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Rural Development revisited in Cork

Phil HOGAN,

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development



Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

Contents

- 3** Rural Development revisited in Cork

- 6** Sustainable futures for Europe's heritage in cultural landscapes:
Applying a landscape approach to land-use science and policy

- 8** Milestone reached: Wildlife Estates Label exceeds 1 million hectares mark

- 9** Keep Calm and Let Africa Speak!

- 10** Wild flowering landscapes & bee-friendly farm machinery announced as winners of this year's European Bee Award

- 12** Education, Training & Innovation European Historic Houses annual event

- 14** Fish, Mushrooms, and Forestry: YFCS General Assembly Vienna 2016

- 15** Due to French Overprotection, Chinese Are Buying Our Farmland

Book
Semences hors-la-loi.
La biodiversité confisquée.

EU: You cannot stop terrorism by restricting legal gun ownership. You can still sign the online petition

- 16** Diary dates

Now that the European Union has formally committed itself to keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, it is time for us to consider how we can best achieve this monumental task. While we agree that all sectors of our different economies and societies must contribute, it is clear that the European countryside has a major role to play, both as a source of carbon emissions, but more importantly as the major carbon offset asset Europe has to offer.

In order to unlock all this potential, it is vital that Europe engages much more with the private sector in order to stimulate conservation actions by all stakeholders. It has never been the case that only the NGO community can manage land properly. Private actors, such as those who have the Wildlife Estate label, show that the private sector is more than competitive, especially as they often do not have the same access to state funding.

To involve the private sector more means that Europe and national governments must seek a better understanding of their motivations and drivers, not lock them out for the sake of an outdated orthodoxy that believes only in the public cause and the public purse. At the 11th plenary session of our Wildlife Estates label in Denmark, we have once again seen the extraordinary potential of the private contribution. All we need now is the right set of policy solutions in order to unlock it.





A. BUCKWELL, C. PIRZIO-BIROLI, F. FISCHLER, T. de L'ESCAILLE and C. BÜREN at the high level workshops

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Rural Development revisited in Cork

In November 1995 the European Commission decided to host a conference on Rural Development in the Irish city of Cork. This turned out to be an influential event in the development of the CAP. All the main stakeholders with an interest in the European countryside participated and together produced a concise two-page Cork Declaration called "A living countryside". The Agriculture Commissioner of the day, Franz FISCHLER, stayed in the background at that event, but he carried forward the principal idea in the declaration that sustainable development in Europe's rural areas should rise in the EU's priorities. The result was that in his first major reform of the CAP, Agenda 2000, the two-Pillar CAP was born. This galvanised the principle that rural development was a Pillar of the CAP rather than a complicated accompaniment to the primary support regime.

Allan BUCKWELL and David BALDOCK
Institute for European Environmental Policy

In subsequent reforms the second Pillar was expanded in resources and measures were based on the principles of co-financed, programmed, multi-annual measures regionally tailored by the Member States to the needs of their rural regions. These were precisely the principles spelled out in the 10-point declaration of Cork I.

However, in more recent years rural development has not enjoyed so much of the European limelight. Ever since the 2007/8 commodity price spikes attention, not unnaturally, has tended to focus on agricultural production, its productivity and capability of providing for a growing and enriching population. In the 2013 reform the slow evolution of the CAP towards greater resources for Rural Development was halted. Some actions previously considered better suited to Rural Development were switched to Pillar 1 (for example greening, help for areas of natural constraints and for young farmers), and five Member States choose to switch substantial pillar 2 funds back to Pillar 1 direct supports shrinking their Rural Development programmes.

Meanwhile other preoccupations, such as migration, sluggish economic progress, and now Brexit have occupied the European centre stage. Within the rural policy world it has been Pillar 1 of the CAP, the crisis in dairy and other markets, safety nets, greening, simplification and concern about the budget that have absorbed the air time and the attention of ministers.

So there were risks in gathering 300 stakeholders and experts again in Cork this September, twenty years later, for a second Cork Rural Development conference. The conference was opened by Commissioner HOGAN who of course was on home territory, together with COM AGRI Chairman Czesław Adam SIEKIERSKI, and the President of the Agriculture Council Gabriela MATEČNÁ, the Slovak Minister of Agriculture and Rural development. None were in a position to make new announcements about imminent or desired policy developments. This meant that the ideas and the impetus had to come from the participants and a well organised facilitation team.

The action took place in four parallel workshops dealing with the themes:

- Jobs, Growth and Investment in the agri-food supply chain and the wider rural economy
- Rural environment, climate and water
- Targeting innovation to farmers' needs
- Rural viability and vitality

These workshops occupied the bulk of the conference. The participants, who came from all areas of the rural economy, and all parts of the EU, worked together constructively. The general framework was first to identify the potential opportunities under each of the four themes. Second, the work groups considered the driving forces acting on these themes and any obstacles to their development. In the third and final sessions of the workshops

the groups then produced and organised ideas about the policy developments necessary to realise the full potential of Europe's rural areas. There was a continual feedback between the groups and a drafting team led by Heino von MEYER (OECD) who gradually worked up a new Cork declaration distilling the output of the groups.

