

# CountrySide

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## Europe meets in Wolfsburg

19<sup>th</sup> Friends of the Countryside General Assembly



# Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

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## Reason and Responsibility

*Once again, Europe is proving itself chronically unable to deal in a smart, efficient, science-based manner in the area of crop protection. The recent last-minute extension for glyphosate shows that the Commission and Member States are willing to play political games with active ingredients that are among the basic tools for conventional and no-till farmers. In doing so, they prove willing to ignore well-reasoned advice from their own European Food Safety Authority.*

*There is, and should always be, room to discuss the health and environmental effects of crop protection products. If there is significant scientific evidence that any of these should be restricted or banned, then they should be. However, we should acknowledge that pesticides can also play a pro-active role in maintaining our soils and improving our climate. Without glyphosate, it would be almost impossible to practice no-till agriculture.*

*For this trend, however, we should not only hold the European institutions to account; Member States themselves seems comfortable to abrogate the responsibilities they have towards their farmers, consumers and citizens. Complicated matters of science, public health and sustainable protection should be dealt with in an informed and objective manner, not treated as a device with which to score political points.*

*For years now, many Member States have forced the European Commission to take difficult decisions and thereby absolved themselves of any responsibility. This allows them to blame 'Brussels' – an attitude that has helped turn our citizens against the idea a European Union. For the results of such manoeuvres, look no further than the United Kingdom.*





## Europe meets in Wolfsburg 19<sup>th</sup> Friends of the Countryside General Assembly

*At the end of May, more than 200 Friends of the Countryside (FCS) came together for their annual General Assembly in the city of Wolfsburg in the middle of Germany. As every year, this event was a great opportunity for the rural entrepreneurs from all parts of Europe, to exchange ideas, discuss, and meet old and new friends. The countryside entrepreneurs who make up the FCS create a network united to promote the interests of their land and livelihood through innovative and sustainable practices.*

Georg-Wilhelm KÖNIG, ELO

The city of Wolfsburg and the Friends are natural partners; it is a town that did not exist until 1938, when it was built to host the employees of a big German car manufacturer. Even though the company is quite young compared to most of the businesses represented by the FCS, it also stands for a never-ending need for innovation, high quality and consistency.

Each year, a different European country organises the General Assembly (GA) and all the events around it. This year, the honour of hosting fell to Germany, and the man in charge was Günther von

der SCHULENBURG, whose family history is closely connected to the one of Wolfsburg, since large parts of their estate were dispossessed in order to make room for the factory. The GA's venue was Nordsteimke, which is still part of Günther von der SCHULENBURG'S estate today and is located 5km outside Wolfsburg.

FCS president Michael zu SALM-SALM opened the GA by asking for a minute of silence for the victims of the attacks in Brussels, which happened during the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA), which the FCS have co-or-

ganised from the start. Board member G. von der SCHULENBURG welcomed everyone on behalf of the German delegation. Thereafter, the FCS president expressed his special thanks to the outgoing board member Eric KWINT, and emphasised his great work and cooperation over the last years, mentioning in particular his organization of the Netherlands FCS GA.

Afterwards, the ELO Secretary General Thierry de l'ESCAILLE gave his annual presentation and stressed the importance of good cooperation at a European level as well as current challenges such as

Brexit, the migrant crisis and the EU's political legitimacy in general. The Secretary General illustrated the growing pressure on the CAP in terms of budget, as well as some of the current issues surrounding prices and Greening. Finally, he discussed new property rights regulations in several eastern European countries such as Poland, Romania or Hungary.

Thereafter, Ana CANOMANUEL, ELO communication officer, presented the *Young Friends of the Countryside's* (YFCS) work. The YFCS is an association for young future landowners aged between 18 and 35 years. It aims to promote a prosperous European countryside, and has a special focus on countryside entrepreneurship. During their regular meetings, the YFCS discuss questions concerning young entrepreneurs and starters in particular, such as how to be a successor of a family business.

Subsequently, Clara MORENO, presented the *Welcoming Estates Websites*, a homepage open to the public where members can offer their services, produce, or anything else that comes from high-quality estates. The growth of the website,

she said, proved that there was a real appetite in Europe for authentic, locally sourced products and services.

Günter von der SCHULENBURG gave a presentation about his company and its different activities in agriculture, forestry and tourism and especially on how to reuse old buildings, which are not agricultural used anymore. His lecture was followed by an afternoon program that included a tour across our host's estate, test drives with different types of Volkswagen cars and Deutz-Fahr tractors, a guided tour through the recently opened boarding hotel and an information stand where members and guests could learn more about the ELO, FCS, and the various awards and projects that are maintained in the Brussels' office.

