

# CountrySide

N° 188

European Landowners' Organization

JULY-AUGUST 2020 - BIMONTHLY - EN



**EU Biodiversity and  
Private Land Conservation**



# Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

## Contents

- 3** ELO reflections on the proposed EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 "Bringing nature back into our lives"

---

- 6** Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" first annual conference

---

- 7** LIFE programme 'Land Is For Ever' - policy recommendations

---

- 10** 23<sup>rd</sup> Friends of the Countryside General Assembly – Online

---

- 12** UMECAH Canary Houbara Bustard. A conservation strategy for the island of Fuerteventura

---

- 13** eNatura2000 application – to better connect between land managers  
Land Mobility project - to promote initiatives and innovative concepts surrounding land mobility

---

- 14** Renewal of the YFCS vision at a time of crisis

---

- 15** Fostering inclusion through the on-farm employment of people with mild intellectual disability

---

- 16** Publication in "Ecology and Society", Vol. 25, No. 3, Art. 2  
Diary dates

---

## White Smoke

*White smoke has at least emerged from the Justus Lipsius building. After a long period of political trench warfare, a deal on not just the European budget, but also the COVID-19 recovery package has been reached. While I am happy to see resolution at least, the fact that we needed a public health crisis to make the discussions fluid does not bode well for the European project in the long run. Depending on one's political-economic view, the long-awaited arrival of debt-financed deficit spending is either the start of a negative trend, or the next step in the very long walk to federalism.*

*For land managers and the CAP, there are upsides and downsides. While we regret to see the continuation of overall budget cuts of around 12%, we can take some small comfort in the fact that the cuts did not go deeper. Quite how these cuts will square with the increased political ambitions of the 'Farm to Fork' and 'Green Deal' – both of which will require significant investment to realize – is unclear. The good news is that capping is once again voluntary to the Member States but if chosen is also taking into account social costs; the bad news is that the genuine farmer should still be defined at national level but without being discriminatory; while we object to the serious distortions this will cause to cross-border farm management, it is good to see that the EU has maintained its support for farms of all sizes.*

*Unfortunately, to reach an overall deal, cuts have been made to funds for research and innovation as well as the climate transition – vital tools if we are to deliver a sustainable future and live up to our international commitments.*







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## ELO reflections on the proposed EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 “Bringing nature back into our lives”

*ELO welcomes with great interest the new strategy of the European Commission. We recognise the intention of inclusiveness with all stakeholders and, when working alongside the institutions to halt the loss of biodiversity, we believe that no sustainable solution leading to reintroduce biodiversity could be achieved without landowners and efficient land management.*

To put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, the EU Commission proposed to step up the protection and restoration of nature by improving and widening the network of protected areas and by developing an ambitious EU Nature Restoration Plan. As privileged observers and custodians of Europe's nature, landowners are particularly impacted by the progressive disappearance of numerous species and habitats in the area where they are living and working. Like every citizen, and even before reaching its climax in the public opinion, many land managers were conscious of the necessity of a transformative change towards a more nature-based land management. The imperative of making a living in low-margin land-based activities (farming and forestry) in an era of rapid technical change meant that it has taken time to realise the negative side effects of some activities. At this point of our economic development, landowners are of course ready to reshape how they manage land to embrace nature-based approaches to a higher degree and to try and restore lost natural capital.

**Considering that almost 95% of Europe's land is in private hands, landown-**

**ers should be considered prime partners in ensuring the success of any biodiversity targets.** Indeed, this transformative change can only occur if, as a starting point, it is understood that biodiversity and nature encompass a wide variety of land types, users, and management strategies under different socio-economic circumstances in the European Union. Geographical differences and climate constraints, but also legal, economic, and social differences between Member States are realities which must be recognised before adopting any new EU biodiversity targets. Those elements have been underestimated in the past. This created a European political agenda which was and still is disconnected from the difficulties that private managers face in the field.

Even if land managers contributions have been progressively recognised at EU level, the repeated failure to achieve EU Biodiversity 2020 goals indicates that there is room for improvement. In particular, land managers should be more clearly empowered and encouraged as well as having access to suitable tools and financing to contribute efficiently to this collective goal. ELO can only regret that during the last

decade, despite an increase of the global budget and an increase of land surface for nature conservation, biodiversity continues to decline. This is why we call for focussing at European level on the real problems that remain the most pressing ones.