The five page declaration "A Better Life in Rural Areas" contained these ten points:

- 1 Promoting Rural Prosperity
- 2 Strengthening Rural Value Chains
- 3 Investing in Rural Viability and Vitality
- 4 Preserving the Rural Environment and Simplification
- 5 Managing Natural Resources
- 6 Encouraging Climate Action
- 7 Boosting Knowledge and Innovation
- 8 Enhancing Rural Governance
- 9 Advancing Policy Delivery
- 10 Improving Performance and Accountability

This unusually bottom-up and spontaneous approach was appreciated by most of the delegates, especially as there was a concerted effort to harvest the ideas on the various tables, and underlining synergies rather than conflicts. Lying behind the Declaration there was a shared sense that rural policy needed new vigour and a refreshed sense of direction. Otherwise there was a danger of it being relegated to a lower tier of EU priorities and the budget could decline with it, either in the course of the next MFF review or sub-



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sequently. In addition, the logic of Cork 1 was ready to be taken further. Many delegates seemed to agree with Franz FISCHLER who, in his remarks in the closing session, argued that rural policy should be the main driver going forward, implicitly incorporating Pillar 1 agricultural support as a single element of a wider and more strategic frame.

The Declaration itself asserts the case for adopting the second Pillar approach for the whole of the CAP. “The architecture of the CAP must be based on a common strategic and programming framework that provides for targeting all interventions to well-defined economic, social and environmental objectives” (from Point 8 on governance).

There was a confident tone in language about improved performance, smart administration rather than mere simplification, addressing the climate and environmental agenda with more vigour, digitisation and the need for policies to be accountable and fit for purpose. Rural societies are not inherently backward and provide much more for society than is generally recognised. While there were certainly calls for more and better focussed support this was accompanied by demands for rural identity to be celebrated with greater pride and stakeholders to work together more effectively to secure their place in any re consideration of European priorities.

At the same time it is clear that the potential of rural policies is not always realised and more value could be added; for example through the wider application of performance-related schemes. In several workshops it was clear that trust had been lost in parts of the policy and funding chains. Administrations have become increasingly concerned about the risk of penalties and disallowance where relatively minor infringements have occurred and farmers fear that the details of control could cramp their options in unnecessary ways and expose them to penalties as well. Risk-averse policies can take over in these conditions, conflicting directly with the underlying objectives which often require risks to be taken. Reversing this trend will not be straightforward but the stage is set for more effort to do so. The same is true of work towards a green-

er rural economy, the better integration of migrants and wider social inclusion as well as shorter supply chains.

Solutions were diverse rather than simplistic. In his closing remarks, Commissioner HOGAN backed the call for the rural proofing of all EU policies. More information, training, engagement and facilitation, alongside greater awareness amongst consumers and others in value chains were approaches that cropped up in nearly every workshop. Administrations are often reluctant to give these softer measures much priority, not least because of the challenge of measuring results. However, the Cork discussions indicate that it would be most helpful if this culture could be changed. Land managers and small businesses are facing a transition to a different world with limited resources to appreciate all the consequences, they therefore need support and direction, quite apart from financial assistance.

How far this burst of energy and call for new directions is followed through in practice remains to be seen. The Commissioner seemed satisfied that the event was thoroughly worthwhile. We await with interest to see if he directs this mainstreaming of Rural Development into the debates surrounding the review of the CAP and its future which will no doubt be part of the post-2020 multiannual Financial Framework debates during the coming 12 months.



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T. de l'ESCAILLE, N. PAUWELS, S. J. SCHERR, M. SCHEELE, A. GRADY

Sustainable futures for Europe's heritage in cultural landscapes: Applying a landscape approach to land-use science and policy

The adoption of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) has attracted attention from the sciences, policy makers and the general public but it has not yet managed to effect the formulation of common solutions to the main challenges facing European society today. The HERCULES FP7 project has the importance of applying a holistic, multi-scaled and interdisciplinary approach to effective research and understanding of rural landscapes in Europe.

Julianna NAGY - Project Coordinator, ELO



6

The next step would be to apply a 'landscape approach' to support their long term sustainability, i.e. respecting and enabling their inherent dynamics, cultural specificities and multi-agency nature. Having a landscape approach at the centre of policy and governance models can be a more effective way of accommodating and managing the competition and interdependencies for natural resources, cultural heritage values and ecosystem services among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and among land users. Governance and policy need to take into account the socio-economic factors at work in the landscape as well as the biophysical, in addition to the culture(s) of the people living and working within it.