The day finished with a gala dinner, taking place at Schloss Wolfsburg, a medieval lowland and water castle, which was first mentioned in the records in 1302. Since then, it has been turned into a Weser-renaissance palace, which was owned by the family SCHULENBURG until the Nazis dispossessed them in 1943 after they

build the Volkswagen plant on the estate's grounds. The Friends of the Countryside were welcomed by Dr. Günzel von der SCHULENBURG, who remembered living in the castle as a young boy and spoke in detail about the building and its eventful history. During the dinner, three members were awarded the *Wildlife Estate Label* and two more the *Anders WALL Award*. The next day, different tours were offered, all leading to estates in the State of Lower-Saxony. The aim of those tours was – as every year – to show new and old entrepreneurial concepts to the members that might serve as examples for their own businesses all over Europe.

One group went to Nörten-Hardenberg, a castle, distillery and luxury hotel next to the university town of Göttingen. Besides liquor tasting, the group enjoyed an extensive wild boar lunch, as the wild boar part of the coat of arms of the hosts, the HARDENBERG family. After lunch, the tour moved on to the estate of Philipp von OLDERSHAUSEN, where the group had a guided tour through the estate's forest. Here archaeological excavations found the remains of an antique battleground



New estates joining the Wildlife Estates - more information on p6



between Romans and Teutons in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, which has become a major regional tourist attraction.

The family von CRAMM also welcomed a group of FCS at Castle Oelber, which has been in possession of the family since the early middle age. In the castle's courtyard, they have been organising concerts, Christmas markets and other events for 20 years. Afterwards, Rembert von MÜNCHHAUSEN welcomed delegates at his arable farm that is located next to a former nuclear waste depository, which makes his work sometimes difficult. Seismic measurements have to be undertaken in regular intervals in order to measure the stability of the rock mass that houses the depository, which causes abandonments of the farm business lasting for months.

Hubertus KNIGGE operates a cemetery inside his forest next to Hanover. This concept, the so-called "Ruheforst" is becoming increasingly popular in Germany, since it is less expensive than a spot at a cemetery run by the church or the state. On the other hand, for the owner of the forest, it provides a very different business model than conventional forestry. Since the con-

tracts have run-times of up to 99 years, the forest stays untouched for a long period of time and remains living spaces for local flora and fauna. At Schloss Marienburg, one of Germany's prime examples of Neo-Gothic style, Ernst-August von HANNOVER gave a guided tour through the castle built by his ancestor King George V of Hanover, the last king of Hanover. On average, 220,000 tourists annually visit the castle, its restaurant and its museum; their entry fees and expenditures help maintain a vital part of Germany's history.

At the moated castle of Hülsede the family FINCK von FINCKENSTEIN gave insights into their estate as well as into their agricultural business, which they own for four centuries. The whole estate is landmarked and has been renovated over the last three decades.

Alexander zu SCHAUMBURG-LIPPE welcomed at his castle in Bückeberg, the for-

mer capital of the principality of Schaumburg-Lippe. The FCS visited the famous mausoleum of the family, which is the biggest private mausoleum in the world. The prince organises many different events each year, such as garden fairs, Christmas markets, concerts and more. An important feature of the palace complex is the princely riding school, which stables date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

During the final evening, Günther von der SCHULENBURG invited the FCS to his place at Bisdorf, for a great buffet of regional specialities, an art fair and – as special surprise for football lovers – a live stream of the Champions League final.

The GA was followed by a post tour through eastern Germany, with visits of estates, museums and other places of historical importance. The next FCS General Assembly will take place in **Belgium in June 2017**.

The ELO and FCS staff would like to thank Günther von der SCHULENBURG, the German team and all the hosts who kindly opened their doors for a warm welcome.



## The Anders WALL Award 2016: Combining profitable agribusiness and good environmental management

*In 2016, the Anders WALL Award, which rewards private entrepreneurs who have made a special contribution to Europe's rural environment, was given to Mr Evelyn BOSCAWEN and Fernando DE ANDRADA-VANDERWILDE CONTRERAS.*

For the past 12 years, the European Landowners' Organization and the Anders WALL Foundation (Sweden) have granted this award together with the Friends of the Countryside, the Roy-

al Agricultural Academy of Stockholm, and most recently DG Environment. The award promotes efforts creating a positive rural environment through landscape preservation, biodiversity enhancement,

cultural heritage conservation, and contributions to the rural economy within the EU.

This year's prize was awarded to Mr BOSCAWEN, Tregothnan Estate, United Kingdom. His estate designed, developed and currently manages Europe's largest estuarine oak woodland. He has created the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest charcoal business in Europe as a means to maintain ancient coppicing of rare woodlands and reduce non-EU imported charcoal requirements. He is also a pioneer of the first tea plantations in the UK and protector of many rare flora and fauna species.

