ABSTRACT

Cultivable land is a limited resource and agriculture contributes to some of the most serious environmental problems facing the planet like, global warming, eutrophication and loss of biodiversity. The specialized, industrial agriculture with monoculture and extensive input of external energy, commercial fertilizer, and chemical pesticides are all essentially unsustainable. An adaptation to other methods of production is necessary to preserve the environment for future generations. The aim of this study is to describe the factors that distinguish sustainable from unsustainable agriculture. The results will be used to examine if and how the European Union (EU) works in order to create a more sustainable agricultural industry and to analyze the preconditions for such development. We have used a method based on abduction and we have a hermeneutic and ecological economic approach. The empirical survey is of a qualitative nature and is based on four interviews and literature studies. The results of this study shows that a sustainable agriculture should be build on ecological premises, which is easier to achieve in small-scale, functional, integrated and cycle-based farming. Modern farming’s dependence of fossil fuel and pesticides and the excess use of land must cease. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to decrease our consumption of meat products. EU’s agricultural policy is based on a worldview that relies on production optimization and is growth-oriented and these approaches must be changed. Certain positive changes have occurred within EU, but the decision-making process is slow and bureaucratic. Financially strong lobbyists have too much influence and power, compared to the rest of society. This makes it difficult to work for change and attain actual sustainability.