On the 4th of October stakeholders gathered together on the occasion of the project's final conference that comprised of two panel discussions; first on landscape science and understanding the dynamics of cultural landscapes in Europe, addressed by Guy ROBINSON, Editor of the journal *Land Use Policy*. The second panel

reviewed how can we apply a landscape approach to land use policies; this session was headlined by Sara J. SCHERR, President and CEO of EcoAgriculture Partners.

Understanding our surroundings to make better decisions

Since 2000 landscape science has been used increasingly to refer to research that seeks to understand the relationship between people and their environment, with a focus on land use change and data pertaining to land resources at the landscape scale. It links natural sciences in the form of landscape ecology, human sciences through geography and human ecology, and humanistic and symbolic approaches to landscape. It seeks to understand relevant structures, processes and their states and drivers primarily in terms of anthropogenic uses of landscapes.

When the idea for the HERCULES project came up in 2012, there was a lot of ambiguity to what cultural landscapes are. Despite the fact that this concept was mainly linked to *heritage, society and environ-*

ment, the HERCULES team had a slightly different understanding of the concept. They wished to link cultural landscapes with an evolving and changing perception of space and its management. Thus at the heart of the project's interest were the questions of how, why and how fast cultural landscapes change(d). In addition, partners were interested in reviewing more practical initiatives related to cultural landscape management.

As a result, HERCULES researchers synthesised existing knowledge on drivers, patterns and outcomes of persistence and change in Europe's cultural landscapes and performed targeted case studies to develop in-depth insights on dynamics and values of cultural landscapes. They also created a typology of cultural landscapes and scaled-up case study insights using observations and landscape modelling; developed visions for re-coupling social and ecological components in cultural landscapes and translated them into policy recommendations.

Studying landscape and its history is not

about getting nostalgic about the good old times. It requires having a clear notion of what a landscape actually is: Is a landscape what we see on topographical maps and on aerial photographs? Or do we have to be ground-based, to see the landscape and understand how local people and tourists construct a landscape for themselves? As part of the project, partners combined both perspectives by complementing a classic map-based Land Use/Land Cover analysis with oral history interviews on landscapes. The aim was to find out how landscapes have changed and what driving forces were responsible for the changes observed. They did this in six study landscapes which have evolved significantly in the last two centuries, using the same procedures for the map analyses and the oral history interviews in all locations in order to gain a broader understanding.

In a separate activity they went beyond asking people how and why landscapes changed by getting at the perception of "landscape values", in order to increase the project's understanding of the interactions between people and the landscape. Sometimes these values are deeply rooted in the local history and can be better understood when looking into the past (e.g. existential values, spiritual meanings, and social fulfillment); but values are also dynamic and change with society.

Building coalitions to advance policy

Currently, many landscapes are facing many challenges across multiple dimensions: agricultural production, biodiversity, ecosystems, climate change adaptation/mitigation, city-region development, water, employment, inclusive economic transformation, etc. must all find a place in and extract from a shared natural resource base. Current policies are not well-suited to the challenges as they are fragmented, siloed, but the new framework of the SDGs (and converging directions from CBD, CFS, CCD, UNFCCC, Habitat III, inclusive green economy) are energising policy innovation towards integrations.

The landscape approach offers a way to operationalise the cross-goal integration that forms the basis of the SDGs. However, policies need to change to support these efforts on the ground. As well as long-term collaboration among different groups of stakeholders are needed to realise multiple objectives from the landscape.

Farmers, land owners and foresters (and many other actors) have shaped landscapes for many years, if not centuries. They are also the stewards who will carry landscapes into the future. However, they have a different view of both the landscape and policy approaches that seek to guide it – they are the ones who will have to live with the decisions, and who are responsible for maintaining and renewing the landscape. A landscape approach to policy should therefore first and foremost be about stakeholder engagement; in order to make successful policy those in charge will need the positive attitude of those impacted by their decisions.

However, we need to be careful that landscape-centred policies either replace or lighten current regulations, and do not form an 'extra layer'; many land managers are already struggling to keep up with many forms of regulation and administration. Second, landscapes are about mutual respect. Land managers should have respect for their property and take care of the economic and environmental values. However, those who visit the countryside should also respect private properties. Third, if we are to improve landscapes, those who manage the landscape should benefit just as much as those who come to visit it.

A landscape approach, especially if we combine land use with heritage, preservation and other aspects, demands that we need to re-examine the possibility of payment to land managers for the provision of public goods.

The ELO is proud to be a partner of the HERCULES project and look forward to further contribute to the discussion on the future of European landscapes and socio-economic challenges.