### **Protecting and restoring nature in the European Union**

As the EU Commission believes that biodiversity fares better in protected areas and the current network of legally protected areas is too small, the network should be widened. At least 30% of the EU land and 30% of the EU sea area should be protected and connected with one another by the set-up of ecological corridors, to become a true Trans-European Nature Network. The proposed commitments are feasible in their own right, but ELO's view is that as long as quantitative targets remain the main objective, there won't be any significant qualitative improvement in term of biodiversity. **ELO believes that the EU Commission's ambition to restore and increase biodiversity cannot be achieved in a protected area only.**

Significant progress has been made, notably in the implementation and on the



communication towards land managers in Natura 2000 areas. The exercise of the “Nature Fitness Check” has been proven to be very useful in that sense. Recently through the “EU Action Plan for nature, people, and the economy”, the European Commission recommends that landowners and users should be consulted at every stage of the decision-making process. What was true then, should remain valid when implementing the new EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. It is clear that EU nature conservation measures and especially the EU Birds and Habitats Directives’ obligations are still a challenge to implement for many private managers.

**The three pillars of sustainability: economic viability, environmental protection and social equity, remain essential elements for a successful implementation of EU nature legislation. But pursuing environmental protection without taking into account economic viability and so-**

**cial equity, proved to lead to disappointing results. (...)** Qualitative and effective management plans to restore biodiversity should therefore be at the centre of the EU strategy. (...) Landowners should be the natural and preferred partners at EU level to implement the right management tools in order to enhance biodiversity. Voluntary measures and contractual agreements have proven to be very effective. For this reason, ELO recommends choosing a wide range of voluntary tools for the conservation of private land at EU level. Many Life+ projects have such tools. (...)

**Strict protection is not the most effective solution**

“Within the 30% protected areas, 10% should be strictly protected”. With regards to this objective, ELO does not understand why and how this measure would achieve the desired result. **If this target involves the total abandonment of economic intervention, ELO believes that strict protec-**

**tion will lead to a result that is strictly opposite to what is intended.** This 10% strict protection should be preferably applicable to state-owned land and stay voluntary for private land areas. (...) This is why ELO considers it essential to reach agreement on detailed EU-wide criteria. This is the prerequisite to succeed in defining strict protection that the Member States must implement in a fair and impartial manner. (...)

**Work with farmers with adequate incentives to improve biodiversity**

(...) **As for many years, the ELO is still advocating payments for ecosystems services.** Unfortunately, the EU fails to adopt what would constitute a decisive set of measures for land managers or at least explain which existing instruments would allow this approach. ELO regrets that this measure is not even mentioned as an essential instrument. Farmers and foresters are ready to engage for biodiversity but they need to understand how the suggested target of 10% agricultural area under high-diversity landscapes will be designated and articulated with the new CAP. Will it be included in the eco-scheme architecture and how will it be paid for? In parallel, pollinator decline must be reversed and land managers through multifunctional field margins can play an important role. The EU pollinators initiative was particularly timely and we would favour more ambitious programmes with a clear link with the new CAP and the Farm to Fork Strategy. In the same spirit, the proposed reduction of chemical pesticides should go hand-in-hand with the development of more environmentally friendly alternatives enabling farmers to ensure Europe’s and the world’s food security. (...) The ELO supports the proposals to review these two sets of regulations for biocontrol and for biotechnology.

**Ensure objectives are accompanied by the necessary financial incentives**

Private landowners are ready to envisage the use of the EU Commission proposal of leverage instruments to respond to this new business model. Therefore, **ELO welcomes the proposed investment priorities in Natura 2000 and green infrastructure and the European Commission’s exercise suggesting 20 billion euro/year be spent on nature. However, this is only a fraction of what would be needed to properly fund biodiversity.** Synergies with other EU funding flows are particularly important and we know that they are not in themselves completely effective today. (...) ELO also calls for improving the use and adoption of the existing financing mechanisms to boost actions linked to biodiversity.



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Iberian lynx

ELO, with the support of the Life program under the project “Land Is For Ever”, reviewed existing and innovative mecha-

nisms, to present to the European Commission a list of tools that can be supported from the individual landowners' perspective. These tools including payments for ecosystem services, tax benefits, and labels for nature conservation management or durable natural products are being explored.

#### Conclusion

The new proposal of the European Commission is undoubtedly ambitious. We welcome the efforts made to establish a timetable. However, there is a danger linked to the maintenance of coherent developments across the various policies involved and therefore to the complexity of implementing this strategy combining new objectives and targets related to the food chain and new CAP. This complexity carries a great risk to be mitigated or see the distress of our land managers worsen.

It is very important to remember that all of the measures being proposed under the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies and the CAP, will ultimately impinge on individual, usually small, single-family farmers or foresters who are already managing the effects of climate change on their activities. ELO, therefore, awaits close consultation as this process develops and looks forward to in-depth, thorough and convincing impact assessments to show that

the strategies and policy measures put in place are likely to be effective for the environment as well as facilitating viable rural businesses and communities. (...)