Mr DE ANDRADA-VANDERWILDE CONTRERAS received the diploma of recognition for his project "Providing biodiversity and contributing sustainable economic local development while helping the most endangered species in Spain: Iberian lynx and Iberian imperial eagle" and his life-long effort as a custodian of land.

The prizes were awarded at the 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside.

### Wildlife Estate Label welcomes 4 new estates

The *Wildlife Estate (WE) Label* is a network of European territories who are committed to the importance of biodiversity preservation. It targets landowners and managers of such territories and encourages them to join the *WE Label* network to acquire recognition for their efforts in sustainable wildlife management.

The *WE Label* is currently represented in 17 European countries mostly through a decentralized network. The *Wildlife Estates* secretariat is situated in Brussels, Belgium whereby it coordinates the activities of the National *WE-Delegations*. During the 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside, 4 new estates joined the network:

**Alexander zu SCHAUMBURG-LIPPE:**

Bückerburg – Schaumburger Wald and Forstverwaltung Steyerling;

**Matthias v. WESTPHALEN:**

Land- und Forstbetrieb Rixdorf;

**Antoinette u. Max v. ELVERFELDT-ULM:**

Vittinghoff-Schell'sche Betriebe Kalbeck.



Farms, estates, and other countryside businesses are more than welcome to join the label!

More information: [www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu) or [delphine.dupeux@elo.org](mailto:delphine.dupeux@elo.org)

More information  
on the winners and the award:  
[www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)

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## “How to cope with the expectations from the agricultural sector and society”

For the FFA's regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture, local stakeholders, farmers and agricultural experts met at Vienna's Justizpalast to discuss the question of 'how to cope with the expectations from the agricultural sector and society?'



Robert de GRAEFF, ELO

The first answer that united all speakers and guests was best phrased by the Chairman of the Forum, Janez POTOČNIK: “*You can't do it alone*”. The changes that are needed to provide both food and environmental security are too large to overcome by any single actor in the food chain, and that taking action against climate change is as much the responsibility of the farmer as that of the consumer.

Picking up on these themes, keynote speaker Folkhard ISERMEYER, President of the Johann Heinrich THÜNEN Institute, called for innovation both in terms of increasing crop yields as well as a renewal of technology transfers to developing countries. According to Mr ISERMEYER, this was especially relevant as “*Europe is not here to feed the whole world*”. Respondents noted that global agricultural development strategies rely on better remuneration in the sector in order to ensure that farmers can make a decent living. During the session, Juan GONZALEZ-VALERO, Head of Public Policy and Sustainability at Syngenta, urgently called for a rational, scientific debate about agricultural methods of production, noting that “*we need to work together instead of demonising each other*”.

The future of European agriculture was the topic of the second panel, where Professor Allan BUCKWELL of the Institute of European Environmental Policy stated that the current EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must evolve to better reply to climate challenges and SDGs. To change this situation, the keynote speaker called for a new policy based on integrated land management through multi-annual contracts with different tiers for those farmers who wished to do more for biodiversity.

“*Markets do not yet pay for producing environmental benefits*” agreed Tassos HANIOTIS, Director for Economic Analysis at European Commission's DG Agriculture, who supported the idea that the next CAP should not just be based on farm production. Elisabeth KÖSTINGER MEP warned that EU agriculture policies would be hit hard by a rise in EU-scepticism and that “*politicians have made a huge mistake when nobody can explain the CAP to a farmer any longer*”. A more upbeat tone was presented by Herman SCHULTES, President of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, who noted that the EU still maintains “*the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> in terms of maize, wheat, meat and milk*”, and that such efficiencies would play a key role in

developing climate-smart agriculture.

The final panel of the day concerned land ownership and sustainable land management. Niels TRESCHOW of the Swedish Landowners Organisation pointed out that land ownership means the development of a long-term perspective that allowed for land structures to be developed years in advance. However, many farmers still feel that their profession represents “*poor money for high value*” as land prices are not in relation to the yield that one can get from them, argued Felix MONTECUCCOLI, President of the Association of Austrian Land & Forest Owners.

Final remarks were made by Reinhard MANG, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, who called on those present to push for “*a sustainable balance between usefulness and protection*”, noting that this balance was the goal of Austria's agricultural policy.

In closing, Janez POTOČNIK called for “*a new global contract between ourselves and the planet*”. Such a contract, he said, should make it clear that humans are wholly dependent on natural cycles that are now being pushed out of balance.