Distinguished speakers of the conference were (in order of appearance) Tobias PLIENINGER (HERCULES Project Coordinator), Birgit de BOISSEZON (Head of Unit, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission), Guy ROBINSON (Editor of the journal Land Use Policy), Matthias BÜRGI (Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research), Peter VERBURG (VU University Amsterdam), Thanasis KIZOS (University of the Aegean), Sara J. SCHERR (President and CEO, EcoAgriculture Partners), Martin SCHEELE (Head of Unit, Consistency of rural development, DG Agricultural and Rural Development, European Commission), Natalie PAUWELS (Policy Assistant to the Director-General of DG Environment, European Commission), Anne GRADY (Cultural Diversity and Innovation, DG Education and Culture, European Commission), Thierry de l'ESCAILLE (Secretary General, European Landowners' Organization). Session moderators were Graham FAIRCLOUGH (Landscape Research Group) and Claudia BIELING (University of Hohenheim).

More information on the project is available on the project's website: www.hercules-landscapes.eu



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Michal PERNICA (Director Colloredo-Mannsfield spol. s r.o.), Jens RISOMS (CEO of Gissfeldt Kloster), Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS (COO WE Label), Lelio COLLOREDO-MANNSFELD (Colloredo-Mannsfield spol. s r.o.), Carlos OTERO MUERZA (Chairmen of WE Scientific Committee), Gustav HAGEMANN (Ruuthsbo Gods), Thierry de l'ESCAILLE (Secretary General of ELO)

Milestone reached: Wildlife Estates Label exceeds 1 million hectares mark

In Denmark 26 further Estates joined the Wildlife Estates – network, increasing the total number of estates under the label to 231 covering a total area of 1.135.000 hectares.



Florian HOFBAUER, ELO

The Wildlife Estates Label has been developed as a means to recognize and acknowledge the exemplary management of landowners and managers of territories in Europe and make them more visible to society as strong guardians of nature. This initiative is based on a voluntary approach in order to highlight the key role of land managers in protecting biodiversity. It also makes the link between biodiversity and sustainable hunting to facilitate a better communication between land managers, hunters and local authorities. The project is managed by 19 national delegations who are responsible for spreading the initiative at the country level.

On the 27th – 29th September international experts for wildlife management and the national delegations gathered in Køge, Denmark for the 11th Plenary Session of the WE Label Steering Committee to discuss the progress of the project, exchange experiences and validate the new WE Estates in various countries. The meeting was chaired by Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS, COO for the WE project.

The ELO and Wildlife Estates Steering Committee awarded the WE label to the estates Gissfeldt Kloster (DK), Colloredo-Mannsfield (CZ), Skabersjö (SE) and Ruuthsbo Gods (SE) for their extraordinary efforts to promote biodiversity and nature conservation.

The seminar “Managing Europe’s wildlife and its natural environment” provided

fruitful discussions between various stakeholders of wildlife and nature conservation management. Humberto DELGADO ROSA, Director Natural Capital of DG Environment, emphasized the role of private land managers for nature conservation. He also stated that “hunters are managers of nature and deserve a full recognition of their role for nature”. Andras KROLOPP, Senior Policy Advisor of The Nature Conservancy, presented the US model of conservation easement which offers tax reliefs for landowners who accept restrictions of conservation on their land and allows them to sell the accrued loss of value of their land to NGOs as The Nature Conservancy. He stated that “this model could also have some potential in Europe”. Jurgen TACK, ELO Scientific Director & Landelijk Vlaanderen reported of the scientific evidence that hunting con-



Ledreborg Estate

tributes to conservation through balancing the peaks and slumps of population from prey and predators. He stated that “if the population keeps on growing, finally only hunting is then able to bring the population back to the carrying capacity”.

Participants in the Plenary Session had the chance to visit the Ledreborg and Gissselfeld estates to see their wildlife- and landscape management. Ledreborg is an estate of 1.600 hectares in the centre of Sealand’s only National Park. It was listed under a national landscape preservation

order in the 1970’s. The agriculture production is arable, crops of wheat, barley, rye and oats as well as grass seed production. Ledreborg also has a long tradition as a sporting estate where game and wildlife management is an essential part of the estate’s nature conservation, with both driven and rough game bird shooting as well as roe deer hunting.

The Gissselfeld Estate consists of 4.000 hectares distributed between forest, agriculture, meadows, lakes, and wetlands. Game and nature have optimal conditions

thanks to artificially created biotopes, hedgerows and game crops. Grass strips and beetle banks have been cultivated to extend habitats for pollinators. The agricultural business is run in harmony with the further activities of the estate, such as renting of houses, fishing, hunting, tourism, and events.

For more information please visit the site: www.wildlife-estates.eu or contact us by email: wildlife@elo.org

Keep Calm and Let Africa Speak!



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was born out of a recognition that the conservation of wildlife is of global

importance and that international cooperation is required to protect certain species that are impacted by trade. Over 180 countries have ratified CITES which establishes the international legal framework to prevent the trade of endangered species and regulate the trade in others.