Farmers, foresters, rural entrepreneurs need to know what is expected from them if we want to protect and promote biodiversity coherently and efficiently and what should be an appropriate environment to achieve this objective through collective and individual responsible ownerships.

**The full version of that ELO paper is available on [www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)**

***ELO is ready to actively contribute to this dialogue. It calls on the Commission on the one hand to offer the Member States a simple, precise and efficient toolbox and to recognize that more controls and reinforced application, without at the same time providing incentives to landowners and land users, on the other hand, are not expected to generate the expected results of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.***

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## Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” first annual conference

*On June 30, the European Parliament’s “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” Intergroup held its first high-level conference of its new 2019-2021 term entitled “EU Biodiversity Strategy reloaded: Making sure it works”. The event was hosted by the President of the Intergroup, MEP Álvaro AMARO (EPP) and Intergroup Vice-Presidents MEP Alex AGIUS SALIBA (S&D) and MEP Elsi KATAINEN (Renew Europe).*



Delphine DUPEUX, ELO

**With an exceptional attendance of more than 250 online participants, the meeting was moderated by Dr Hilde EGGERMONT, Coordinator of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform. The event was organised by ELO in conjunction with FACE-European Federation for Hunting and Conservation. Many Members of the European Parliament joined the conference.**

The President and Vice-presidents of the Intergroup, as well as the majority of experts, pointed out the importance to consider rural actors as prime partners for the future implementation of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. Kim FRIEDMAN, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), underlined the need to involve stakeholders in the process of effective policy implementation. Erik GERRITSEN, Senior Policy Analyst at IEEP emphasized that the renewed biodiversity ambition in the EU Green Deal and 2030 Strategy is a real opportunity for all stakeholders who believe in a living countryside to join forces.

Most of the interventions regretted the lack of implementation of Natura 2000 Directives and deplored that the EU is

failing to find adequate solutions to reverse the current trends of biodiversity losses. Jurgen TACK, ELO Scientific Director suggested that qualitative and effective management should be at the centre of the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy. Since voluntary measures and contractual agreements have proven to be very effective, ELO recommends choosing a wide range of voluntary tools for the conservation of private land at EU level such as the ones analysed in the LIFE programme ‘Land Is for Ever’ (*red.: more in this edition*).

Both MEP Elsi KATAINEN and Jurgen TACK, also explained that if we want Europe to be a leading continent in the field of ecological sustainability, we need the social, cultural and economic pillars at the core of the debate. If we ask for ambitious environmental results from farmers, foresters, landowners, hunters and entrepreneurs, we need to allocate enough resources for them to operate, to successfully implement this strategy and reach concrete results. Erik GERRITSEN added that EU institutions must take urgent steps to meet known investment needs,

not only through dedicated nature funding but also through better integration for example with CAP Strategic Plans.

Humberto DELGADO ROSA, Director of Nature Capital for the Directorate-General for the Environment was invited as the keynote speaker. He described at length the different targets of the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy with particular attention on the new EU restoration plan binding target which is the first time that it is labelled in that format. He confirmed that this objective will be reviewed with a proper impact assessment. In his view, this target is the one offering a positive message as it is about putting nature back where it is needed.

MEP Alvaro AMARO, President of the Intergroup’s final remarks were in favour of rural stakeholders by recalling their successful initiatives and valuable networks on the ground which are key to tackle current and future EU environmental challenges.

**For more information:**  
[www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)





## Adapting new conservation tools to engage private landowners in national and regional conservation efforts in EU Member States

More information: [www.landisforever.eu](http://www.landisforever.eu)

# Private Land Conservation

The overall purpose of this project is to create a network of European private landowners that are involved in nature conservation, to expand the use of private land conservation methods and approaches in the EU through dialogue with these landowners and their representatives.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

60% of the Natura 2000 network is owned by private landowners. So private land conservation is an important tool to halt biodiversity loss in Europe. One out of three respondents indicate they already use their private land for nature conservation. This makes private landowners an important target group to realise biodiversity related objectives within Europe.

Expand the use of private land conservation methods in the EU

Develop recommendations for more effective private land conservation policies

Publish recommendations on how to roll out these policies effectively on a larger scale

Promote nature conservation as a valuable type of land management

### 02

The certification of products (FSC and PEFC are the most used labels for forestry products) and estate management (the Wildlife Estates Label is the most important wildlife management label among individual private landowners) are major incentives for private landowners in Europe to participate in private land conservation. Getting public recognition is extremely important for individual private landowners.

### 01

Private landowners have a strong preference for voluntary programmes. Due to the diversity of habitats, species, landscapes, cultural and economic use of private land and the diversity of landowners, private landowners and managers need to have a choice between different tools to implement private land conservation.

