



syngenta



JOHN DEERE



ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

Table of contents

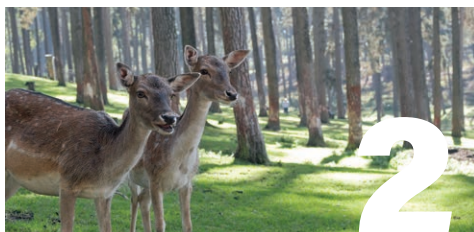
ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

INDEX

2

FOREWORD

5



2

1 THE ELO FAMILY

6

1.1	European Landowners' Organization	7
1.2	RISE Foundation	8
1.3	Friends of the Countryside	9
1.4	Welcoming Estates Website	10
1.5	Young Friends of the Countryside	11

2 ISSUES AND POLICIES

13

2.1	Food security and resilience	14
2.2	The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	15
2.3	Farm to Fork	16
2.4	Sustainable Food System	17
2.5	The EU Biodiversity Strategy	18
2.6	The new Nature Restoration Law	19
2.7	Soil Health Law	20
2.8	Nutrients & Fertilisers	21
2.9	Forests and forestry	22
2.10	Fit for 55	23
2.11	Carbon Farming	24
2.12	EU Taxonomy Regulation and Delegated Acts	25
2.13	Land access and property rights	26

3 PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

27

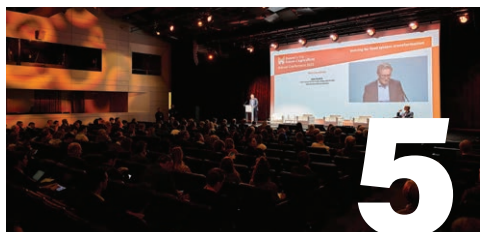
3.1	AGRIWATER	28
3.2	ALL-READY	29
3.3	BioScape	30
3.4	BioWILL	31
3.5	CARBON CONNECTS	32
3.6	CLIMATE FARM DEMO	33
3.7	CONSOLE	34
3.8	DigitAF	35
3.9	European Network for Private land Conservation	36
3.10	EUWAY	37
3.11	FARM ELDER	38
3.12	FERTIMANURE	39
3.13	HERIT	40
3.14	MICROSERVICES	41
3.15	PathFinder	42
3.16	PROPAGRI	43
3.17	REFLOW	44
3.18	SAFEGUARD	45
3.19	SOILGUARD	46
3.20	SOILVALUES	47
3.21	STAY	48
3.22	TERRANOVA	49
3.23	The AgriLife Label	50
3.24	TRANSFARM	51
3.25	WATER2RETURN	52
3.26	Wildlife Estates Label	53



4 ELO AWARDS

54

- 4.1 The European Bee Award 55
- 4.2 The Land and Soil Management Award 56
- 4.3 Belleuropa Award 57
- 4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year 58



5 EVENTS

59

- 5.1 ForumforAg 2022 Month of March 60
- 5.2 ForumforAg 2022 Regional Event in Czech Republic 61
- 5.3 ForumforAg 2022 Regional Event in Sweden 62
- 5.4 ForumforAg Global 63
- 5.5 ELO General Assemblies in 2022 64
- 5.6 European Biodiversity Conference 2023 65
- 5.7 European Tree of the Year 67
- 5.8 Trade Conference 68



6 COMMUNICATION AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

69

- 6.1 CountrySide Magazine 70
- 6.2 ELO Online 71



7 COOPERATION WITH THE EU INSTITUTIONS

72

- 7.1 2022 Intergroup 73
- 7.2 EU Large Carnivores Platform 74



8 PARTNERS

75

- 8.1 European Historic Houses 76
- 8.2 EUROPA NOSTRA: For a value-based and culture-driven Europe 77
- 8.3 Future for Religious Heritage 78
- 8.4 EFFORTS EUROPE 79
- 8.5 European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform 80
- 8.6 European Heritage Alliance 81
- 8.7 European Partnership Association (EPA) 82