The 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP), the decision making body of CITES, took place in South Africa from September 24 to October 5 this year, where members voted on important resolutions that have significant implications for both the trade in wildlife and the communities that may or may not be benefiting from their natural resources. If sustainable hunting and other forms of consumptive use are eliminated and local people do not benefit from the wildlife sharing their neighborhood, the natural assets we are bound to protect will no longer have support and protection from the locals. The consequence of banning sustainable consumptive use, which

would largely be the result of purely emotional reasons, would cause a massive and devastating loss of wildlife habitat.

The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation supported its members in Africa by facilitating a press conference on Saturday, September 24 at 17:00 at the CITES CoP17. The governments of Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique expressed their frustrations and concerns over the imposition of rules and guidelines, developed without their input, which would adversely affect wildlife conservation and employment creation in their respective home countries by foreign governments. The African Range States finally had a say on the future of their wildlife! The session can be watched on the CIC Facebook page.

CIC Team
www.cic-wildlife.org



Wild flowering landscapes & bee-friendly farm machinery announced as winners of this year's European Bee Award

Landscape scale initiative "B-lines" and the "Double Knife system" mowing technology stand out among the pool of 27 contestants from 17 European countries

Beatriz ARRIBAS, CEMA, Ana CANOMANUEL, ELO



Now in its third edition, the prestigious European Bee Award organised by ELO and CEMA, awards innovative projects in two different categories: 'land manager practices' helping to protect pollinators' habitat in the farmed environment and 'innovative & technological solutions', aiming at reducing the impact of farming activities on pollinators' populations.

The projects "B-lines – connecting landscape for pollinators" from the UK has won the land management practices category, while the "Double Knife system with automatic grinding machine" from Germany won the award for innovative technology solutions. We had the chance to speak to the coordinators about the goals and future developments of the projects.



Paul EVANS is the co-ordinator of Buglife's project "B-lines – connecting landscape for pollinators":

'B-lines' project is focused on restoring wild-flower habitats in order to protect pollinators in the UK. How did this idea come up?

Buglife have been very concerned by bee declines over the past twenty years, we

looked at the underlying causes and discovered that around "3 million hectares of wildflower rich meadows had disappeared since 1945 in the UK" leading to fragmented and isolated pollinator communities. B-Lines is our attempt to reverse this decline.

What are the main actions and practises 'B-lines' is undertaking to conserve insect pollinators?

Firstly B-Lines maps areas, usually a county at a time in consultation with local wildlife groups, landowners and other interested parties. Initially plotting areas that are still good for bees and then we seek to provide connectivity by choosing the best corridors to join these important areas together and connect with neighbouring areas. The second phase is to facilitate the filling in of the mapped B-Lines with pollinator rich habitat strips either by directly planting and/or sowing new meadows or by influencing others to do so.

Can you mention some of the places where the project has intervened? Could you list the main benefits for insects' populations you have observed until now?

Roughly two thirds of England has now been mapped along with a little of both Scotland and Wales. Most of the remaining B-Lines have seen some activity by partner organisations such as Wildlife Trusts and or individual land owners all of which are plotted onto the interactive B-Lines map. Already there is evidence of increased pollinator communities in

and around the active B-Lines as well as a greatly enhanced flora. One partner the Yorkshire Arboretum has had such success with their meadow they are considering harvesting and providing seed for other meadow creation work.

B-lines is a large scale project, how do you ensure there is a continuity after the creation of wild-flower areas? Are public/private partners responsible to follow-up locally?

We ask all participants to guarantee a minimum of ten years' continuation for meadows we are involved in creating and do try to monitor areas created. We are currently developing an accreditation scheme to assure the quality of work undertaken at all levels. We encourage all participants to join in a regular dialogue to support learnings from the project.

B-lines also work in the farmed environment, how this initiative is being received by land managers?

Farmers have been very positive about the idea and welcomed the opportunity to be part of something big - helping the pollinators that will help them and their businesses. The B-Lines are also carefully plotted to avoid taking in high grade agricultural land and we have been working with government to try and provide some grant support for putting land into the scheme. We also have developed a B-Lines farm advisor post which is drawing up best prac-

tice guidance and engaging directly with farmers in the south-east of England.

Based on your current experience, are you planning to export your idea to other countries?

Buglife are keen to roll out B-Lines across other countries. After all, bees do not stop at national borders. The interface between, for instance, Ireland and Northern Ireland is of high importance and we are hoping to begin mapping work in Northern Ireland during 2017.

How did you hear about the European Bee Award?

We saw some on-line publicity for the European Bee Award and thought that it was a great platform to promote B-Lines and also believe that winning the award will increase the political impetus and the landowner keenness to deliver more B-Lines.



Max BANNASKI is the founder and CEO of BB Umwelttechnik, the young company behind the “Double Knife system” mower project:

‘Double knife system mower’ is an innovative tool to harvest grassland and avoid damaging insects or amphibians seating on wild-flowers or grass. How this idea come up?

“As an enthusiastic organic farmer, I was looking for a more environmental friendly mowing technique, using a lighter farm machine tool which could be more gentle with insects seating on the grass”. Since there was no suitable mower on the market, I decided to build up a mower based on my ideas.