### 03

Private landowners and managers prefer financial incentives for a service (annual payments) or on a product basis (carbon credits, payments for ecosystem services, ...).

### 04

Tax benefits for income, property or land taxes or taxes related to the transfer or sale of land are welcome incentives to individual private landowners actively involved in nature conservation.

### 05

Most landowners are prepared to conserve a part of their land as wildlife habitat or as natural area.

### 06

For many private landowners public access remains a major concern and a reason not to participate in private land conservation programmes. There is a need to develop a specific set of tools to tackle this problem.

The graphs in this brochure are based on a report prepared by K&DM International analysing the results of a survey conducted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in consultation with Lori Weigel (Principal, New Bridge Strategy) in the period 27 May 2019 – 29 June 2019. The online survey was conducted among landowners and managers in the 28 EU European Member States and was available in eleven languages. 747 respondents completed the survey.



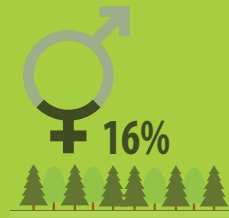
The project 'Land Is For Ever' has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union under the grant agreement LIFE17PREBE001.





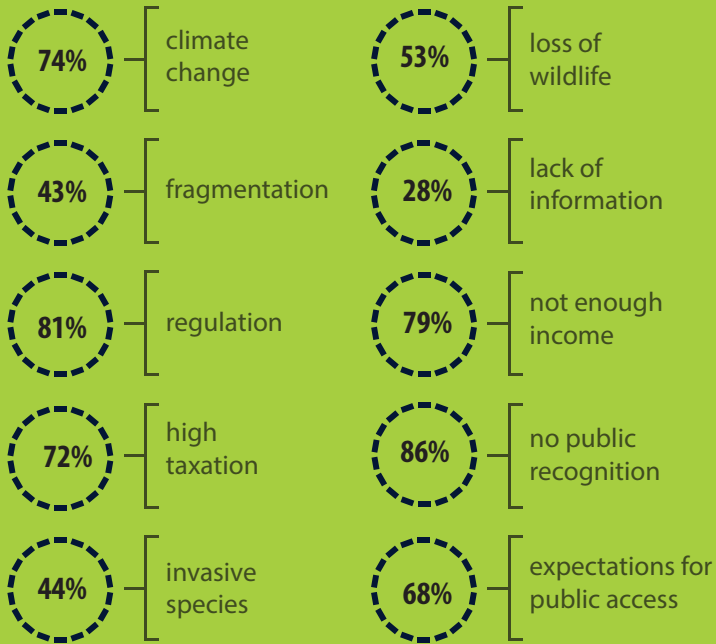
## Female landowners

An increasing number of landowners and landmanagers are female. Their approaches to land management are often different from their male counterparts



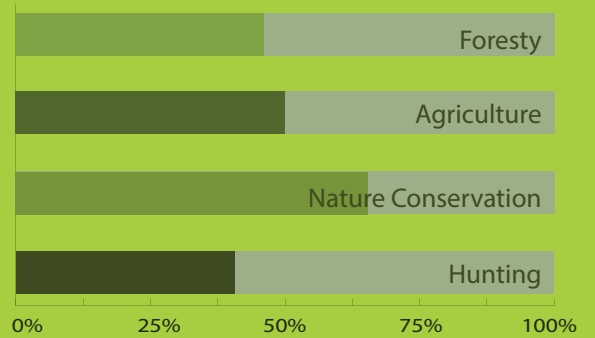
## Nature conservation: issues related to private landownership

The following issues are seen as very important to private landowners (percentage of total of respondents)



## Female landowners and land management

Female landowners show a much larger interest in nature conservation compared with their male counterparts. The opposite is the case for hunting.



# 23<sup>rd</sup> Friends of the Countryside General Assembly – Online

*As for so many events since March this year, latest technologies have come to the rescue to somehow replace face to face meetings. The FCS General Assembly was no exception and on June 24 members turned to their screens to follow the GA online.*



Sophy SMITS VAN OYEN – MALTZOFF, FCS

FCS President Michael zu SALM-SALM gave everyone his customary hearty and warm welcome, wishing everyone safe and well during these tremendously strenuous times. He went on to regret the postponement of the meeting in Córdoba and looks all the more forward to meeting there next year.

After legal formalities were completed thanks to Jurgen TACK, Director of scientific and research programmes, 29 new members were approved as well as 2 new board members, Ginevra VISCONTI from Italy and Fabian WENDENBURG from Germany. The latter replaces Wolfgang von DALLWITZ who, after more than 20 years with FCS, is retiring. The FCS wish him well.

