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EU Agricultural Soils: Advancing Conservation, Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health





Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Executive President

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In our pan-European society, the reality of the rural world is becoming more and more distant, as our fellow citizens uproot themselves from the land. Let us remember that we all have rural origins, but most of us have forgotten them! Added to this is the fact that we live in a consumer society that views nature essentially in terms of use and consumption.

This is illustrated by the fact that as soon as we were freed from COVID, people returned to nature, regarding it as a consumer good of which they had been deprived, which, in their perception, belongs to everyone. That which is free and common must be preserved: when they are not valued, they are regretfully badly managed, badly considered and therefore overexploited. This poses real problems for the use of nature. Today, many people believe that nature, as a common good, belongs to them, unaware of the difference between public and private property... However, the majority of managed areas are privately owned, and are therefore responsible for their land. We are nonetheless confronted with very different representations of nature. Rural activities are increasingly difficult to accept: the Disney mentality has played its role! Many people have developed an Epinal image of nature.

Faced with this, there are two attitudes: there is the attitude of the besieged citadel, which considers that the urbanised majority has no respect for rural people anyway, and that they will impose an avalanche of restrictions on them without giving due thought, or force them to coexist with species that have long since disappeared due to them being a nuisance. This attitude cannot lead to anything positive. This is the approach taken by our current thinking, the work done by the "Wildlife Estates" ("Territoires de faune sauvage" in France) network, and by those involved in conventional or organic sustainable agriculture.

Let us not fall into urban excesses or those of besieged citadels.

There is more to be done, and we can hope that even Ursula von der LEYEN identified the need for this in her State of the Union speech... If this is not carried out, populism will take over.



Jose Maria VITAL

EU Agricultural Soils: Advancing Conservation, Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health

On October 10, the Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting, and the Countryside hosted a significant webinar focused on EU Agricultural Soils, with Mr. Jurgen TACK, the Secretary General of the European Landowners Organization, moderating the event. The keynote speaker was Slovakian MEP Martin HOSJÍK, who not only sits as a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety but is also the Rapporteur on Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law).

Hugh O'CONNOR, ELO



Online conference
"BIODIVERSITY, HUNTING, COUNTRYSIDE"
INTERGROUP

EU AGRICULTURAL SOILS

**ADVANCING CONSERVATION, REGENERATIVE
AGRICULTURE, AND SOIL HEALTH**
HOSTED BY MEP SIMONE SCHMIEDTBAUER

TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER
13:30-15:00

SPECIAL ADDRESS
MARTIN HOJSÍK, MEP

OPENING STATEMENT
LUCA MONTANARELLA
SENIOR EXPERT AT THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, JRC
CURRENT STATE OF EU AGRICULTURAL SOILS AND EU POLICIES

PANEL DISCUSSION
MELLANY KLOMPE, FOUNDER OF THE SOIL HEROES FOUNDATION
FLORENCE BRAYE-RIGEL, EMEA CARBON FARMING AGRONOMIC LEAD REPRESENTING, BAYER
PR. DR. AXEL DON, DEPUTY OF THÜNEN INSTITUTE OF CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

Organised in conjunction with
ELO - European Landowners' Organization



Mr. HOSJÍK commenced the discussion by acknowledging the European Union's previous attempts to establish a legislative framework for soil preservation. He underlined the pressing need for such legislation due to the deteriorating state of EU soils. He simultaneously recognised its potential as a foundation and articulated his

ambition to refine it to align with the overarching goal. He announced his objective to achieve a parliamentary position before the upcoming European Elections to avoid further delays in addressing this critical issue. He then delved into the contributions of soil law, emphasising his satisfaction with the Commission's acceptance of the

proposal to work on entire districts. This approach, according to him, epitomised the potential of European legislation built on diversity. The legislation aimed to promote healthier soils in Europe by at least 2050.

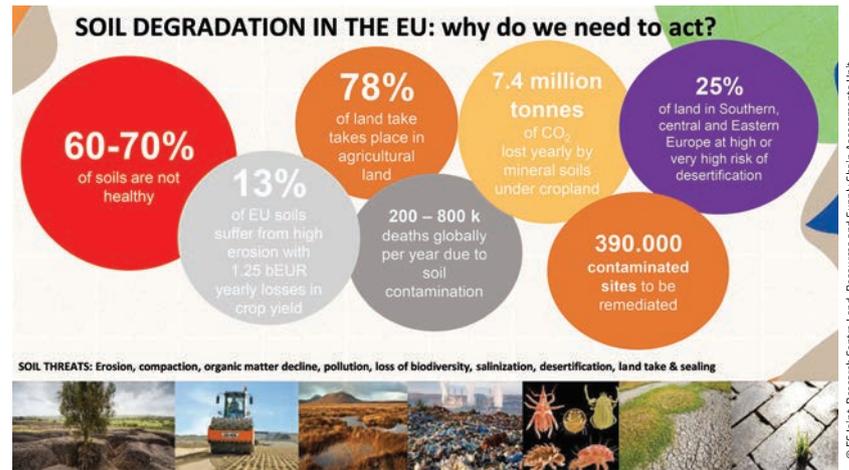
Mr. HOSJÍK underscored that the collaborative bottom-up approach, encompassing farmers, foresters, scientists, regional administration, and the general public, was pivotal in ensuring the right trajectory. "It is important to avoid complications or double legislations". He called for policy coherence to prevent interference with other legislation, maintaining that management practices should contribute to soil health without creating redundancy. In essence, the framework is meant to facilitate a comprehensive approach to soil preservation.

The webinar also featured Luca MONTANARELLA, a Senior Expert at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. He emphasised the diversity of EU soils and the intricate challenges associated with their monitoring. He introduced the EU Soil Observatory's LUCAS Soils monitoring system, which aimed to provide independent soil data. This system permits the collection of samples and allows one to see the data on soil conditions throughout the European Union. He outlined the fundamental idea behind the Commission's soil monitoring law. It sought to unite efforts at both the EU level and member states, enabling more comprehensive insight into soil conditions across Europe. The Observatory was responsible for defining the monitoring process and making data accessible through a dashboard.