J. GONZALEZ-VALERO, Prof. W. BLUM, Prof. M. CARVALHO, N. MARQUES, T. de l'ESCAILLE

## Creating new land and soil management opportunities under Mediterranean soil and climatic limitations.

*Soil Award winner Nuno MARQUES offers his prize to ICAAM – Instituto de Ciências Agrárias e Ambientais Mediterrânicas to support farm advisory system in order to better inform farmers in his region about the benefits of no-till, crop rotation and residue management.*

Under the auspices of the European Commission (DG Environment and the Joint Research Centre), in association with the BOKU and Ljubljana Universities and Syngenta International, The European Landowners' Organization (ELO) once again awarded the Land and Soil Management Award during the dinner preceding the Regional FFA Conference in Vienna, Austria.

The award was bestowed on Mr Nuno MARQUES and Professor Mário CARVALHO for their winning project entitled 'Creating new land and soil management opportunities under Mediterranean soil and climatic limitations'.

The project's main objective is to achieve sustainable intensive agriculture under Mediterranean conditions with its climatic and soil constraints, by improving soil fertility, water and land productivity and the efficiency of external inputs. The project is located on Herdade da Perreira, an 800 hectares estate in south of Portugal mainly producing beef, forage, and cereals.

The key challenges on the estate were increased risk of runoff, erosion and compaction and the decline of soil biodiversi-

ty. All of which were resulted from the extensive use of intensive tillage.

Over the last 30 years the project participants defined step by step the best ways

“The ELO launched its Land and Soil Management Award in 2008 as we believe that sustainable land and soil management is central to improve our food systems, maintain a healthy environment and foster European rural development. With this award we recognise the great value of the farmers' work, by promoting the winning project as a good practice at the EU level.”

to tackle these difficulties and finally developed a new management system that is based on conservation agriculture (no-till, crop rotation and residue management including animal manure) and the utilization of autumn-sown crops.

This new system significantly improved the fertility and drainage of their soils, resulting in improved crop yield and extended animal grazing possibilities through-

out autumn and early winter. The improved grazing periods have reduced the needs of stored fodder and imported animal feed. Furthermore, it has led to significant improvements in the efficiency of external inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and energy consumption that allowed the estate to save costs on production.

Mr MARQUES believes that the success of this project could be extended to other areas of the Mediterranean. In fact, the results are already being disseminated by the winner to other farmers in the region through open days and the results are a central part of the local no-till farmers club.

**The next call for application will be announced in September on the ELO's website.**



# BREXIT

*By any standards, the Brexit referendum divided. The often blatant racism and populism of the campaign was accompanied by a series of wild and inaccurate assertions. For many, there was a near complete incomprehension. On 23 June, 17,410,742 votes were cast to leave the EU against 16,141,241 votes to remain. London, Scotland, and Northern Ireland all voted strongly for Remain, like Oxford, Cambridge and Norwich.*

Michael SAYER

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The young voted 75% to remain. Depressed, run-down towns like Sunderland, or Great Yarmouth and Boston, often with EU labour and heavily canvassed by UKIP, voted to leave. But so did most of England, and most Conservative voters. Brother voted against brother, husband against wife, and parent against child on what was often seen as a matter of fundamental national and personal identity. For many, there is a profound and lasting disillusion. Over 4,138,000 people (equivalent to over a quarter of those who voted for Remain) felt strongly enough to petition for a new referendum, even though at the time this could be little more than a symbolic protest.

Despite burying a million dead in foreign fields in two world wars, Britain has an impaired sense of the European ideal compared with the continent. In part this stems from one view of 'our island race',

as if its internationalism could only be expressed in terms of imperialism or colonialism. CHURCHILL, with an American mother, knew this was only half the truth when he wrote his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. But there is a sense in which Britain felt more comfortable in a Gaullist 'Europe des états'. It was never fully comprehended that after 1989 this model might need to evolve, while 'ever-closer union' (despite CAMERON's opt-out) was often seen as a threat.

The EU is widely attacked as an oppressive, unnecessary tier of bureaucracy with a democratic deficit. For Brexiters this lay in reality, however, not in any imbalances between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council of Ministers, but in the novelty that, under a Treaty to which Britain had acceded, decisions could be agreed and taken outside Britain at all. The Eurozone changed perspectives

more widely, especially as governments over-borrowed. There remains a real need for fiscal convergence here, but to use so many currencies was also costly, and it is not the role of states to perpetuate economic or environmental distortion.

In reality, there are many positives. Dialogue has replaced a thousand years of fighting, the EU is a very powerful negotiating bloc, and the single market is a modern, holistic model. Free movement of goods and investment (capital) is accompanied by free movement of labour. This offers huge opportunity for the engagement of the citizen. Critics appear trapped in a polarised and fundamentally Marxist dialectic belonging to an economy of static mass employment in heavy industries and agriculture.