What are the main advantages of using this system compared to conventional rotary mowers?

These double-blade mowers treat amphibians and insects with care during mowing operations. Compared to a rotary disc system, a double blade system, does not suck the insects. This mowing technique uses a scissor cuts system. Therefore, the cut grass falls behind and the insects seating on the plants can fly away without obstacles. This tool also reduces considerably fuel consumption and avoid soil compaction due to its lightness.

Can this tool be retro-fitted on existing mowing machinery? If so, what are the approximate costs?

For the moment the retrofitting of old mowers is not available.

Behind this technology there is an interest to reduce the impact of farming practices in pollinators, are you in contact with beekeepers’ associations or local farmers to assess the impact of the tool in preserving pollinators?

I have got bees myself on my farm. And I am in touch with beekeepers to discuss how to engineer the perfect ‘Double knife system mower’ in order to preserve pollinators as much as possible. I think, for bee

protection in mowing operations this system is nearly perfect.

Is this product already available on the market (as set-apart technology and/or integrated in new mowers)? If not, when do you plan to launch it? If yes, how many units have already been sold approximately?

Yes, these kinds of mowers have been on the market for two years already. In that period, we have delivered approximately 100 mowing systems in different European countries.

Do you believe public investment support schemes like the CAP Pillar 2 payments could be used to facilitate the uptake of such equipment?

Yes, of course. However, the funding should be significantly increased in order to further promote a sustainable agriculture. Local subsidy programs for this mowing technology, which are already available in various countries especially for areas of high ecological conservation potential, clearly show that the number of double-blade mowers has risen significantly.

Based on your current experience, are you planning to export your technology to other countries? If so, which countries would be a priority?

More and more farmers from other countries are experiencing the benefits of this new system. We are very interested in exporting our mowers to other European countries. In the last season we have received many requests from Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Hungary and of course Austria and Switzerland.



To learn more about the European Bee Award, visit: www.elo.org/awards/bee-award or contact the award coordinator at: ana.canomanuel@elo.org



Education, Training & Innovation European Historic Houses annual event

Each year the European Historic Houses Association (EHHA) invites its national members in Brussels to discuss the workings and future strategy of the European association. These meetings gave strong impulses to strengthen the future development of EHHA, which represents privately owned historic houses in Europe. Its mission is to increase the public and political awareness of the difficulties and needs of private heritage. A highlight for achieving these goals will be the coming European Year for Cultural Heritage in 2018. Furthermore, the Association will revitalize and innovate the EHHA Award to strengthen our overall visibility in Europe.

Maarten PEETERS, EHHA

12

On Wednesday afternoon of the 5th October 2016, the European Historic Houses Association launched a debate on education, training and innovation for better management of historic buildings. These buildings are very often important (local) centres for knowledge of our shared history, heritage and craftsmanship. Furthermore, they are of vital importance in educating the next generation of both current and future managers and admirers. If we are to attract a new generation into caring for and maintaining Europe's cultural heritage, we must invest in training, transfer of knowledge and acquisition of skills.

However, both our President Rodolphe de LOOZ-CORSWAREM and Ms. Martine REICHERTS, Director General of DG Education & Culture, the keynote speaker of the conference, rightly indicated that today's

youth is not always aware of our shared past. Ms. REICHERTS stressed that we need to look beyond the traditional education of hard skills in the fields of economics and law. Indeed, we need to invest in teaching soft skills targeted at living together and at revaluing the qualitative and artistic works of craftsmen. Mr. Patrick LIEBUS, President of the European Builders Confederation, representing SME's in the construction sector, confirmed this view and highlighted the importance of apprenticeships for the smooth transmission of skills. Further, Ms. REICHERTS provocatively stated that the new economic model is shifting towards the concept of sharing rather than private property. In her view, opening private houses of our shared history is more in line with the future aspirations of the next generation. However, as EHHA's British member showed through the address of their president Mr. Richard

COMPTON, many private owners are already finding a proper balance between their private residence and the interested public. Thorough research in the UK indicated that 60 % of the historic houses in private ownership have already opened their doors to public events such as weddings.

If we want to get the youth interested in cultural heritage, it is important, Ms. REICHERTS said, to speak their language and adjust our style of educating and training by using ICT more intensively. Herita, a Flemish heritage organisation and promoter, tries to focus their activities heavily on young children by directly asking their needs and wishes and by involving different stakeholders like for example the local communities, schools and villagers. In this way, it is possible to raise their interest at an early stage. Also, many national asso-

ciations are exploring different innovative forms to raise public awareness of private historic houses. Ms. Birthe IUEL, President of the Danish association BYFO, presented various ways of informing and educating the public, such as using TV, online competitions and social media. Our Estonian member represented at the conference by Mr. Imre SOOAR informed the audience on their innovative approach to their award system based on the Oscars, which resulted in a 20% increase of visits to private historic houses this year.