Highlighting the current situation of soil degradation, Mr. MONTANARELLA noted that more than 60% of EU soils suffered from degradation or are unhealthy. He attributed this issue to a history of industrialisation and mining activities, urban development on fertile lands, and unsustainable agricultural practices resulting in soil erosion and the loss of soil organic carbon.

After listening to the general approaches, the debate with the panelists allowed a more practical view on the subject. Mellany KLOMPE, co-winner of the “Land Management and Soil Award” latest edition, shared her experience on how she embraced regenerative farming techniques on their 200-hectare arable farm in the Netherlands and founded the Soil Heroes Foundation. She shared the motivations behind their approach, including addressing soil compaction, declining organic matter levels, stagnant yields, and diminishing farm revenues. She outlined the three core elements that guided their regenerative farming journey: restoring organic matter in the soil, rebalancing mineral variety, and revitalising soil biology. Maintaining equilibrium among these elements was crucial. She provided examples of techniques employed on their farm, such as utilising a combination of solid manure and green compost instead of high-pH slurry or manure and avoiding soil disturbance through practices like tillage. The Soil Heroes Foundation compiled a comprehensive 20-principles Guidebook. She shared that they successfully implemented 16 of these principles on their farm, with four remaining unimplemented due to Dutch legislation constraints. Some of the principles also focused on technological aspects, like control traffic farming.

Ms. KLOMPE concluded by sharing the positive outcomes they observed over the past decade, including improved crop yields, livelier soil, reduced waste, and enhanced crop resilience, especially during extreme weather conditions. However, she also highlighted economic challenges, such as insufficient compensation for regenerative farming, low revenue, and



limited market demand for regeneratively produced food. She made a plea for further investment in education, knowledge dissemination, and the practical execution of regenerative farming.

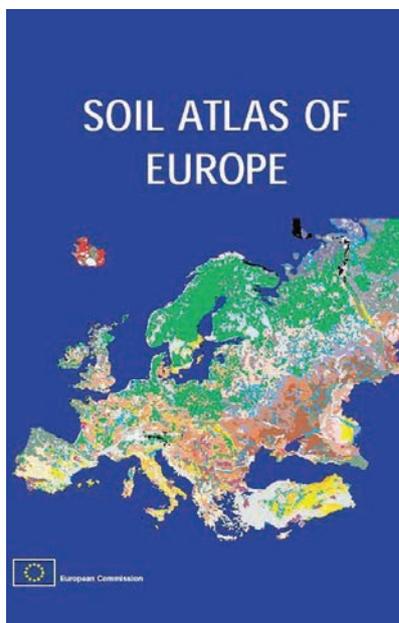
Florence BRAYÉ-RIGEL, EMEA Carbon Farming Agronomic Lead for Bayer, took the stage to discuss the critical importance of soil health and its potential to drive climate change mitigation, empower farmers, and promote sustainable food production. She emphasised that adopting regenerative agricultural techniques could reduce agriculture’s environmental footprint and climate impact. Healthy soil was identified as the linchpin in optimising the impact of regenerative agriculture, particularly concerning carbon sequestration and biodiversity promotion. The central question, according to Ms. BRAYÉ-RIGEL, was why farmers should embrace these practices. She outlined several compelling reasons, including alignment with regulatory compliance, sustainability benefits, increased crop resilience, economic incentives, carbon storage opportunities, and a performance-based system that empowers farmers. She stressed the need for a toolbox of alternative sustainable practices and strong cooperation between farmers, the public, and public institutions.

The webinar continued with a presentation from Professor Dr. Axel DON, Deputy Director of the Thünen Institute of Climate-Smart Agriculture. Professor DON explored the potential and limitations of carbon farming in Europe, considering the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to reach net-zero by 2050. He explained that emissions from agriculture were unique and rooted in biological processes. To offset these emissions, carbon removals, carbon sinks, and carbon farming were essential strategies to sequester carbon in soils. However, he pointed out that while there was potential for these measures, the technical potential needed to be considered. Land-use changes, like converting arable land into regenerative farming,

offered potential but could only compensate for a small fraction of European greenhouse gas emissions. He mentioned the importance of permanent vegetative cover as a key component of regenerative agriculture. In regions with substantial cropland lacking vegetative cover, carbon loss from the soil occurred. Implementing measures such as cover crops and carbon loss mitigation could transition these regions from carbon loss to carbon sequestration. He enlightened the audience the vital role of plant roots, which were three times more effective in building soil organic carbon compared to straw or leaf litter. He stressed the need to select crops and genotypes with extensive root systems as this was essential for soil health, drought resilience, and overall agricultural system robustness. Soil organic matter played a pivotal role in various aspects of soil health, including water retention, pH buffering, and the entire soil microbiology ecosystem.

In summary, the webinar provided valuable insights into the importance of legislation and collaborative efforts to address soil degradation in the EU. It showcased the promise of regenerative farming techniques in revitalising soil health and mitigating climate change. The speakers emphasised the significance of strong cooperation between stakeholders, the public, and public institutions to promote sustainable agricultural practices and secure a healthier future for European soils.

All relevant information (recording and PPTs) is to be found on the Intergroup website: www.biodiversityhuntingcountryside.eu





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Derna, Libya, 2023

The European Landowners' point of view on COP28

Michael SAYER, ELO Special Adviser; Member of the "Friends of the Countryside"

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The Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) meets in December against the least promising backdrop for many years, both politically (Ukraine, tensions between US and China, and a widespread feeling that the host country is conflicted) and climatically, since the carbon budget for stabilisation at plus 1.5 degrees as agreed at Paris in 2015 is now less than 250 Gigatonnes (emissions for 2022 were 40 Gt) and almost exhausted. There is a two in three chance of the plus 1.5 limit being breached for at least one year between 2023 and 2027. To this extent, society is already committed to an overshoot with the corresponding need for clawback. Only the rapid growth of renewable electricity (global carbon emissions from electricity might peak this year) offers realistic hope, but without further heroic action, the world faces plus 2.8 degrees of warming.