The failure of British political discourse is that the biggest issue of the day, which

will continue to be one for years, is treated essentially as an exercise in party management. Referendum has been set up by politicians against Parliamentary government, playing the system against itself, and governance is now sadly diminished. There is no sense that this is an issue so important that on it Government must carry its agenda or go into Opposition on principle. CAMERON, who played to the gallery on immigration and confused longer-term reform with a quick deal, imagined right to the end that he could be Prime Minister whatever the result. Instead, the terms of reference are set by the internal, self-validating political game, producing a crop of political turncoats and assassins. The English Conservatives have rolled up their map of Europe for at least ten years, giving gratuitous encouragement to LE PEN and a series of anti-European parties.

It is ironic that in what is now an English-speaking world, British standing is likely to be substantially diminished. JOHNSON as Foreign Secretary is unlikely to enhance it. It is unclear where Britain will stand in WTO or UNFCCC, if no longer alongside the EU. Many Brexiters would exit from science, and particularly (like JOHNSON) from climate science, although climate change will drive more migration than ISIS.

What is the correct response from EU leaders, irritated by CAMERON's clumsiness and riled by JOHNSON, GOVE and FARAGE? There is every prospect of bitterness if May, a lukewarm Remnant, fulfils her promise to be 'bloody difficult',



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wrapping herself in a tattering national flag. If the worker is not entitled to trade his labour, that itself creates a trade dispute. The necessary British legislation may prove difficult to enact with a small Parliamentary majority. A new Labour leader and a general election might change the landscape in concert with the Liberal Democrats and Scottish Nationalists.

Clearly, there should be no concessions over the principles of the single market if free access is to be agreed. This could only weaken Europe to no purpose. The EU may also need to hold Britain to the Paris Agreement, where Europe negotiated together.

Scotland, which has always considered itself an equal partner in the Union of 1707, voted solidly for Remain, and is likely to

demand a second referendum on independence in the case of Brexit proceeding. The Scottish Conservatives have demanded full access to the single market and, realistically, have refused to rule out a second EU referendum. If Scotland were to leave a UK which had itself left the EU, it is difficult to see how it could then be in the interests of the EU to obstruct or delay Scottish membership.

But beyond that, if they are guardians of the European ideal, EU leaders must show that this reaches beyond governments. If divorce proceeds, they must be patient, keep doors open for a rapprochement, and keep faith with the children of the marriage, with all those who support the EU and especially with the young. Meanwhile, none of the basic issues has in reality been addressed or will go away, but the national character has been soured.

## ELO General Assembly in Bratislava

*Every six months ELO members gather for their General Assembly in the Member State preparing for its Presidency of the EU Council. On the 15th of June the meeting took place in Bratislava.*

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, ELO

The first part was dedicated to policy discussions between ELO members. Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, ELO Secretary General, presented the most important issues such as the evolution of the CAP post 2020, the ongoing implementation of the greening and about the current efforts to simplify CAP rules. The consequences of the referendum taking place in UK were tackled as well as the market situation influenced by the Russian embargo and the forthcoming elections in France, Germany and other EU countries.

Professor Allan BUCKWELL led the discussion summarizing the outcomes of the regional FFA in Vienna, which took place the day before the GA, with a special attention given to the role of the climate change and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the European agricultural and environmental policies. A special focus was also dedicated to the potential outcomes of the *Cork 2.0 conference* organized in Ireland by DG Agriculture on the 5-6 September on the evolution of rural development. The members of the ELO Secretariat presented outgoing projects: *Sustainable Futures for Europe's Heritage in Cultural Landscapes* (HERCULES, [www.hercules-landscapes.eu](http://www.hercules-landscapes.eu)); *REuse and Valorisation of Agricultural Buildings through training based on real experiences* (REV-AB, [www.revab-erasmus.eu](http://www.revab-erasmus.eu)), and *Fostering sustainable feedstock production for advanced biofuels on underutilized land in Europe* (FORBIO, [www.forbio-project.eu](http://www.forbio-project.eu)) as well as the next steps for the Wildlife Estates network ([www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)).

The first part was closed by the elections of the Board members. ELO Secretariat is pleased to congratulate Christoph BUREN for his reelection as ELO President; Gabriel LODARES and Algis GAIZUTIS for their elections as ELO Vice-presidents and Niels TRESCHOW for the election as ELO Treasurer.