9 PERSPECTIVES

83





Foreword

ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

Just as the world seemed to be returning to a form of normality after two years of severe pandemic disruptions, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops in February took most of us by surprise. What very few would have predicted is Ukraine's fierce defense, stalling Russian troops nearly a year later. Thus, 2022 saw the brutal return of history at our doorstep. In the wake of the war, what were soaring energy prices became an unprecedented energy crisis. The Ukraine war also brought the biggest European refugee crisis since the Second World War and major agricultural market disruptions, endangering food security worldwide.

In the background, extreme climate events with record droughts and fires have continued. The challenges posed by climate change to landowners, farmers and foresters are every day more acute. The purpose of the European Green Deal is for the EU to lead the way in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, but the jury is still very much out there on the effectiveness of ever more red tape, with so little involvement of private actors on the ground.

Against such a backdrop, our team battled on many fronts to ensure rural actors could still live and make a living in the countryside, balancing environmental, economic and social priorities. Landowners and rural entrepreneurs are the custodians of the land, and as such, maintaining a living and thriving countryside is at the heart of our lives. Faced with the seriousness and intensifi-

cation of the current challenges, the land manager is asking the European institutions to support and accompany them in a sometimes painful transition. We therefore question whether the proposed regulations will really meet our needs. Why do the institutions often feel that they have to force them to do so through punishing regulations?

The European Green Deal is laudable in its objectives, but its implementation often disregards the realities of people on the ground. Initiatives like our Wildlife Estates label, where millions of hectares are now covered across Europe, is providing a bottom-up approach to sustainable land management. Our new Agrilife network, now in its pilot phase, is the farming equivalent, placing biodiversity at the heart of agricultural practices, without dogma. It is about acknowledging that it is the farmers who know their land best, and finding ways to support them to deliver nature-positive agriculture. This is exactly why the EU should continue shaping strategic frameworks, while trusting and entrusting its farmers, foresters and landowners in the ways and means to preserve their lands, landscapes and natural resources.

Thierry de l'Escaille
Secretary General of the ELO

1

The ELO family

1.1 European Landowners' Organization

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, is a unique federation of national associations from the EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs, at the European level and beyond.

Based in Brussels, the heart of the European Union, ELO is an independent non-governmental organisation that provides support to its members in issues related to the countryside from land management, farming, forestry, and hunting to land access and property rights. Sustainability lies at the core of ELO's philosophy with the utmost appreciation for a healthy environment and thriving biodiversity.

The current and future impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss create both short and long-term challenges for the rural way of life and all the businesses that depend on it. Therefore, ELO, alongside its members and partners in Europe and beyond, is committed to taking a sustainable approach to private land conservation respecting the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic.

Through the organisation of interdisciplinary meetings, key stakeholders can come together to share their knowledge and perspective with one another. By engaging with policymakers at different events on the local, regional, national and European level, ELO is able to help create inclusive legislation that facilitates the work of private landowners and sustainable land use. In addition to shaping policy, ELO is able to create incentives and reward mechanisms for landowners and



farmers that are engaging in nature-friendly activities through countless projects and initiatives.

Within Europe and beyond, ELO has a unique position across the rural, agricultural and environmental sectors with its ability to engage in policy, compile scientific literature, and launch projects to support the rural way of life.



www.elo.org



[@europeanlandowners](https://www.facebook.com/europeanlandowners)



[@EULandownersOrg](https://twitter.com/EULandownersOrg)



[@European Landowners' Organization](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-landowners-organization)

1.2 RISE Foundation







As a think tank, RISE gathers experts to tackle some of the greatest environmental-climate-agricultural challenges we face in Europe today. It develops high quality research reports with clear recommendations for policy makers, and works in EC funded projects under the Horizon programme.