The weather events of 2023 are indicative of the rapidly deteriorating situation. July, August and June brought record monthly temperatures with periodic daily breaches of

the plus 1.5 target. Seven European countries experienced their warmest ever September. Sea temperatures were also above normal. The oncoming El Niño will further amplify the background rise in global temperature.

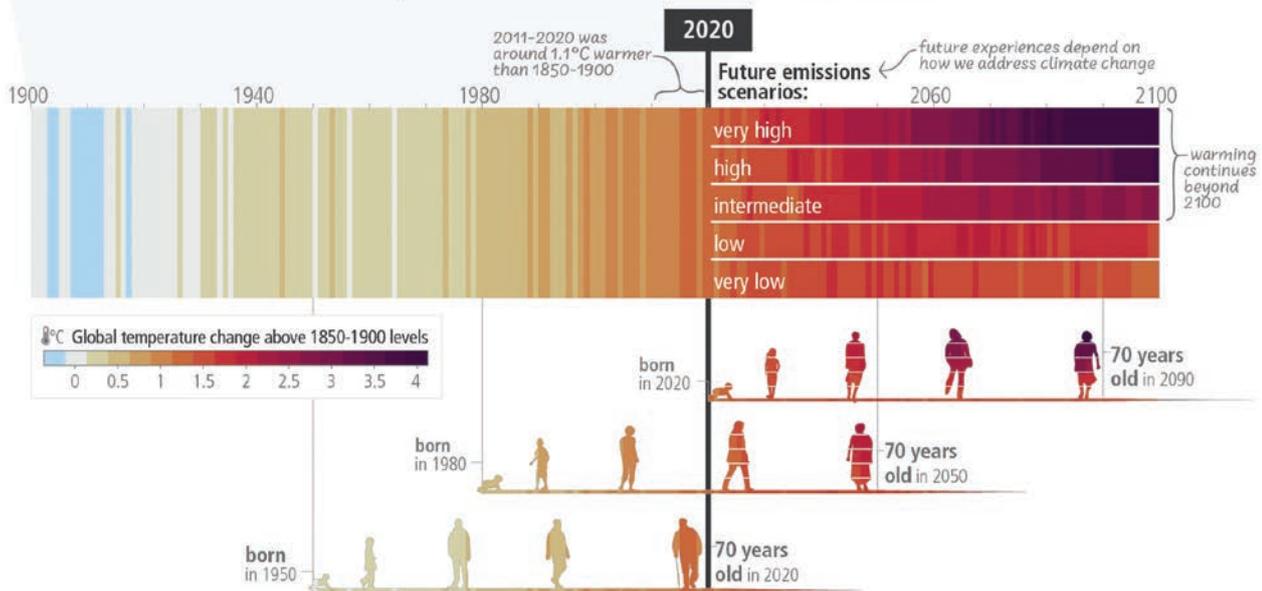
Wildfires set records, for example in Greece (an EU record), Canada, Maui (the town of Lahaina was eighty per cent destroyed on 9 August, with 97 deaths and 31 people still missing). There was extensive flooding in Italy in the early summer, then in Greece and, especially, in Libya (Derna) with thousands of deaths. At the same time, low flows/winter recharge have affected north Italian rivers, mountain lakes (Titicaca) and inland seas (the Caspian).

In many of these cases, anthropogenic climate change (fundamentally a result of global energy mismanagement) is exacerbated by local land mismanagement and neglect (failure to control invasive grasses on Maui, failure to maintain dams at Derna). Natural disasters in the US alone exceed US\$1bn in damages for the first eight months of 2023.

The speed of change evident in 2023 is faster than anticipated and the risk of reaching climatic tipping point(s) has significantly increased. This is seen in the cryosphere (especially the Antarctic, where it may now be too late to prevent the gradual break-up of the Western Antarctic Ice Sheet, but also Greenland), with a medium risk of a breakdown in the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (the Gulf Stream) in the next century. There are indications that the South American Monsoon may also be approaching a tipping point with major consequences for rainfall in the Amazon, currently experiencing extreme drought.

Meanwhile, governments continue to subsidise fossil fuels. In 2022, differences between efficient price (including environmental cost and direct subsidies) and

c) The extent to which current and future generations will experience a hotter and different world depends on choices now and in the near term



Source : IPCC, Sixth Assessment, Synthesis, Fig 1.

retail price yielded a global subsidy equivalent to US\$7tn. Of this, US\$1.7tn was in explicit subsidies. (IMF Fossil Fuel Subsidies Data, 2023). For example, fossil fuel typically pays only 5 per cent VAT and aircraft fuel is zero-rated.

The International Energy Authority (IEA) reported in 2021 that coal, oil and natural gas all need to go and its roadmap for net zero (2023) allows for no new oil and gas fields, coal mines or mine extensions or unabated coal plants beyond those approved in 2021, while mining companies will switch to providing critical minerals (copper, cobalt, manganese). By 2050, world energy demand could have reduced by 8 per cent but for an economy twice as big.

Meanwhile, there is a loss of ambition driven by political maneuvering. Shell has scaled back its plans to transition. The UK has rolled back targets and its offshore wind auction failed because the price cap was set too low to be viable for energy companies. It is one of five countries behind half the planned expansion of new oil and gas to 2050. Although deforestation in the Amazon was reduced, thanks to a change of government in Brazil, the world lost 4.1 million ha of primary forest, equivalent to 2.7 million Gt CO₂, in 2022.

Yet the urgency is widely understood. An ELO Board member from northern Italy writes (July): *"We have to accelerate on green energy. To stop carbon emissions and produce green energy has to be the first European goal"*.

A growing public loss of confidence in policy drives the current wave of court cases (see also Global Climate Litigation Report, 2023). These include *Milieudefensie v. Royal Dutch Shell* (brought in The Hague), and very recent cases brought by the State of California against five oil companies, by nine small island states against high emitter countries for an advisory opinion under the International Convention on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) at Hamburg, and by six young people against 32 European states in the ECHR.

These cases are quite separate from the loss and damage mechanism agreed in principle at COP27 last year, where there are demands for the sheer (and continuing) inequality of carbon use between countries to be addressed.