To further strengthen the education and training process for historic buildings, innovation is of uttermost importance. Mr. Robert MADELIN, Senior Innovation Advisor for the European Commission and opening speaker explained two relevant parts for an innovative strategy for cultural heritage in the future. The first vital aspect is obviously the increasing importance of technology and digital communication. Society in general, and especially the young generation, is being digitised rapidly and, therefore, private owners of historic buildings cannot miss this train. Different interesting and innovative initiatives already exist in Europe, one of the most important hubs of innovation

in the world. Indeed, Mr. MADELIN rightly indicated that five countries out of the top ten most innovative countries in the world are European. A great example of innovation in the field of cultural heritage and historic houses are the endeavours of Mr. Thibault le MARIE, speaker at the conference presenting the 'Langue & Nature' project in his Château de la Mazure. He is managing his house as a centre for adult and adolescent education in a stimulating ecosystem. Furthermore, he is investing in a platform which provides online cooking sessions in both French and English.

The second aspect stresses the importance of (virtual) networks. Indeed, Mr. MADELIN emphasised the importance of creating new partnerships and looking for unsuspected alliances. The French association La Demeure Historique is very active in trying to find new, innovative and maybe unexpected networks. Its president, Mr. Jean de LAMBERTYE explained the creation of a separate foundation for historic monuments to make up for the cut in government subsidies. Since 2009 this foundation has distributed 1.2 million euros among 100 monuments and 50 students. Furthermore, La Demeure Historique was able to collect 5.6 million euros for 145

cultural heritage projects since 2008. Ana CANOMANUEL-ÁVILA, who presented the REVAB project managed by the European Landowners' Organization, gave another great example. This project showed clearly that the ancillary buildings surrounding historic houses can be reused in an innovative way.

We believe our speakers and participants delivered a clear message that should be taken into account to further develop future strategies for privately-owned historic houses. It is clear that Involving and educating the Next Generation is of uttermost importance for the protection and conservation of our shared heritage. To assure the involvement of the young generation, we have to speak their language and invest in innovative communication methods.

The minutes, reports, presentations and pictures of the conference will be made available on our website and Facebook.
(www.europeanhistorichouses.eu)
& facebook
(@EuropeanHistoricHouses)



R. de LOOZ- CORSWAREM, P.LIEBUS

Fish, Mushrooms, and Forestry: YFCS General Assembly Vienna 2016

Each year, the General Assembly of the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) gathers the next generation of countryside entrepreneurs so they can network, experience practical examples of land management and successful business cases. This year, the YFCS General Assembly took place in Austria.

Marie-Christine SCHONBORN, YFCS

The 2016 General Assembly of the Young Friends took place not far from the beautiful estate of Venzel CZERNIN, which provided great introduction into the business of running a golf. Golfclub ENZESFELD is not very far from Vienna and beautiful located on an estate that previously belonged to the ROTSCHILD family.

On the morning before the GA, the Young Friends were lucky to be introduced to the art of running a fish farm by Ferdinand TRAUTMANNSDORF. He showed to us the different fish he breeds and sells in different ponds on his estates and explained his business concept to us, which includes supplying to the whole city of Vienna.

During the GA, the Young Friends were fortunate to listen to Felix MONTECUCCOLI, who introduced the audience to the topic of sustainable land-use. He first gave a broad overview of Austria and the average Austrian farm size, which is on average 27 hectares. Mr. MONTECUCCOLI then explained his concept of sustainable land-use, defining it in terms of managing the land in order to produce the necessary food whilst keeping a balance with biodiversity. He emphasized that a crucial topic



Mushroom farm

in Austria are natural hazards and risks in the mountain areas which might explain why Austria has such a high awareness for sustainable land-use. To him, sustainable management means "just harvesting the fruits, not cutting the tree". Mr. MONTECUCCOLI concluded that Europe needs a new concept of sustainability; a healthy balance between supporting the economic needs of the producers of agricultural products, a self-reliant economy and at the same time with a strong focus on biodiversity. According to him, an efficient tax system could help creating this new balance.

Ana ROCHA, liaison between the ELO and the UK's CLA also delivered her assessment of the Brexit. She detailed the arguments of both "Stay IN" and "Stay Out" and explained how and why Brexit happened. Most importantly, she outlined that "nothing has changed yet" and that questions remained as to how Brexit would alter European and British law.

Geoffroy de CANNIERE and Marie-Christine SCHONBORN then introduced the FAMIGRO award to the audience. The FAMIGRO Award is a prize awarding the most successful and impressive business project application from a new generation of countryside entrepreneurs with a €5,000 prize.

Finally, we were very lucky to welcome Alix DE BALSAC, who leads Forum Forêt, a network, which aims to create subsidiaries in France in order to answer more forestry specific questions for young people. Alix is a pioneer in this subject and it was very interesting to listen to her impressive achievements as a founder of Forum Forêt.