The second part of the Assembly was the debate with the representatives of the Slovak Ministries of Agriculture and of the Environment. The delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture started by



a broad presentation of the program of the Slovak Presidency based on four priorities: an economically strong Europe, a modern single market, a sustainable migration and asylum policies and a globally engaged Europe. The Director General presented the agriculture priorities: strengthen the position of the farmers in food chain and food supply; simplification of CAP; and the economics of forestry. Property rights were also discussed, even though these fall outside the scope of the Presidency; Slovakia has a very specific situation concerning land ownership and acquisition due to its inheritance law with even up to 16 persons owning one parcel. The Communist regime influenced the concept of land ownership as private property at a time when people were leaving the countryside. Slovakia has implemented special measures for land markets and land access which promote active entrepreneurs and aim to limit land speculation. These actions are being now discussed at the European level as the European Commission launched an infringement procedure on March on actions concerning investor restrictions for agricultural land.

The day was concluded with a very inter-

esting debate with the representatives of the Ministry of Environment. It was mainly focused on the so called ReFIT (mid-term review of Natura 2000 Directives), especially that the ongoing Dutch Presidency cancelled the planned June conference where the public consultations would be summarized and the next steps indicated. The Slovak delegation underlined also the importance of balance between agriculture and forestry sectors, especially for countries like itself with more than 40% of the surface of the country being forested. Last but not least large carnivore management was also debated as in Slovakia you can find wolves, brown bears and lynxes.

The meeting was closed by an informal lunch over the bank of the impressive Danube. The next ELO GA will take place in Malta on the **29 - 30 November**.

For more information about the priorities of the Slovak Presidency please visit: <http://www.eu2016.sk/en>



WINDMILL YEAR 2009



WINDMILL YEAR 2016

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## New Opportunities for Old Buildings Report from the REVAB Project



*Over the last few years, rural areas have faced significant challenges: the economic crisis of the last years, current agricultural prices and a continued exodus towards the cities. More specifically the unemployment rate in the EU passed from 6,4% in 2007 to 11,2% in January 2015 (Eurostat, March 2015). In addition to this the unemployment rate in predominantly rural regions of the EU is even higher: 11% compared to 8,5% in predominantly urban region in 2011 (EC, 2012).*

There is also an enormous consumption of agricultural land for settlement, traffic and industry. According to the Corine Land Cover data, between 2000 and 2006 arable land, permanent crops, pastures and mosaics have been reduced by more than 500.000 ha in Europe. This, combined with lower employment opportunities, has led to the loss of centres of rural living and a lack of use for existing agricultural buildings.

The potential for reuse of existing agricultural buildings is huge, but there is a lack of possibilities to get to real experiences in this field from entrepreneur to entrepreneur. In order to do this, the ELO and partners have begun a new Erasmus+ project, REVAB, with the goals of:

- Fostering the entrepreneurial approach towards the use of existing agricultural buildings in different regions of Europe.
- Stimulating rural entrepreneurs, rural land and real estate owners and young farmers to think about possibilities of (re-) use and valorisation of existing agricultural real estate and farmsteads while respecting economic, ecologic and social effects.

- Avoiding further consumption of agricultural land through settlement and industrial real estate.
- These aims will be reached with the development of a training system based on case studies and Open Educational Resources (OER).

It is the aim of this project to focus on the current and future needs of the farmers concerning reuse and valorisation of agricultural used buildings:

- To keep rural society vivid and to maintain and improve incomes, not only for farmer but for the rural society as a whole.
- To create new job opportunities and to promote entrepreneurial spirit.
- To avoid further consumption of agricultural land.
- To connect valorisation and reuse of agricultural buildings to agriculture

Therefore the partners of REVAB put together the Summary Report explaining how to reach those goals and what points should be considered. Several experts and stakeholders in every country of the partners were interviewed to get a clear

view on the situation in all of the five countries. For example to assure helpful and practicable training units and also case studies, it is very important to have detailed information about the situation in the respective countries. Furthermore, this helps to create units on European level that can be implemented all over the EU by the partners.

Since one third of the population (higher in some countries) live in rural areas, and accounting for a slight movement towards urban areas, and coupled with a higher unemployment rate and lower income in rural areas, there is a risk of vibrant rural areas dying out. To reduce or even stop these tendencies, incentives and encouragement are needed, especially in order to keep young people in rural areas. Such new generations are needed to keep rural areas alive, create and leave investment, provide secure jobs and to ensure the sustainability of rural life.

For more information please visit:  
[www.revab-erasmus.eu](http://www.revab-erasmus.eu)



## Forest Management and Natura 2000 in the Alpine and Continental biogeographical regions

As part of the kickoff of the biogeographical seminars, a workshop on forest management and Natura 2000 in the alpine and continental biogeographical regions was organised and held at the University of Padua (Italy) on 21-23 June. Doug EVANS participated in this meeting on behalf of the ETC/BD and ELO was represented by Marie-Alice BUDNIOK. The meeting focused on management of forest habitats, a report will be available soon while the presentations will form a special issue of the *Journal for Nature Conservation* (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-for-nature-conservation>).