FCS General Secretary Thierry de l'ESCAILLE presented his annual summary of ELO activities

mentioning in particular FCS's new South American members and how the Green Deal may influence CAP reforms. Other concerns included biodiversity strategies and the topic of land access. He then went on to commend the Wildlife Estates label which is expected to cover 2 million hec-



tares and present the 30 projects in which the ELO is involved.

Marketing Manager Natalya ZINYCH, from FCS new sponsor John Deere, with its 180 year old history, joined to introduce a very positive video presentation and state that John Deere sees digitalisation and technology as the way to the future to become a smart, ecological, agricultural and industrial company.

After a series of questions from some members via the chat line, vice president of Young Friends, Anna ZAHEDI, gave a refreshing account of how the new and dynamic board have promoted digitalisation to stay in contact with members, update the website and give young enterprising members the opportunity to fuel their interest in rural landscape. You can find out more about the YFCS in the article in this edition.

Claudia NAVARRO, YFCS member, presented the General Assembly for 2021 which will take place from **June 3 to June 6**, presenting the 6 agricultural business tours to choose from. The Pre-tour will take place from May 31 to June 3.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE then announced the postponement of the FCS Study Tour in

Wales to September 2021 when members will be welcomed to an in-depth study of local practices and industries. He also introduced the forthcoming re-structuring of the Welcoming Estates Website and invited members to follow its successful Instagram account.

A special address from Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO, Director General, DG ENVI noted that our dependence on agriculture has become all the more obvious with the crisis and that our relationship with nature must be urgently fixed.

For those who missed the online GA, a recording is available on your Trusted Area.

If you require additional information about the General Assembly next year, please contact Jehanne de DORLODOT at [coordination@elo.org](mailto:coordination@elo.org). For information about Wales or the WEW, please contact Sophy SMITS VAN OYEN at [events@elo.org](mailto:events@elo.org).

10

Discover these beautiful countryside estates that are grouped together on one site and offer you a multitude of activities.

With confinement now easing, you can once again visit, stay, eat, buy, hike, bike or plan events at the Welcoming Estates.

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[www.welcomingestateswebsite.com](http://www.welcomingestateswebsite.com)

**For more information please visit:**  
[www.friendsofthecountryside.org](http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org)  
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\* Wheat input cost according to Agribenchmark data for France, United Kingdom and Germany. Diesel / ha according to Agribenchmark data for France, United Kingdom and Germany. Input cost reduction for guidance systems with 15 cm is 8% according to Lohnunternehmen 1/2010. In this case we only compare the difference to the less accurate 30 cm EGNOS signal, so the benefit is half of 8% = 4%. Labour cost according to Agribenchmark France, United Kingdom and Germany. Productivity increase according to Landtechnik 6/2006 with SF1 is 14%. Again, we're comparing only to the half as accurate EGNOS 30 cm correction signal, so the gain is 14% / 2 = 7%. Section control input cost reduction according to Profi Dec. 2012. Note, the smaller the field and the less rectangular the shape of the field, and the wider the implement working width and the smaller the individual implement sections, the higher the benefit. For big fields with rectangular shape the section control benefit is minimal.

<sup>1</sup>AutoTrac SF1 provides 15 cm accuracy vs. only 30 cm with EGNOS; <sup>2</sup>BRX tractors; <sup>3</sup>7R, 8R, 8RT, 8RX tractors; <sup>4</sup>6R, 7R, 8R tractors

# UMECAH Canary Houbara Bustard. A conservation strategy for the island of Fuerteventura



Dr. Carlos OTERO, WE Scientific Committee Chairman, IUCN SSC Bustard Group Member



Author: F. SANCHEZ

The island population of Houbara Bustards in Fuerteventura has been reduced in recent years to a critical situation.

## Background

The *Biosphere Reserve of Fuerteventura* island was certified as a Wildlife Estate in July 2017. The audit of Wildlife Estates revealed some shortcomings, such as an improvable *Threshold of Tranquillity*, an underutilized AUA (Area Used for Agriculture), a scarce water availability as it could not be otherwise in a landscape with desert features such as the *majorero* and a *CAP* or *Hosting Capacity of the Habitat* that can be improved.

The current socio-economic model of Fuerteventura, mainly focused on the use of tourist resources, has blurred the historical rural profile of the island and currently there is a lack of agricultural activity (not livestock) that would positively influence the conservation of fauna and biodiversity and, even more important, the conservation of a rural landscape that is gradually being lost.

In view of this situation, the Wildlife Estate Project, in agreement with the Island Council, proposed a Conservation Project based on the UMECAH strategy (Unit for the Improvement of the Habitat's Reception Capacity) taking the houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata fuerteventurae*) as the **target species**, and another 10 species as **associated species**. And in view of the ecological requirements of these species, it defines two Pilot Projects.

