

## LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE EU: GREEN, PRIVATE AND PROFITABLE?

A unique seminar took place at the European Parliament in Brussels on Tuesday March 18 on the topic of **land management in the EU** – including lessons from the past, concerns for the present and hopes and ambitions about the future.

A number of MEPS held a constructive and fruitful debate together with hunters, farmers, private landowners and other conservationists, sharing insights and knowledge in order to identify private land management practices that generate both economic revenue and ecological benefits, putting the future of European rural areas squarely into the hands of landowners and managers. Co-chaired by MEPs **Véronique MATHIEU-HOUILLO**n and **Robert STURDY**, the conference heard speakers from **DG ENV**, the **Country Land and Business Association (CLA)** and the **Domaine de Chambord**, whose combined contributions were discussed by representatives from the **European Landowners Organization (ELO)**, **FACE** and other conference attendees.

In her welcoming statement, the President of the Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity, Countryside activities, and Forests, **Véronique MATHIEU-HOUILLO**n pointed out that “we must be careful not to create overly complex regulation, which would impede the business of land managers, farmers, foresters and hunters, who are the first concerned by natural resources preservation.”

In the words of **Robert STURDY**, MEP, co-chair of the meeting, “Good land management is essential for maintaining biodiversity and for ensuring the security of the land for future generations. Hunters and farmers are often the first people to notice any kind of problem with the environment and authorities should work with them to ensure sustainable land management in the future.”

**Jacques DELSALLE**, Policy Officer for Directorate General of Environment of the European Commission, stated that “Land, a finite resource, is subject to competing pressures from urbanisation, agriculture and the provision of ecosystem services. Degradation of EU and third country land – through the land resource embedded in imported products – is high, and shows no sign of stopping. To respond to the political mandates of the 2011 Road Map for a Resource-Efficient Europe, the 2012 Rio+20 conference and the 2013 7th Environment Action Programme, the European Commission is working on a communication on “Land as a resource” expected for 2015: its aim is to raise awareness about the value of land as a resource for crucial ecosystem services, to evaluate the effectiveness of current policy instruments at National, EU and global levels, and to provide pointers for further action at EU level for a more sustainable management of land as a resource. ”

“As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Europe’s forests are more important than ever before”, said **MIKE SEVILLE**, advisor from CLA. “We realise the importance of making the best use of our renewable resources, whilst at the same time protecting our natural capital as Europe’s forests have an important part to play. Many of our important Natura 2000 Forests are in unfavourable condition; for many, with a history of productive management, the increasing societal demand for timber and biomass offers the potential to reverse their decline; whilst for the more natural forests it may pose a threat, as the challenge will be how to unlock their productive potential without damaging their equally important ecological value.”

“The Domaine de Chambord is a living example of the fine balance between human activities and biodiversity”, said **Jean d’HAUSSONVILLE** from the Domaine de Chambord. “While we pride ourselves on offering public access to an exceptional natural reserve, we do everything we can to keep disturbances to a minimum. What may at first seem like a paradox is actually a recipe for success: it shows that sensible land management – particularly reasoned hunting activities – can truly contribute to maintaining and indeed improving ecosystems.”

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\***

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Organisers:



ELO (European Landowners Organization) is a unique federation of 67 national associations across the EU27 which represents the interests of landowners, rural managers and entrepreneurs at the European level. ELO defends and promotes a dynamic, prosperous and sustainable countryside based on high environmental standards, economic viability and social fabric. [www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)

For further information, interviews, quotes, photos, please contact:

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