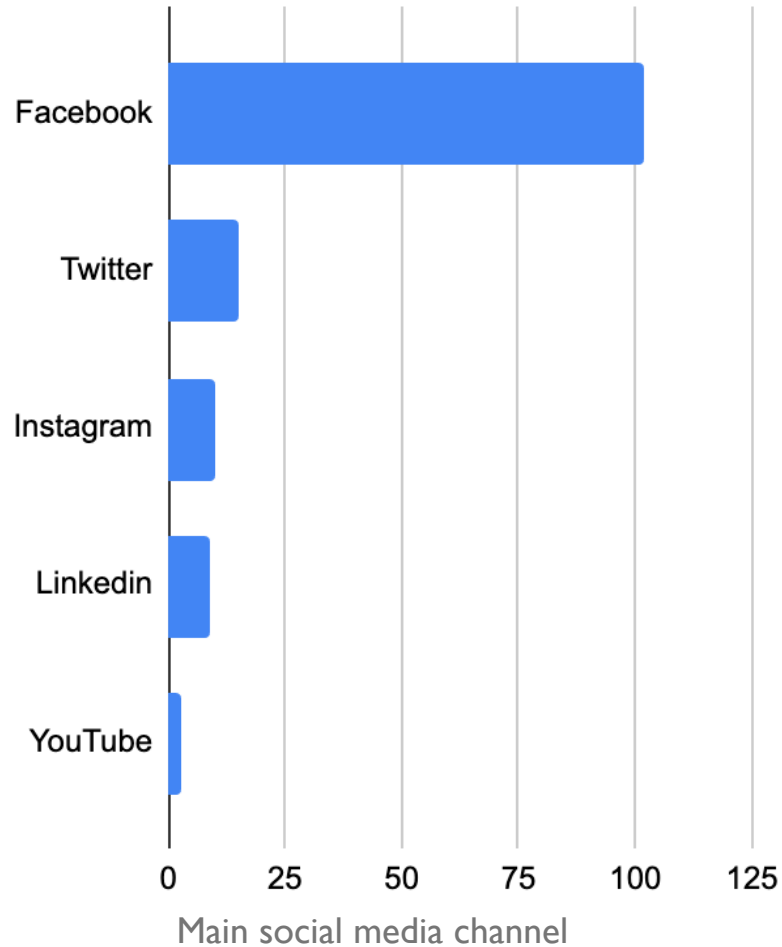
- Most of them work locally in communities.
- Many practice some form of advocacy work, again, sometimes on local, or national level sometimes on UN level (COP).
- A significant fraction focuses on the Global South



Main working areas of FBOs, one organization can have multiple.