- Target Species: Canary Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata fuerteventurae*)
- Associated species: Canary Island Runner (*Cursorius cursor*), Hornbill (*Burhimus oedicnemus*), Moorish Partridge (*Alectoris barbara*), Sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*), Marshland Lark (*Alaudala rufescens*), Trumpeter's Bullfinch (*Bucanetes*

*githagineus*), Tawny Pipit (*Anthus berthelotii*), Canary Island Stonechat (*Saxicola dacotiae*), Greater Perenquén (*Tarentola angustimentalis*), Black Lisneja (*Chalcides simonyi*)

## UMECAH strategy

Each of these UMECAHs, understood as intensive management points, with an extension of between 2 and 5 ha, aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- to guarantee the **Threshold of Tranquillity** of the fauna.
- to satisfy the basic needs of the target species, such as **the availability of shelter, food and water throughout the year**.

The cultivation of rainfed alfalfa, the keystone of this initiative, must be available to house between 3 and 9 female houbara bustards with their chicks in the summer season, so the minimum area of alfalfa should in all cases exceed 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

*UMECAH majorera* bases its success on the capacity to attract female houbara bustards close to the area of action, with their chicks, during the dry season (April to October for Fuerteventura) and on creating a marked affinity or love for the surrounding fauna.

All the actions proposed involve the appearance of an *Area of Sympathy*. In an environment so lacking in basic resources for wildlife such as the arid steppes of Fuerteventura, the creation of water, shelter and food points that will last throughout the year generates a so-called effect around the UMECAHs, which has been estimated by direct observation, at 1,200 ha.

It is therefore clear that the presence of UMECAHs does not only affect the area of direct intervention, but also improves the capacity of the habitat in an area that is not negligible.

The UMECAH strategy is a solution that has already been tested and has proven its performance in other steppe birds. It is practical, economical, very approachable, replicable and can be modulated in its development (1, 2 or more years).



Award ceremony at the De Hoge Veluwe National Park, July 2020.

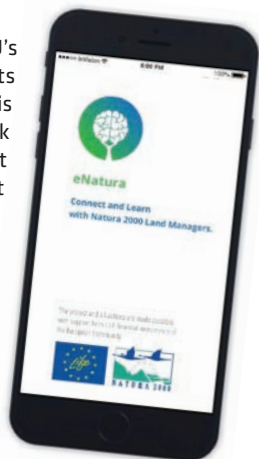
The Wildlife Estate Secretariat is happy to announce a new label awarded in the Netherlands in 2020 to the estate of Heerlijkheid Mareinwaerd. We would like to thank Seger van VOORST TOT VOORST and his Team for having organized the presentation of the Wildlife Estates Labels in De Hoge Veluwe National Park (a Wildlife Estate Label itself).



## eNatura2000 application – to better connect between land managers

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

Stretching over 18% of the EU's land area and almost 6% of its marine territory, Natura 2000 is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world. It offers a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The eNatura2000 program is an innovative three-year project that explores the potential of building new approaches and learning methods to improve knowledge and capacity amongst Natura 2000 Managers.



The project seeks to develop training for Natura 2000 managers while helping them connect and learn together. As part of this project, the European Landowners' Organization is developing a digital application that will help Natura 2000 managers interact. When designing the app, the eNatura2000 team, alongside developer Symantra, reviewed the best digital apps on the market as well as the top Natura2000 applications and created a completely unique experience.

Currently, the beta version contains the ability to connect with other land managers, message them directly, explore Natura 2000 training, and learn about the various aspects of Natura 2000, though features continue to be added. If you are interested in joining the beta testing, please send an email to [Daniel.Montealeone@elo.org](mailto:Daniel.Montealeone@elo.org) describing your background and interest in the Natura 2000 land management. At this time, the application is scheduled for release in Fall 2020, and can be downloaded on both Google Play and the Apple Store under "eNatura2000".

*Note: The eNatura2000 project meeting scheduled during Green Week was unfortunately not held due to the cancellation of Green Week events caused by COVID19. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September.*



## Land Mobility project - to promote initiatives and innovative concepts surrounding land mobility

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

Originally scheduled to meet in person, the Land Mobility project met virtually on June 23, due to the continuing COVID19 crisis in Europe. Although project partners looked forward to discussing the topics in person, these are unfortunately the realities we live in.

The aim of the Land Mobility Erasmus+ funded project is to promote initiatives and innovative concepts surrounding land mobility in European Union countries. The project team will do so by developing training materials and guidelines for landowners, farmers, authorities and advisors in the area of land mobility services, land management partnerships and farm take-over brokerage.

During the meeting, progress was discussed. At present, all training material is currently on schedule, with each partner completing their various portions. Amongst duties, ELO is responsible for dissemination, including Twitter and Facebook (so be sure to join us on Social Media!).

