



**Pesticide
Action
Network
Italia**

FACT SHEET

MALS IN VINSCHGAU / MALLES VENOSTA REFERENDUM

VILLAGE

Italian village, located in the Province of Bolzano

Inhabitants : 5.113 (status 2013) // 97% german-speaking, 3% italian-speaking

247.1 km (second largest village in South-Tyrol)

1051m above sea-level

Located 23km from Austrian border, 10km from Swiss boarder

Main industries : Tourism, Service industry, handcraft, and agriculture

REFERENDUM

WHAT

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 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.

WHEN

The referendum took place between 22 AUG – 05 SEP 2014.

The final result was announced on the 05 SEP 2014 (at around 19.00)

Voting people : 3348 (i.e. 69% of the population above 16years)

Voters in favour of the ban : 2377 (i.e. 75%) / Voters against : 764 (i.e. 25%) / Others (invalid) : 207

Before, during, and immediately after the referendum, various political forces (mainly the Südtiroler Volkspartei) and organisations (Bauernbund – Farmers' Association, Bauerliche Zukunft Mals, Lawyers, and some private persons) tried to stop the referendum by stating that the referendum is illegal. Court cases are expected on various levels.

WHO

In 2012, the Umweltschutzgruppe Vinschgau / Environmental Group of Vinschgau commissioned a research institut to carry out a survey in Mals. The result showed that the majority of the population was against the intensive fruit-growing industry, and in favor of prohibiting the use of dangerous

pesticides. Following the results of the survey, a promotion committee in charge of a referendum was created.

In parallel, the representatives of the initiative to promote DirectDemocracy were committed to improve the rights of co-decision in Mals, that resulted in a legally binding referendum.

In August 2013, the request for a binding referendum was posted, and in December 2013, it was approved by the village commission.

WHY

For years, the Umweltschutzgruppe Vinschgau / Environmental Group of the Vinschgau Valley has been watching with concern the increase of the intensive fruit growing business in the upper valley, which, as a consequence, is threatening organic farms, farmers of agriculture and livestock, and also changing the cultural landscape of the region (and village of Mals) in a negative way.

The Umweltschutzgruppe Vinschgau / Environmental Group of Vinschgau has commissioned the analysis of a sample taken from local hay, which revealed residues of 9 active substances in relevant amounts, among them dithiocarbamate, dithianon, chlorpyrifos, fluazinam, imidacloprid and penconazol.

The sample was taken from the immediate surroundings of the elementary school in Tartsch. The analytic results were presented to toxicologists Prof. Irene Witte of the University of Oldenburg and Prof. Hermann Kruse of the University of Kiel for their evaluation. Based on the results, Prof. Kruse was concerned about students and teachers being affected by the drifting pesticides through skin and respiratory tract.

Furthermore, a ban of chemical-synthetic pesticides could also guarantee a regional and sustainable development of other industries, such as tourism industry. Mals will also become a more attractive place for their own citizens.

HOW

Various action and initiative groups were involved in the direct and indirect campaigning for the referendum :

- Official promotion committee – press releases
- Umweltschutzgruppe Vinschgau – press releases, sample analysis, various events
- Hollawint – press releases, banners, information material, personal consultations, networking between various groups, events organisation and support, web site (www.hollawint.com)
- Bioverbände (organic organisations) – press release, information and consultation
- PAN-Italia – press releases, expert opinions
- Adam&Epfl – supportive activities
- Heimatpflegeverband – press releases
- Kornkammer – implementation of alternative agriculture