There is an overriding need to understand the problem in terms of inter-generationality (something which should come naturally to land managers), as investment in the technologies of future rather than past, and the greater security of renewable sources. In this way, the US Inflation Reduction Act (2022) offers an example.

Globally, the oil and gas industry showed record profits of nearly US\$4tn in 2022, up from an average US\$1.5tn on the back of the war in Ukraine (IEA). In addition, methane emissions from energy sources in 2022 were 135 million tonnes. These are

measures of the opportunities for energy companies to invest in green technology, for oil states to diversify their economies and for governments to reform tax systems to reward sustainability and not pollution. Put in perspective, it has been calculated (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2023) that Europe could wean itself off fossil fuels by 2040 for a total of US\$2.1tn (€140bn annually to 2030 and €100bn annually to 2040 thereafter). Globally, the investment required in clean energy needs to rise from its current US\$1.8tn to some US\$4.5tn annually by the 2030s.

Under the Paris Agreement, the first global stocktake and revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is now under way. This is the moment to adopt more ambitious targets and to tighten the language of COP26 at Glasgow two years ago. It was already plain then that the industrialised economies need to bring forward net zero. In the EU, only Finland is planning for net zero before 2040.

To offer a realistic scenario at COP 28, the EU needs to lead an alliance to phase out coal in OECD countries by 2030 and oil by 2040. Developing countries should exit coal by 2040 and oil soon after. Deforestation needs to end by 2030 and methane emissions should be reduced by 30 per cent, principally from the energy sector, also by 2030.



The question of 'abated' fossil fuels is critical here. The most permanent carbon sink is the biosphere. One of the biggest risks is that the use of untried carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS), especially underground storage, to enable higher than necessary levels of fossil fuel use would leave a world in hock to geoengineering. Agriculture, forestry and land management are profoundly exposed. They also have their own structural problems and their own contribution to make to net zero.

On a 20-year Global Warming Potential, some two-thirds of agricultural emissions in EU-UK are methane from cattle, while two-thirds of cereals are grown for livestock feed. Food waste in the global north runs at over 30 per cent.

Clearly livestock have a central role to play in agriculture and grassland management, but the sector is out of scale, largely a result of the growth of intensive units where the availability of pasture is no longer a limiting factor, and the over-reliance of unviable farms on livestock. A reduction in intensive units combined with a switch of arable land

to other food crops, biofuels and mixed afforestation would need to be accompanied by some diet change (to avoid outsourcing emissions) and help for those affected to diversify their farms or reposition within the broader rural economy.

In forestry, there needs to be a more holistic policy focus on the role of harvest and renewables in forest policy. The construction industry is particularly hard to decarbonise and the role of timber in construction can help. "Closer to nature forestry" needs to be understood as dynamic, uneven-aged, continuous cover forestry with mixed species and accompanied by a forest inventory. (Measurement by drones is too crude here.) Mixed afforestation certainly has a role in under-wooded countries.

As the EU leads the way, its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), expected to be fully in force in 2026 will be necessary to avoid exporting emissions reduced.

The structure of the net zero we should plan for is also crucial. Land-based carbon

resources need to be planned, whether as forest, as agroforestry, as soil carbon in farmed lands, or as peatland, all with net zero in mind, so that they can sustain a net zero economy. Offsets should not be used to spin out the transition against the interests of land managers, and especially the next generation of land managers. Only when net zero is reached can the realistic value (price) of Carbon be known.

Thanks to Professor David VINER for checking this piece.



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Secretary-General of ELO believes we cannot avoid polarization in the future.

Secretary-General of ELO Jurgen TACK sat down with ELO's "CountrySide Magazine" editor Emmanuelle MIKOSZ to discuss current issues.

Edited by Hugh O'CONNOR, ELO

He started by discussing the Nature Restoration Law, returning to the events in July, when the European parliament was voting in favor of this law. At that time, we saw that the content throughout the whole process was systematically brought down from the whole of the countryside to Natura2000 areas. *"While ELO's lobby work proved to be successful, we have to remain very attentive as many private landowners have property in Natura2000. Especially Germany and the Scandinavian countries who have put a lot of their economically viable private land, especially forestry, into Natura2000. In those countries the nature restoration law in its present form is problematic for private landowners so we need to remain vigilant. We must make sure the final version of the law makes it possible for private landowners to keep doing their work in the countryside in a sustainable but profitable way."*

The discussion turned to the expected polarization in upcoming events such as the European Parliament Elections. He

believes that we will not be able to avoid polarization in the future on issues such as nature conservation, on climate, on biodiversity, on private property resulting in political polarization. He believes this is partly caused by social media where it is easier to be 100% for or against something. As soon as you use the word "but" the sentence becomes too long and is not read anymore.

Some biodiversity projects, in which ELO collaborates with other partners such as the Wildlife Estates Label and the European Private Land Conservation Network *"prove almost on a daily basis that private landownership and taking care of biodiversity is going hand in hand. However, there are several strict conditions to make sure we can realize that."* When positive action, whether it's for biodiversity or for climate change, it is important that *"we make sure that our business models stay profitable. At the same, before approving new legislation forbidding certain methodologies or products we should make sure real alternatives are available."*

The conversation then turned to soil related topics. He claimed: *"soil is the real capital we have as a private landowner."* Therefore, several upcoming initiatives are very important for ELO, especially the soil law. We will take a positive approach on the new legislation since the European Commission and Parliament are both promising not to make the same mistakes made in the preparation of the Nature Restoration Law.

He added that although there is only limited time left for the present European Commission, these promises need to be proven as *"under Frans TIMMERMANS a lot of mistakes were made. He completely forgot to take most of the stakeholders on board. You cannot tackle biodiversity loss or climate change without the support of those living in the countryside"*. At the end he mentioned that the new Commissioner on the European Green Deal seems to have a real interest to work together. But the proof is in eating the pudding.