A new cycle of "Natura 2000 Review Seminars" is about to start, aiming to monitor and evaluate the results of the actions agreed at the earlier sessions and to identify and recommend further priorities and opportunities for continuous development of the process. The first of these seminars will be held in Lithuania (Boreal region) in September and in Ireland (Atlantic region) in October.

For more information please visit [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm)

source: European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, newsletter July 2016

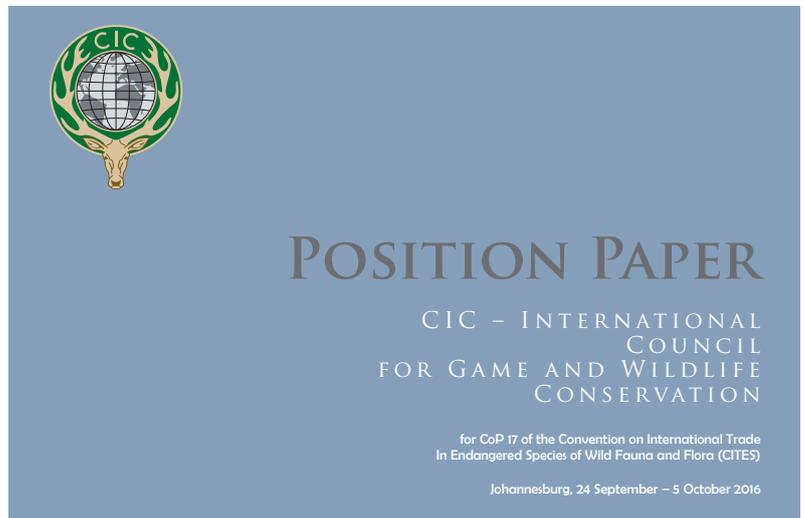
## New Ideas for Wildlife Conservation

The *International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation* (CIC) released a document with recommendations on proposals to be brought up at the upcoming meeting of the *Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES COP17) to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24 September to 5 October 2016. This voting guide concentrates on agenda items which are important for rural communities and their livelihoods as well as for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife resources; and gives recommendations for the decision on each proposal.

We thank Willem WIJNSTEKERS, former Secretary General of CITES, who thoroughly prepared this position paper. We encourage all Parties to CITES to consider our recommendations and we hope that our reasoning will convince many of them to vote in accordance with the CIC recommendations.

Please download the CIC Position paper at [www.cic-wildlife.org](http://www.cic-wildlife.org)

CIC Team



## Investments in Forestry and Wood Processing in South-East European Countries

In July in Brussels wood-processing and forestry issues gathered a heterogeneous group of participants at the second Conference on Investment in Forestry and Wood Processing in South-East European countries. The event was organized by the Croatian Wood Cluster, and supported by Croatian MEP Marijana PETIR and the Agency for Investments and Competitiveness and Wood Cluster Styria.

DG AGRI's Gafo GOMEZ ZAMALLOA presented the activities of the EC in the development of new legislative proposals, noting that new economic opportunities are of extreme importance for the sustainable development of the forestry and wood processing industries. The current policies being developed related to forestry include the adoption of new regulations on the use of land, land conversion, and the new directive on RES within which the criteria of sustainability for biomass will be considered.

On behalf of the ELO, Ana CANOMANUEL AVILA presented the Tree of the Year contest that her office organizes in cooperation with the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment.

Source: [www.southeast-europe.net](http://www.southeast-europe.net)

# Pokémon Go

## Invited and Uninvited Guests

*The extraordinary success of the new game Pokémon Go has not gone unnoticed on Europe's privately managed land. Our members are noticing a definite increase in visitors who look for Pokémon in countryside locations in order to catch the virtual animals. This leads to both positive and negative experiences.*

Broadly available in Europe and indeed around the world, *Pokémon Go* is already billed as the biggest mobile game ever, with players both young and old. The game uses a smartphone's camera to project digital animals into the real landscape. Using their phone, players must overcome a short game in order to 'catch' up to 150 different animals.

### Experiencing nature and new contacts

By looking for new digital animals to catch, players often end up in places they normally would not go to, including the countryside and privately managed properties. This leads to both a new form of interacting with nature and special attention for a given location from both players and the media. A number of estates and farms in Holland, for example, have already made good use of this extra attention by promoting the special products and services available on the farm. Nature organisations are also fully utilizing the hype and use Twitter and other tools to reach new audiences; many are already pointing out that there are both real and digital rare species to be found in the countryside.