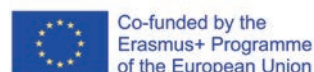
Most recently, the Land Mobility project completed a survey, which asked farmers, landowners, and aspiring entrepreneurs what they know about land mobility in order to better gauge the training assessment. Although we have already received preliminary results, the survey is still available on both the Twitter and Facebook page for the project.

The Land Mobility project will also have a multi-day session to review the training material. ELO is looking for 1 or 2 landowners, farmers, or future farmers who would like to test out the material as it is developed. This workshop was originally scheduled for July, however due to COVID19 has been rescheduled tentatively to November.

 <http://land-mobility.eu/>

 @Land

 LandMobility



*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This website reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project number: 2019-1-IE01-KA202-051449*





The new board of the YFCS met in Belgium last October



Bert EVANS-BEVAN, YFCS member, planting trees in Ireland



Charles de FIERLANT DORMER, YFCS member, pruning during lockdown

## Renewal of the YFCS vision at a time of crisis

*The new YFCS Board has propelled the organisation into the digital era and simultaneously shown pragmatic crisis management. Please read on for the changes and developments that have taken place with the YFCS over the past months.*



Bert EVANS-BEVAN, Charles de FIERLANT DORMER, Alberto HERMOSEL

At the 2019 General Assembly in Angers, last year, the Young Friends underwent a significant transition. With many former board members stepping down to become *Friends of the Countryside*, the *Young Friends* welcomed a host of new board members and the new President, Marie-Christine GrafIn von SCHÖNBORN.

The new board has taken quickly to their new positions and have had an immediate impact on the progression of the *Young Friends*. A meeting of the new board was held in October 2019 to discuss their strategy and ponder new ideas. Since then it has been full steam ahead. The organisation has now implemented several of these ideas and made considerable development especially on the digitalisation of the YFCS. During lockdown they welcomed a fresh new logo by Joana SOTTO-MAYOR and a brand-new website, designed by the DIGITAL LIONS from Kenya, with new features helping to connect with members. The membership application form is now on the website for instance, which will make the joining process more efficient. The team have also created an official YFCS video presenting their vision on the website along with a section introducing the new board.

The new look is particularly aesthetic on the new Instagram account, *yfcs.official*, which has been active since isolation. The communications team created various educational quizzes, the hashtag #iamyfcs and shared articles of interest. They also

asked members to send in photos with a sentence on how they are making the most of being confined in the countryside. They had a good response, with members sending in photos of their activities which included tree planting, hiking and pruning to name a few. Lately there have been posts on the profiles on the new board members. Generally, there has been a greater social media presence for the *Young Friends*. LinkedIn is another site which has been used to diffuse their newsletters and relevant articles on rural development and climate change, among other topics.





We have seen over the past year, clear evidence of the next generation's impact in the agricultural and environmental sphere in Europe. We have witnessed their willingness to be heard. Their voice has grown louder and has helped to bring important topics, notably climate change, into the forefront of most political agendas. Highlights of this activity from the *Young Friends* included the first ever FFA start-up Corner which looked to promote seven innovative start-ups at the Brussels FFA in March. Despite the event being cancelled, the concept was set to be a great success and will return next year. There was plenty of diversity in regards to the focus of each start-up, ranging from biodiversity protection solutions, insect farming and farming data.

This year's *Famigro Award* again demonstrated the energy and ingenuity of Europe's young pioneers. It was an immense-

ly competitive year seeing for the first time four diplomas awarded alongside the winner, *Coconat*. They stood out to the jury as being particularly forward thinking, unique and community driven, though this year saw a great deal of promising ideas and projects.

The COVID-19 crisis has presented challenges and disappointments notably the postponement of the 2020 General Assembly in Córdoba (moved to June 3 - 6, 2021). However, the Board is currently brainstorming and will try to organize another event in October, if the situation allows it.

In these times of unforeseen challenges and changes, this new team is certainly showing a great representation of the new rural generations. The new board highlighted that it is integral to keep the YFCS open and united. They look forward to engaging with the members and enhancing the network. Interaction and input from anyone passionate about the countryside is always welcomed at [info@yfcs.eu](mailto:info@yfcs.eu).