Wildlife Estates annual Plenary Session in Scotland

Landowner-Government Partnership Key To Addressing Wildlife And Habitat Loss

The Wildlife Estates (WE) annual Plenary Session was attended by representatives from 11 of the 19 member countries participating in this project, an accreditation initiative promoting the best habitat and wildlife management practices for farms and estates. Attendees convened to discuss progress, share knowledge, and observe the work undertaken on accredited landholdings in Scotland. During the congress collaboration between government, business, and landowners was recognised as key to reversing the significant loss in wildlife and biodiversity in both Scotland and across Europe. The participants from various countries gained valuable insights from the strong collaboration and trust presented by the Scottish Land & Estates (the national landowner organization in Scotland promoting WE) and the various the agencies of the Scottish Government.

Lorna SLATER MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy, and Biodiversity, attended the congress dinner and praised the “*exemplary leadership*” provided by Wildlife Estates in addressing the nature crisis. A roundtable discussion was also held with landowner representatives from Scotland and countries across Europe, as well as Scottish Government officials, NatureScot chair Colin GALBRAITH, and Grant MOIR, CEO of the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Delegates also participated in two site visits to accredited Scottish landholdings, including Bavelaw Estate hosted by Ed DOUGLAS-MILLER in the Pentland Hills and Hopetoun Estate hosted by Mike EAGERS on behalf of Lord HOPETOUN, to witness innovative conservation projects firsthand in Scotland.

Miles MONTGOMERIE, chair of Wildlife Estates Scotland, emphasised the importance of a partnership approach between private landowners and government across Europe to achieve sustainable land management. He stated: “*Scotland has set clear but challenging targets to deliver biodiversity enhancement and climate-change mitigation and if we have a realistic chance of those being delivered, it needs to be a partnership between all parties – government, businesses, landowners as well as NGOs – to deliver that. One*



Lorna SLATER MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy, and Biodiversity

party cannot achieve it on its own. We are fortunate that the Scottish Government has engaged really positively with Wildlife Estates Scotland and is using the practical information and data we gather on species and land management to inform its own decision-making. We were pleased to talk with the Minister and Scottish Government officials, and it has been a useful opportunity to learn from other countries what collaboration they have in place between government and land managers to address the biodiversity crisis. Landowners and managers need to be viewed as trusted operators by government and that is what Wildlife Estates has been achieving in Scotland. It is an honour for Scotland to host the international congress. It's good to see so many countries represented at the congress and it will encourage the growth of Wildlife Estates as an invaluable asset for land managers, government, academic institutions and NGOs moving forward.”

Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS, Chair of the international Wildlife Estates Steering Group, added: “*We are delighted to be able to visit Scotland and hear about the positive steps they are taking to engage with their government and other stakeholders. As a family, Wildlife Estates takes great pride in learning from our network of mem-*

ber countries and helps us accelerate our ability to restore biodiversity in a collaborative manner, on a landscape-scale.”

In his opening address during the congress dinner, Jurgen TACK, ELO Secretary General, reinforced the message that landowners are part of the solution to the many challenges facing us at the moment. The cultivation of cooperation and trust, mirroring the Scottish example should be developed across all national landowner associations and their respective governmental and administrative bodies. Wildlife Estates can serve as an ideal mechanism to build this cooperation and trust.

On behalf of the Wildlife Estates Secretariat we would like to address special words of thanks to our generous hosts at Hopetoun Estate, Mike EAGERS on behalf of Lord HOPETOUN, and at Bavelaw, Ed DOUGLAS-MILLER.

This summary is based on the press release of the Scottish Land & Estates.

For more information please visit:
www.wildlife-estates.info and www.scot-tishlandandestates.co.uk

Wildlife Farms and Estates Symposium at Holkham

An enlightening day paving the way for responsible land management country wide



Holkham has been at the forefront of pioneering land management for centuries, so it was fitting that it should host this year's "Wildlife Farms and Estates England" (WFEE) Symposium. As summer beckoned, attendees travelled from estates, farms and advisory bodies spanning the length and breadth of the country, to be informed and inspired by speakers at the forefront of their land-related specialisms.

A warm welcome was enjoyed in the Marble Hall of Holkham Hall before everyone took their seats for an informative morning. The welcome from the Earl of Leicester, Chairman of WFEE, outlined the history and objectives of the organisation. Once named "Wildlife Estates", the newly branded "Wildlife Farms and Estates" is gaining a respectable reputation for leading the way in the accreditation of landowners and managers who put responsible land management at the heart of their operations.

Talks commenced with Thierry DE L'ESCAILLE, Founder and Executive President of ELO, sharing the European perspective. He focused on his belief that the principles of land management are the same everywhere and that all landowners have a long-term vision to take care of the land. He focused on the organisation's key role as a research centre and lobbying tool striving to drive change for the better. As he explained, *"We open doors to future opportunities and change the narrative to make our vision comprehensible to everyone - from the public to politicians. We promote best practices, improve perceptions and make people aware of the possibilities. We improve connections and give legitimate reasons for the delivery of change and a new perspective for business purpose."*

Mark TUFNELL, CLA President, followed with their position on WFEE, and what he perceives to be opportunities for the future. Passionate about the organisation's inclusion of farms alongside estates, and the launch of the new and robust accreditation questionnaire, he stressed the importance of WFEE working together with government and advisory bodies in the shaping of new and laudable legislation.

His three key takeouts were: 1. WFEE can help the government to reach its 30 by 30 target; 2. The significance of Countryside Stewardship Plus and; 3. The role of WFEE as a collaborative knowledge exchange where best practice is shared. Mr TUFNELL concluded, *"Environmental income should be treated as business income."*

Scottish learnings, challenges and successes were then shared by Dee WARDS and Caroline PRINGLE of Wildlife Estates Scotland (WES). With more than 200,000 hectares in their accreditation pipeline and a one million hectares target by 2025, they have big yet achievable ambitions. Their core focus, again, is on changing the narrative and cementing the realisation that landowners are part of the solution for reversing climate change. Now established as a credible and trusted organisation, WES is gaining support from Nature Scot and face-time with government and has an advisory board and technical committee to ensure the delivery of evidence-based solutions.