### Nuisance

Unfortunately, some *Pokémon* players have a tendency to look for their virtual pets in places where they are not supposed to go, which may lead to trouble. In certain fragile habitats and protected nature areas, foresters have needed to demand of players that they stick to the paths. Hospitals, funeral parlours and railway sites have also experienced trouble with new explorers. Landowners have also needed to ask groups of young people to leave their private property; trespassing, even for game purposes, can be a criminal offense.

In order to remove any such tensions, the game makers have now opened a site where people can report such nuisances. After reporting, a 'virtual location' that attracts many players is removed, promises the game's producer Niantic.

### The future

Developments in the new economy and the increasing digitalisation and virtualisation have already led to interesting discussions around ownership, and which rights belong to whom. Such discussions will continue, as the appearance of *Pokémon Go* shows.

Fundamental to this debate is the question of the distribution of income and profit from the digital and sharing economies; *Pokémon Go*, for example, does not reward the private landowner who provides the infrastructure (access, pathways etc), even though much of the game depends on such publicly provided services. In a broader sense, this falls under a discussion over

what the effort vs. reward mechanism should be for the public goods provided from private lands, especially when the establishment and maintenance costs of such goods can often be substantial. In order to make such systems sustainable in the long run, land managers, public authorities and the private sector will have to come up with a more equitable system of burden and profit sharing.

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## Diary dates

### 27 - 29 September, Copenhagen

Wildlife Estates Plenary session  
[www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)

### 30 September - 2 October, Vienna

YFCS XII General Assembly  
[www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)

### 4 October, Brussels

Final conference of HERCULES project: "Sustainable Futures for Europe's Heritage in Cultural Landscapes: Applying a landscape approach to land-use science and policy"; followed by a workshop: "Managing cultural landscapes for multiple societal values"  
[www.hercules-landscapes.eu](http://www.hercules-landscapes.eu)

### 5 October, Brussels

EHHA Conference "Education, Training and Innovation for Better Management of Historic Buildings"  
[www.europeanhistorichouses.eu](http://www.europeanhistorichouses.eu)

### 5 October, Copenhagen

EEA-SC seminar "Land as a resource: raising awareness and building the knowledge base for European Assessments", with ELO active participation  
[www.eea.europa.eu](http://www.eea.europa.eu)

### 11 October, Bratislava

European Tourism Forum Conference  
<http://eu2016.sk16.eu/m2/en/political-and-expert-meetings/european-tourism-forum-conference.html>

### 17 October, Bratislava

Bratislava Bioeconomy conference  
[www.bioeconomybratislava2016.eu](http://www.bioeconomybratislava2016.eu)

### 19 - 20 October, Bydgoszcz, Poland

3rd European Congress for the Agri-Managers, co-organised by ELO and its Polish member  
[www.ekma.eu](http://www.ekma.eu)



### CountrySide

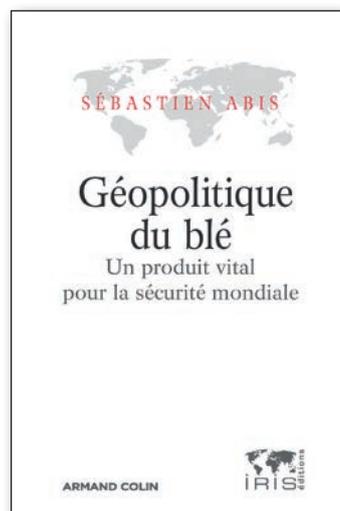
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## The geopolitical of wheat. A product vital to global security

**Sébastien ABIS**  
**IRIS Editions/Armand Colin**  
**July 2015**

Agriculture is an essential component of the international policy agenda. An ancestral activity, it continues to shape the future of human development. Food security influences the stability of nations and helps ensure peace around the world. Feeding a growing population in a context of scarcity of resources and transforma-

tion of economic power between the States is one of the most complex challenges of this century.

Cereals are the perfect illustration of this strategic dimension of agricultural issues. Wheat, in particular, is an example of how a food as a raw material determines global security between the few producer countries and the more numerous consumer states.

Wheat is part of everyday life for billions of people. While consumption is globalizing, its production is very unevenly distributed on the planet. Faced with new demographic dynamics and differences in production, the role of trade is growing. Transport and necessary investments are also a growing part of that equation.

This book explores the dark side of globalization by taking a long-term, cross-continent perspective, which reminds all readers of the strategic importance of agriculture.

*Sébastien Abis is Director in the General Secretariat of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and research associate at the Institute of International and Strategic Relations (IRIS). He specializes in strategic issues of agriculture, cereal and the Mediterranean region.*

Let's increase our food supply  
without  
reducing theirs

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