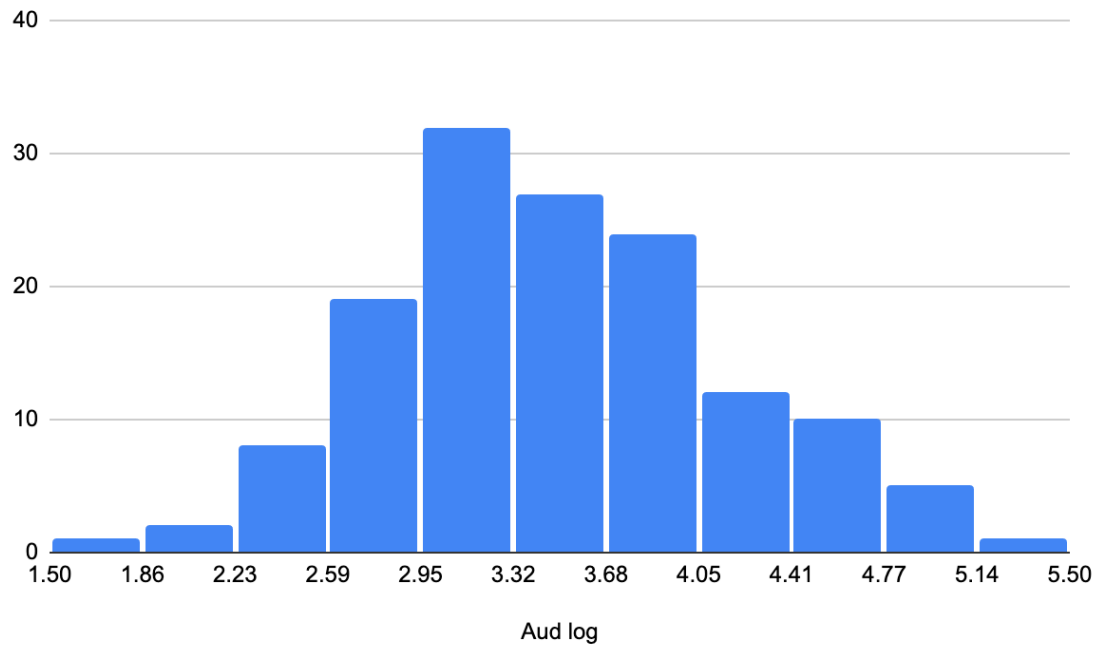


COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS AND AUDIENCES

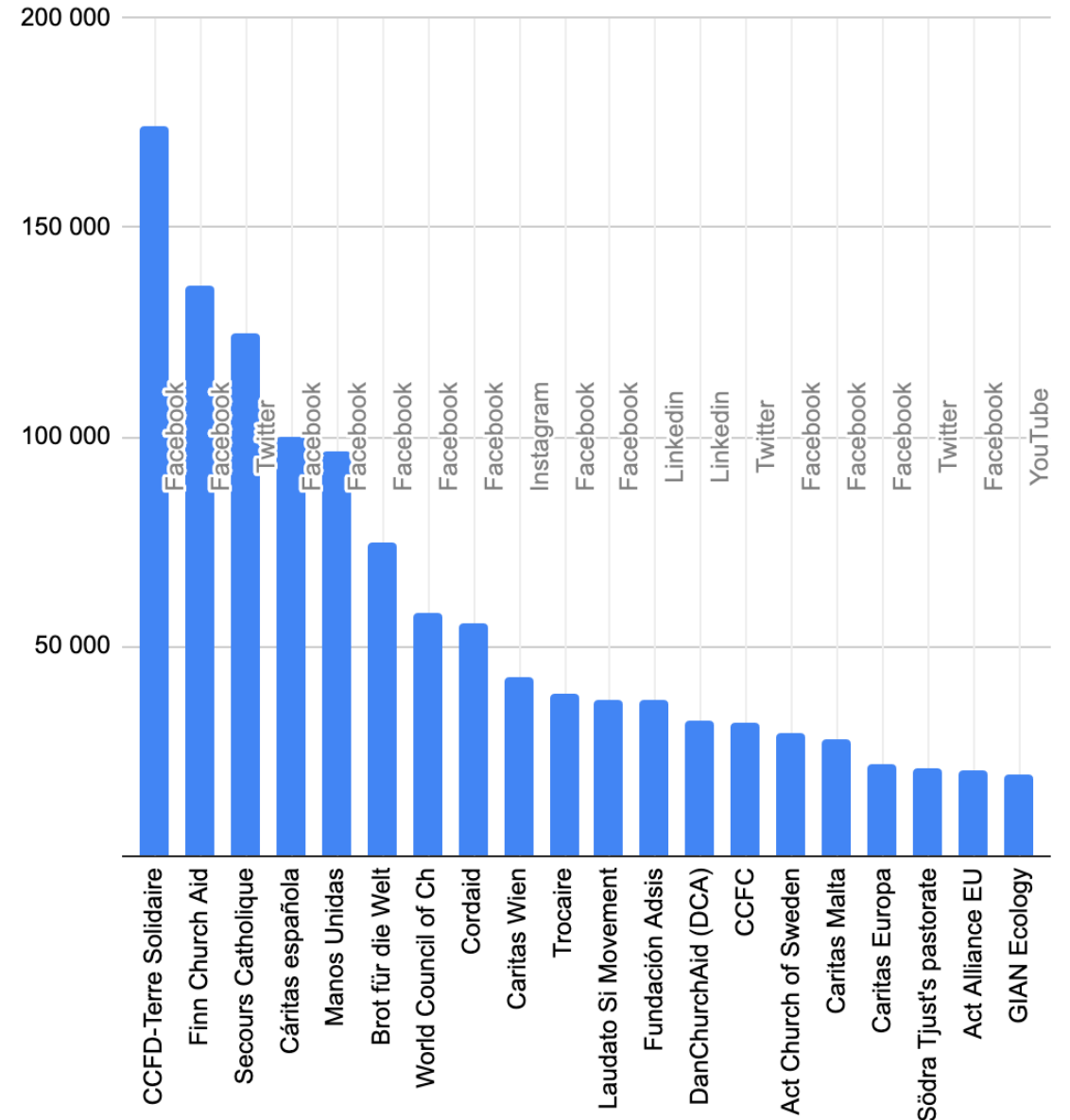


- 1.614.000 followers in total
- Theoretically this number could increase significantly
- About 20% of EU15 population goes regularly to church (Pew Research Center 2017).

TOP COMMUNICATORS



- Top 20 has very high reach
- Most FBOs have around 3-4 thousand followers
- Facebook is by far the strongest channel



WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TO YOU?

- From the interviews: 27 respondents
- Question: please define “sustainable agriculture”.
- Answers were diverse, many gave keywords instead of a full definition. Keywords were homogenized and a word cloud was created. Character size proportional to number of mentions.



WORK AREAS

- In the interviews the 27 respondents gave detailed descriptions of their activities.
- Condensed into keywords, these were the most common focus-areas of the respondents.
- Character size proportional to number of mentions.



CONCLUSIONS



- There is a strong commitment towards a transition to sustainable agriculture.
 - This implies **agricultural changes** – most often based on the principles of agroecology
 - This implies **life-style changes** – most often supply chain and diet related decisions
 - This implies **solidarity** – to the Global South and to the poor (and rural areas) in Europe
- Communication channels offer a good starting capacity but lag behind the strongest actors
- There is serious interest towards the establishment of a Christian Advocacy Network on Food Policy, but many questions remain open.
 - How do we build a shared agenda, what are the unifying and dividing issues?
 - What communications and advocacy options are open to us given all the practical challenges?

OUR DAILY BREAD



- In 2024 JESC will work on the establishment of such a network.
- We will organize online discussions on key topics.
- We will facilitate the partnership building process.
- We will convene an in-person meeting to build trust and work on our shared agenda.
- We will build communications channels and capacity in a participatory process that builds this network according to a consensus of the participants.
- **You are all invited to join this process!**





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

BELA.KUSLITS@JESC.EU