Following a short break, the audience was treated to a talk from author and Holkham's General Manager of Conservation, Jake FIENNES. With eight years on the steering committee of WFEE, he spoke about the value of harnessing citizen-based science, digital technology for tracking and measuring natural capital uplift, and the importance of the WFEE as an accreditation label in the coming years. Roger PLOWDEN, followed with an insight of the application and accreditation process before Tim HOPKIN gave an overview of how The LandApp can help landowners access funding opportunities and design land management plans with ease. Jonathan WHITEHEAD then entertained the attendees with an assessor's perspective and what applicants can expect.

The morning concluded with a focus on the benefits of WFEE. Jonty RAWCLIFFE outlined the reason for Strutt & Parker's involvement and support, this being they fully comprehend how integral WFEE is to the wider picture of cultivating natural capital. Dr Tim COLES OBE, CEO of rePlanet and founder of the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA - a body that Holkham

is championing with training programmes for employees), explored green funding and the generation of carbon and biodiversity credits. Focused on projects delivering natural capital uplift per hectare over a five-year period, he stressed the importance of scientific and academic rigour in formalising and agreeing the future methodology of measuring and crediting biodiversity uplift.

Jonathan BAKER followed, who, as Deputy Director of DEFRA, is responsible for accelerating change towards environmental land management. Interested in bottom-up change for the long-term, he is confident that WFEE will help farms to be strategic and that it is well set-up to successfully implement a toolkit to recognise and drive change. He also shared his vision that the WFEE label could potentially attract a higher payment and/or fast-tracking of applications for future government stewardship support.

Rhodri THOMAS, Head of Rural at Strutt & Parker, concluded the morning with the closing remark, *"If we need to get better at conservation, we need to get better at conversation."* Lunch followed, together with much conversation and knowledge sharing, before everyone headed out onto the wider Holkham estate for a tour with General Manager of Farming, James BEAMISH, and Head Forester, Harry WAKEFIELD.

To conclude, there is no doubt that WFEE continues to strengthen its position as a highly regarded accreditation body destined to recognise and instigate leading land management practice, lobby for legislative change and put wildlife, conservation and stewardship at the beating heart of UK farms and estates.

For more information please visit:
www.wildlife-estates.info



Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Jurgen TACK, Alan PHILLIPS, Anne-Isabelle DEMEURE, Jean de CLOEDT, Guy van WASSENHOVE, Jan BOUCKAERT, Marleen EVENEPOEL, Benoît LOORE



The "Baillet Latour Prize for the Environment 2023" awarded to De Muncken and Scherpenbergen-De Hutten estates

The Baillet Latour Prize for the Environment is Belgium's highest recognition in the field of sustainable private environmental management. Each year the prize, endowed with 25,000 Euros, is awarded to a private owner or manager involved in the ecological design or management of an estate located in Belgium. A jury made up of independent environmental experts, landowners, scientists and journalists evaluates the projects submitted according to established criteria.

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This national prize is awarded alternately by the « Fondation Wallonne pour la Conservation des Habitats » in Wallonia and the « Fondation pour la Préservation de la Nature et de l'Environnement » in Flanders.

Exceptionally this year, the prize was awarded in equal parts to two very different areas, each brilliantly managing, creating and preserving nature in its own way. The Scherpenbergen-De Hutten estate focuses entirely on creating high-quality nature at reserve level, while the De Muncken estate manages to combine nature conservation with agriculture, forestry and housing.

Both estates are an example of how private ownership can contribute to achieving regional, national and international biodiversity goals.

The winners (in alphabetical order) :

De Muncken Estate

The estate has belonged to the de CLOEDT family since 1920, and has expanded over the years. Expanded with private resources in symbiosis with the farmers active on the estate, the municipal authorities of Wingene and Oostkamp and many other stakeholders. This estate, located in the middle of West Flanders, partly designated as a Habitat Directive area, has masterfully

maintained the balance between natural values, agricultural activity, heritage values and highly characteristic landscape features. Baron de CLOEDT inherited the estate from his grandfather in 1996, and has given priority to the conservation and restoration of the rare flora and fauna. This has restored the estate to a situation close to what the region was before massive inputs of nitrogen up to six times the permitted level. The upgrading of the mosaic and semi-open landscape is unique and remarkable. (...).

Measures are also taken for specific species. For example, the estate's icehouse has become a roosting place for bats, and a nesting box for the barn owl has been installed on the barn wall. Trees with cavities will be preserved as long as they pose no danger to troglodyte birds.

Scherpenbergen-De Hutten Estate

This estate is located in the Campinois landscape between Geel and Meerhout, characterised by woodlands, dunes and moorlands, and has been experimenting with nature development and conservation for decades, resulting in some fine achievements. At the head of this work is Alan PHILLIPS and his unshakeable belief in choosing the right approach to private

nature management. This exceptional project has gradually come to fruition, motivated by ever-new discoveries, the natural (and historical) wealth of this region and, above all, the passion for nature of Alan PHILLIPS and his family. The restoration objectives are based on historical data to restore the habitats that existed before the area was exploited, with their specific flora and fauna.

Restoration work is always tested on a small scale, on an experimental basis, to guarantee the expected chances of success and the impact on the surrounding nature before any major intervention. There are very few areas in Flanders where so many different biotopes exist side by side under good conditions.

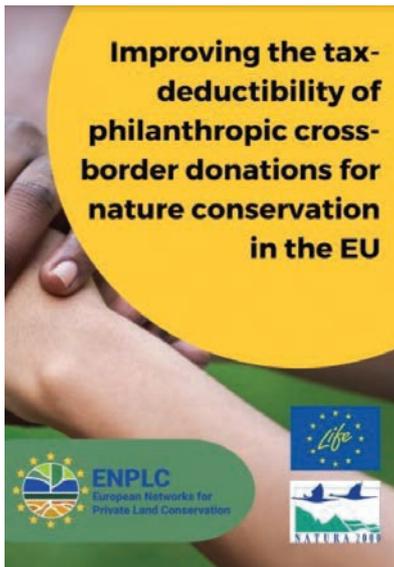
This situation has been reversed by Alan PHILLIPS on an area of around 200 hectares, more than half of which is made up of natural forest, permanent grassland, game refuges, bodies of water and only a few hectares of non-intensive agriculture. The entire estate is located in a Natura 2000 zone, 80% of which is VEN, and has been a protected landscape since 1985.