Finally, on the next day the EDLINGER family showed their mushroom farm to us and the Young Friends were very excited to gather an insight of how mushrooms are produced. Mushroom breeding is a rigorously scientific process, with many intervening steps. YFCS members were shown the different stages of growth of the mushrooms and enjoyed a mushroom lunch before going their separate way.

The Young Friends wish to thank their hosts
Ferdinand TRAUTMANNSDORF,
Venzel CZERNIN,
Ferdinand TRAUTMANNSDORF,
the EDLINGER family and
Alexander VILSMEIER,
helped organize this Austrian event.



Due to French Overprotection, Chinese Are Buying Our Farmland

With France's system of overprotection, its agricultural land prices are among the lowest in Europe. This is mostly caused through the system of land price controls known as SAFER; its pre-emption rights include the downward revision of prices, both for new and settled farmers.

Christian SOREL

Former Vice-president of SAFER Centre, Former General Secretary of Bailleurs FNSEA,
Former President of Propriété Privée Rurale 36

In order to be able to purchase land, the buyer needs the approval of the so-called Commission of Land Structure. Due to such a draconian control system, the commercial value of agricultural land has been falling and free market competition in France is limited, both in land acquisition and use.

Like others, the Chinese have found flaws to exploit in the SAFER system. On the one hand, we should salute their bravery in buying land in a system of such controls. In this, they follow the Swiss, the Dutch, and the Danish.

Answering questions on these issues, French Minister for Agriculture stated "This situation is inadmissible. Regulation must be reinforced". However, I believe the opposite needs to be done; instead of reinforcing an already murky and obscure system, the Minister should relieve the French farmer of these obstacles.

If our land markets were freed, French land managers could adapt to normal market prices, which would have created a more competitive atmosphere that would lead to lower production prices and administrative burdens.

Regulation will always be necessary to create functioning markets, but these must evolve with the times in order not to become a blockage. There will always be loopholes and exploits for foreign and domestic actors to exploit, but we cannot over-regulate and over-tax our land.

When we include land, inheritance, wealth, value-added, transfer, municipal, improvement, development and other taxes, we must see that the real winner of our land markets is the state, rather than the rightful owner.



Semences hors-la-loi. La biodiversité confisquée.

Blanche MAGARINOS-REY
Collection: Manifestô - Alternatives, Gallimard
ISBN : 9782072593895

Since the beginning of the industrial era, an increasingly industrialised agriculture has played havoc with our crop and biodiversity: over 90% of the varieties traditionally used by farmers throughout the world have already disappeared from our fields and our plates. While the remains of these varieties were stored in refrigerated banks of genes for use in the seed industry, their daily use was made illegal as these were considered to be insufficiently uniform. Through such restrictions, the only varieties authorised for sale on the modern marketplace are those protected by intellectual property rights. These restrictive developments and constraints on access to seeds are exemplified by lawsuits launched against the Kokopelli association, which maintains and distributes an extensive collection of traditional varieties.

At a time when a reform of the EU legislation is being prepared, this book sheds light on a complex legislative arsenal and calls us to action. Hidden inside the seed debate, the first stage of the food chain, are numerous fundamental discussions: survival of different varieties of farming, the hope for sustainable agriculture, food quality, but also survival of a common heritage, and the commercial appropriation of life.

EU: You cannot stop terrorism by restricting legal gun ownership. You can still sign the online petition

On the 18th of November 2015 the EC adopted a package of measures to make it more difficult to acquire firearms in the European Union. If you don't agree with this policy line, and instead you think that the EU should focus on the real problems:

- That the external borders of the EU are not protected.
- Our population has groups in it that refuse to align with our democratic core values and our culture.
- Illegal arms trade is rampant within the EU.
- Criminals and terrorists have easier access to illegal weapons than legal gun owners have access to legal arms.

you can sign an on-line petition at:

https://www.change.org/p/council-of-the-european-union-eu-you-cannot-stop-terrorism-by-restricting-legal-gun-ownership?recruiter=503130662&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive

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Diary dates

15 November, Brussels

European Biodiversity Conference, ELO yearly event

www.elo.org

29 - 30 November, Malta

ELO General Assembly

www.elo.org

2 December, Ljubljana

9th FFA regional event in Slovenia

www.forumforagriculture.com

6 December, Brussels

Bee Award Ceremony, organised by ELO and CEMA

www.elo.org

6 - 7 December, Brussels

The 2016 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2016-outlook-conference_en.htm

7 December, afternoon, Brussels

ELO Innovation Conference

www.elo.org

7 December, European Parliament, Brussels

How to ensure access to land for farmers in the EU: a Greens/EFA conference; with ELO active participation

www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en

25 - 26 January 2017, Reims

9th FFA regional event in France

www.forumforagriculture.com

16

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without
reducing theirs

the
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