From 2021, RISE focused on Soil, emphasising the fundamental role that it plays in ensuring life on earth. Healthy soils enable not only proper food production, but efficient nutrient management and carbon sequestration. They also play a key role in protecting biodiversity and regulating water resources. Yet, despite the awareness of the role of soil and the urgency to protect it, soil quality has been deteriorating over several decades, seriously threatening food security and increasing our vulnerability to climate change. For this reason, RISE has been researching the causes of blocking and hindering sustainable soil management in Europe, finally publishing the Report on “Sustainable soil management in the EU: What is stopping it? How can it be enabled?”. The publication, available on www.risefoundation.eu, was presented by the Chairman of RISE, Janez POTOČNIK and their authors Allan BUCKWELL, Elisabet NADEU and Annabelle WILLIAMS, in June 2022.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

In September 2022, RISE joined a new Horizon Europe project, called NutriBudget, which will develop an integrated nutrient management platform to optimise nutrient use across different agricultural production systems and regions in the EU. Within this project, RISE leads the work package on *communication, dissemination and exploitation*. Moreover, the organisation is engaged in two *H2020* projects: BESTMAP which is developing tools for European policy-makers to predict the impacts of future policies on rural areas and Circular Agronomics which is testing innovative solutions for efficient carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus cycling at farm level. RISE contributed to developing the policy brief of Circular Agronomics and it will organise the final conference on 15th February 2023.

-  www.risefoundation.eu
-  [@RISE_Fnd](https://twitter.com/RISE_Fnd)
-  **NutriBudget: NutriBudget**
-  **Circular Agronomics: CircularAgro**



1.3 Friends of the Countryside

Friends of the Countryside (FCS) is a strong network of over 600 like minded private landowners, rural managers and entrepreneurs, which acts as a support group to the European Landowners' Organization (ELO). FCS was founded in 1997 and has members from 27 countries, both EU and non-EU, stretching from the Rockies to the Carpathians.

2022 was a very special year for the Friends as they celebrated their 25th Jubilee Anniversary! In that time this unique and united network that began in Florence has grown both in numbers, geography and relevance.

The annual General Assembly is the highlight for members who gather in a beautiful and historic city and share agricultural innovations and practices. In June, 230 members gathered in the sweltering heat in Évora, Portugal - a jewel of a city. The Conference theme was based on 'Landowners Committed to Biodiversity using Creative Solutions'. A highly successful Generational Handover Workshop was then held with insightful personal experiences shared with passion. Field visits included cork harvesting and manufacturing, real estate development of an old castelo, wineries and bull breeding. A pre-tour was hosted by FCS member Stephanie GICOT based on her estate Herdade do Pinheiro and a post-tour on the volcanic island in the Azores. You can find more information in the CSM 200. In 2023, the 26th General Assembly will be held in Poznan, Poland, from June 15 to 18.

The FCS have recently embarked on member led, smaller scale study tours allowing for a more focussed visit looking at specific issues and areas.

This year Board member Jack TENISON invited a group of members to County Monaghan in Ireland to visit a diverse range of agricultural industries (see CSM no 201). Next year, at the end of February, US members Joe HOAGLAND and Tony SIMMONS have organised a compelling itinerary in Washington and New Orleans. Then in September 2023, French member Daniel HURSTEL will kindly host a group of Friends based in Chateau St. Marcel de Felines.

A new FCS brochure is now available that lays out the importance of the Friends not only as a network of support to each other, but as a support to the ELO who in turn represent the interests and challenges that members as landowners face. For copies please contact events@elo.org

 www.friendsofthecountryside.org

Contact:

 coordination@elo.org

 events@elo.org

WITH THE SUPPORT OF  **JOHN DEERE**



FCS field visits during the GA in Évora.

1.4 Welcoming Estates Website

The Welcoming Estates Website (WEW) is a unique hospitality platform that showcases the private country estates that open their doors to the public. These estates belong to or are managed by members of the Friends of the Countryside (FCS) and are primarily located throughout Europe. By appearing on one platform, visitors who are attracted to the beautiful countryside and its nature can discover either local estates or those further afield and so enjoy the many activities and events on offer.