For more information please visit : www.fondsbailletlatour.com

Life European Networks for private land conservation

ENPLC is a community of European land conservation practitioners who work together on testing and upscaling the most promising tools for private land conservation, advocating for better financial incentives, engaging citizens, and raising public awareness.

ENPLC is an EU-wide network, a union between landowners and conservationists.



Improving the tax-deductibility of philanthropic cross-border donations for nature conservation in the EU

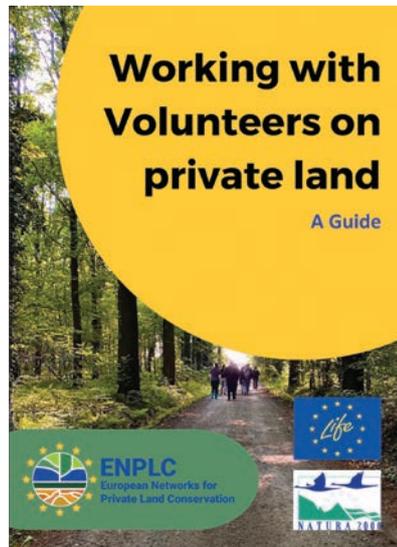
While we've seen notable progress, there's still a noticeable disparity in how civil society organizations, especially philanthropic ones, are treated across different EU member states.

The absence of a common legal framework within the philanthropic sector has far-reaching consequences on biodiversity policy. International and national authorities often struggle with limited funding and capacity, making it challenging to meet their nature conservation goals.

Discover all our reports

Working with volunteers on private land

Voluntary work is a great opportunity for a nature conservation organisation and private landowners and nature estates to effectively enhance its capacities, knowledge and resources to implement a wide range of activities.



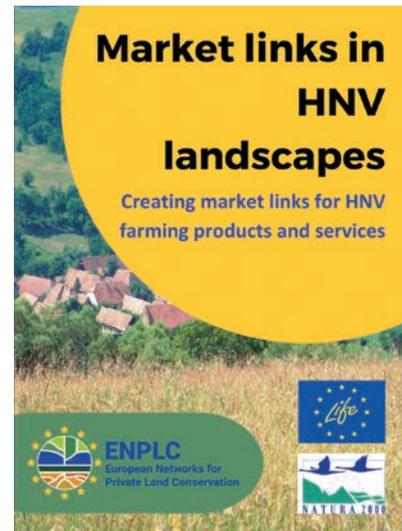
Conservation agreements as private land conservation tools

Documentation on many of the tools mentioned are already brought together by the LIFE+ projects "ELCN" and "Land Is For Ever". This report was built on the outcome of both existing projects. We have thus summarized the main achievements.

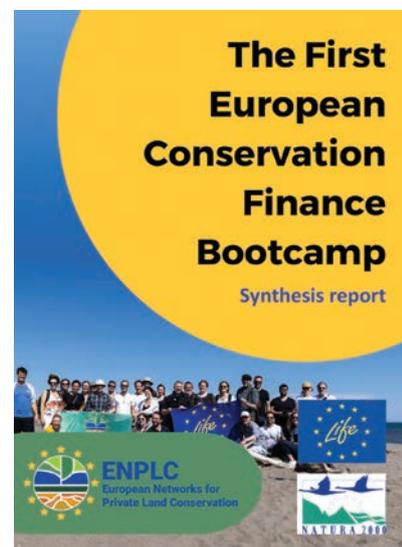


Market links in High Nature Value (HNV) landscapes

The concept of Agricultural Areas with HNV appeared 20 years ago in the EU to promote extensive agriculture practices



which bring important benefits both to nature, as well as to society.



European Conservation Finance Bootcamp

In Europe, public funds have been the major source of funding for nature conservation, while private investments in this field are still treated with suspicion by many in the conservation community.

 @LIFE_ENPLC

 @lifeenplc

 @life-enplc T



This project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under grant agreement LIFE19 PRE/NL/000003



The Future Forest Initiative third event

The Future Forest Initiative organised its third Forum on the 8th and 9th of September 2023. The Future Forest Initiative team welcomed 350 participants representing forest owners, innovators, businesses, investors, and scientists in Blankenburg castle (Harz).

Pauline PIRLOT, ELO

Once again, the Future Forest Initiative demonstrated its ability to establish a unique platform for fostering forest innovation. This event was a great success in this regard. The multi-faceted set-up contributed to the accomplishment of the event. In a friendly and studious atmosphere, international participants shared their businesses projects, aspirations, and inspirations. The result? Emulation.

German and international sustainability forerunner Prof. Klaus TÖPFER opened the forum. Working as executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme and German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety has given him the perspective : humanity and nature constitute an inextricable nexus. We cannot ensure human long-term wellbeing and without ensuring nature sustainability. The main avenue to balance our system's sustainability should combine innovation and traditional knowledge.

The forum was organised as follows. Panels and workshops ran in parallel in English and in German, in separate rooms of the castle.

In the main room, participants could hear and interact with several keynotes (Prof. DETLEF, Ulrich GRAUVOGEL, Martin JANNER, and Sabine SCHULTE BECKHAUSE, Dr. Christian SPINDLER, Monika RUNKEL, Peter GAFFERT, Gabriel von dem BUSSCHE).

In the smaller room, several European enterprises presented their core business. These covered a broad scope of forest innovation, at the service of several issues: forestry (e.g.: the collection and use of big data in forestry), policymaking (e.g.: the use of big data in guiding forest policymaking), and support to foresters and the industry (e.g.: creating a platform for supporting wood-based start-ups).

For the participants suffering from the bright blue sky and burning sun, and in need of a rest under the shade, the movie "Der Waldmacher" was played.

Following these panels, eight start-ups¹ pitched their innovation in a friendly com-

petition. The different subtleties of forest innovation was represented in these start-ups. We could observe a few trends among these start-ups: the development of forest-product based materials as substitutes to 'traditional' materials; use of technology to ease tree planting, growing and subsequent monitoring; forest data collection and make it available and useable to all; the creation of support system for small forest businesses. One start-up stood out with the simplicity of its endeavour, reflecting yet another trend: going back to what nature does spontaneously. A panel of experts with different background selected the winner which was SkySeed, congratulated during the dinner hosted in the castle's courtyard.