-  <http://yfcs.eu/>
-  @youngfriendsofthecountryside
-  yfcs.official
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs/>



# Fostering inclusion through the on-farm employment of people with mild intellectual disability

*The FARMID project, funded under the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, started in November 2017 with the aim of providing inclusive education and training focused on the social integration of people with mild intellectual disabilities (PMID) through on-farm employment.*

Juliette OLIVIER, ELO



For 38 months, the partners from Belgium, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Spain have:

- developed guidelines for social entrepreneurship in rural areas which give a comprehensive overview of national legislation on how to set up a social enterprise in each participating country and in the EU in general,
- gathered best practice case studies in the field of employing PMID on farms,
- developed a theoretical and practical curriculum presenting special knowledge, skills and competences for farmers who will employ and work with PMID on farms,
- created training contents for sustainable employment of PMID on farms

Based on these contents, the FARMID project has created a training programme aimed at equipping farmers with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences for the establishment of an on-farm social enterprise with special emphasis on inclusion of PMID through employment on farms. The online training programme is available in English, Slovenian, German, Spanish, Italian and French, and will be made available free of charge to all farmers and other interested stakeholders.

To conclude this project, we organised a



European dissemination conference online on Thursday 18 June. After an introduction by Peter SVETINA, the Slovenian Human Rights Ombudsman, who stressed the importance of social farming, Ana AMBROŽIČ and Katja KERŽIČ from the Biotechnical Centre Naklo in Slovenia, presented the project results. They gave a demonstration of the e-learning platform which offers various contents ranging from basic knowledge on mild intellectual disability to entrepreneurship and marketing.

We then welcomed three experts in the field to bring in various perspectives. To begin, Suzanne SMYTH, a doctoral researcher at Queen's University in Belfast, who has conducted research on how social agriculture works, for whom and under what circumstances, presented the Northern Irish perspective on social farming, followed by her research on the impacts and benefits of social farming on participants' health and what should be included in a social farming experience. She said *"employment would provide many more benefits than simply improving well-being, it would provide stability and security"*.

Then, Ilaria SIGNORIELLO, who has been working in the field of social agriculture in Italy since 2007 in social cooperatives, as a university professor, but also in the Na-

tional Forum of Social Agriculture based in Italy, started her presentation. After presenting the role and actions of several social farming organizations in Italy, she showed several concrete examples of social farming.

Finally, Michael LONGHINO from one of our partner organisations Chance B, a non-profit organisation operating in the Austrian region of East Styria which ensures that all human beings in need of help can have a fulfilled life, took the floor. He emphasised the potential of social farming as a means of maintaining social life in our rural areas and building communities.

The conference highlighted the benefits of social agriculture and the need to develop it throughout Europe. For more information, please visit our e-learning platform <http://www.farmid.bc-naklo.si/>

[www.farmid.bc-naklo.si](http://www.farmid.bc-naklo.si)

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

Project No: 2017-SI01-KA202-035535

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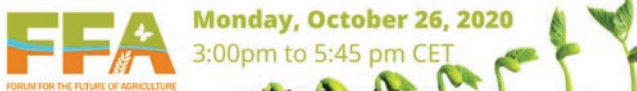


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**FFA2020 Online Live N°2 — SAVE THE DATE**



**Monday, October 26, 2020**  
3:00pm to 5:45 pm CET



**CountrySide**  
is a publication of the ELO  
in English and French  
5 Euros

**Publisher :**  
Thierry de l'Escaille  
**Chief editor :**  
Emmanuelle Mikosz  
**Text editor :**  
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## Ecology and Society

**Vol. 25, No. 3, Art. 2**

**Research: Examining the relevance of cultural ecosystem services in forest management in Europe**

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### ABSTRACT

The ecosystem services framework has become one of the most important paradigms in forest planning and management as a way to link the multiple provisioning, regulating, and cultural services derived from ecosystems and their benefits to human well-being. Recently, there have been multiple efforts in emphasizing the importance of cultural ecosystem services (CES). However, the consideration of CES in management models remains a challenge. In the current context of increased demand for the joint supply of multiple ecosystem services, we aim to evaluate which CES are currently promoted by European landowners, what their future could be, and which factors support or hinder these processes. Our findings are based on a survey of 1182 forest landowners from 25 European countries. By using a mixed-method approach that combines descriptive, ordination, and cluster analysis with qualitative data, our results reveal that CES are currently of high relevance in European forests.

**This article was co-written by our colleagues from ELO: Marie-Alice BUDNIOK & Anne-Sophie MULIER. To read it in its entirety:**  
[www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol25/iss3/art2/](http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol25/iss3/art2/)

## Diary dates

### 2 - 3 September, Wolfsburg, Germany

Wildlife Estates Plenary Session 2020  
[www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)

### 18 September, Scotland House, Brussels

Debate on the RISE Foundation report: Crop protection and the EU Food System- Where are we going?  
[www.risefoundation.eu](http://www.risefoundation.eu)

### 29 September, Brussels - Online

Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" conference on Farm to Fork Strategy  
[www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)

### 13 October, Brussels - Online

Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" - conference on forestry  
[www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)

### 28 October, Brussels - Online

InnoForESt Final Conference  
<https://innoforest.eu/>