The forum enabled participants to experience innovation directly. Six forest innovators demonstrated their ideas in the Blankenburg forest. A hiking tour was organised to meet the innovators, and learn more about robotics, sensor technology, and the production and accounting of ecosystem services.

On the second day, the forum took an interesting turn, instead of having a tailor-

¹ The list of competing start-ups: Lykaia, Yolanda, SkySeed, Complex Earth, strong by form, Mission to Marsh, nadar, and timber worXs.



German. Yet, it supports start-ups around the world.

What comes next

Save the date! The Future Forest Initiative is coming to Brussels in March 2024. A Future Forest Forum will be organised in the preamble of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture. The European Landowners' Organization is delighted to foster synergies between the agriculture and forest forums and give our Future Forest Initiative partners an opportunity to increase their visibility.

made programme, the participants were called to create the programme themselves. Gathering in the main room, the participants could propose issues off-the-cuff.

Then, moving to more intimate parts of the castle, smaller groups could engage into BarCamps. Four issues were selected: purpose economy, agroforestry, smart forestry, and innovation. Each Bar-Camp was supervised by a topical expert and a Future Forest Initiative member.

About the Future Forest Initiative

The Future Forest Initiative was created in 2022 by Wolf GOETZ, Marucs PLÄTTNER, Björn KAMINSKI, Benjamin KOWALSKI and Christoph ZU STOLBERG. The ELO is proud to count some of its 'Young Friends' in the founding members of the Forum and is willing to continue to support the initiative.

The initiative aims at fostering innovation in the forest sectors. It supports networking of foresters, forest owners, investors, and innovators. The two Future Forest Forum organised in 2022 (Brussels) and 2023 (Blankenburg) lie in this objective. What is more, the initiative provides special attention to start-ups aiming at innovating the forest and forestry sectors. This is why the Future Forest Initiative has an accelerator programme. This programme supports the establishment, launch and functioning of start-ups by providing them with mentoring, coaching, visibility, and a support community, among other things. The acceleration programme organises weekends to train and guide start-ups in navigating public communication, distinguishing oneself, but also to create synergies between start-ups. The initiative is

Paris, October 16, 2023



Press release

FOREST: STOP THE DEATH THREATS

An employee of the Alliance Forêts Bois cooperative received death threats from an activist who was present at a rally organised in Paris by the Association Canopée Forêts Vivantes. A complaint was lodged on October 2.

This attack is part of an overall rise in violence against foresters over the last few years.

The Coopératives Forestières condemn in the strongest possible terms the death threats made against an employee of the Alliance Forêts Bois cooperative on September 13, and offer their full support to him and his family.

At an event in Paris dedicated to the sustainable economy (Salon Prourable), the employee was threatened with death by an activist: "*for you, it's a bullet in the head*", "*your head and those of the other white-collar workers will be on a stake*". He continued his invective in a cold-hearted manner, echoing the grievances levelled at the Alliance Forêts Bois cooperative by the Canopée association, a self-proclaimed "*forest protection*" organisation.

This act, which took place outside the entrance to the Palais des Congrès in Paris, is not an isolated incident. It took place against a backdrop of **increasing** verbal and physical **violence** against forestry workers over the last few years.

Faced with these situations, the forestry cooperatives denounce all shortcuts and simplistic messages on complex subjects, caricatured representations and methods used to designate "targets" (people or organisations). These messages, disseminated to create a buzz, create and feed false fears that engender feelings of hatred and a desire for revenge in some people, particularly young people.

As a result, "*foresters (both private and public sector employees) are being subjected to increasingly violent pressure and aggression: verbal and physical attacks, forestry machinery set on fire and sabotaged, brake cables cut on professional vehicles, stones thrown at workers on forestry sites, insults, tags, threats with employees' identities revealed, tree planting uprooted, etc. This can no longer go unpunished*", declared Bertrand SERVOIS, Chairman of the Coopératives Forestières. *We can no longer allow this to go unpunished,*" said Bertrand SERVOIS, Chairman of the Coopératives Forestières.

Press contact: Nicolas JOBIN / njobin@lescooperativesforestieres.fr / 06 88 75 97 39

About UCFF - Forestry Cooperatives

The Union de la Coopération Forestière Française brings together the 15 forestry cooperatives spread throughout France. The Coopératives Forestières bring together 114,000 families of foresters. They help them to manage 2.1 million hectares of forest, harvest and market 7.2 million m³ of wood a year (20% of national production) and reforest around 15,000 ha a year. The Coopératives Forestières employs 1,300 people.

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Page 1 of 1

Droits de propriété environnementaux/ Property rights for the environment

Max Falque Editor/ sous la direction de
Preface by Richard A. Epstein
Préface de Laurent Fonbaustier

BRUYLANT

DROITS ET DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

Property rights for the environment

ICREI and Larcier editions are publishing a book on the role of property rights in environmental protection, edited by Max FALQUE.

In this book, around 28 French- and English-speaking lawyers open new perspectives on the role of property rights in the protection and the management of environmental resources in the service of humankind and the planet. Contrary to the doxa of the political ecology, property rights are at the core of civilization and, provided they are adapted to the new environmental challenges, they are also the best safeguard against overregulation.

The overall lesson should be clear: it is not possible to motto a system of environmental protection that does not include some reliance on private property, with closed and open commons, and on direct regulation or taxation. What matters is the mix.

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FAMIGRO AWARD

PRESENTED BY THE YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

ABOUT

The Famigro Award was created by Karl Grotenfelt in 2013 and is awarded to the most innovative and entrepreneurial rural idea. A project that will contribute to the evolution of our rural countryside, while endorsing their environmental & social responsibilities.

WHY?

The winner will receive:

- €5,000
- A diploma of recognition
- Exposure on our written & online channels
- Invitation to our General Assembly in Siena in June 2024

WHO?

- You are an 18-40 year old entrepreneur and a European citizen with a project of 2 years or more.
Contact info@yfcs.eu for more details!

Deadline: February 1, 2024



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