The WEW was launched in 2015 under the initiative of FCS Vice President Seger VAN VOORST TOT VOORST and has since established a sizable nature loving public keen to experience the wide range of events on offer. The elegant and user-friendly WEW website attracted over 6000 visitors in 2022 while the Instagram and Facebook platforms have gained over 2000 followers informing them of the latest attractions at the estates.

As well as experiencing the beautiful countryside and spotting wildlife, examples of events and activities include wines at Torre a Cona, Weingut Salm, Viña Santa Marina, Botevo, Bousval, Roncade or getaway countryside stays at Castle Leslie, Schloss Altenhof, La Touchardière, Borgo Scopeto, Brazzà, Eriksberg, Ford & Etal, Tregothnan, Torre a Cona, and Eriksberg. Estate shops sell olive oils, wines, organic



flours, jams, honey, cider, ale, tea, flower bouquets and more in person or online. Other events that came up in 2022 included theatre plays, concerts, country fairs, beautiful weddings, workshops, biking tours, team building events, or cut your own Christmas tree!

For the full list of Welcoming Estates and events, please visit the website and to keep informed of the latest exciting events and activities, check out and follow either/or the Instagram and Facebook pages.

For more information, please contact:

✉ events@elo.org

🌐 www.welcomingestateswebsite.com

📷 [@welcoming_estates_website](https://www.instagram.com/welcoming_estates_website)

📘 [@welcomingestateswebsite](https://www.facebook.com/welcomingestateswebsite)



1.5 Young Friends of the Countryside

The Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) is a sub division of the Friends of the Countryside (FCS) and aims to promote interconnectivity between young people and FCS members across Europe who have a longstanding personal or professional interest in rural matters, entrepreneurship, land ownership and management of the countryside.



It is with gratitude that the YFCS reflect on the past year and with excitement as we look forward to the upcoming year. In 2022, our members formed friendships across Europe and addressed

highly relevant and innovative topics in agriculture and forestry. Examples of these topics include start-ups addressing a much needed food system transformation, generational hand-overs of family

businesses, the diversification of rural agricultural businesses and the future of farming.





In March 2022, the Young Friends were not only invited to participate at the much anticipated Forum for the Future of Agriculture, but were also asked to moderate at a Start Up Panel Session. During the Start Up Session, entrepreneurs discussed how to strive for food system transformation through innovation. In particular the need for food chain resilience and the sharing of knowledge, a practicality in policies, and the education of consumers were issues outlined by the participants.

Furthermore, in April 2022, Karl GROTENFELT, Thierry DE L'ESCAILLE and the Young Friends were proud to select the rural business "Gut Waltersteig" for the entrepreneurship "Famigro Award". The Famigro Award awards €5,000 to the most promising and innovative rural business. Karl GROTENFELT very generously sponsors the award and we could not be more grateful for his generous support. This year's winner Karl-Ludwig

VON POSCHINGER runs Gut Waltersteig, which is a rural family business. He diversified the family business with the latest generational change into a very successful venue for teambuilding events, company parties, meetings and weddings near Munich. Furthermore, his business is based on the pillars of sustainability, regionality, and strengthening the local economy.

In addition, from the 9th to the 12th of June, the General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside took place in Évora in Portugal. The Young Friends were very excited to join the Friends in sunny Portugal. A particular highlight was a workshop specifically addressing the generational handovers of family businesses in a trusted atmosphere. The presentations were eye-opening and the participants were fascinated - one could hear a pin drop! In addition, the Young Friends joined the field trip "Visit for the Future" where we were welcomed by various Portuguese agricultural businesses and were inspired by the many fascinating examples shown.

In September, the Young Friends were invited to present their view on the labour market in rural areas at a public hearing of the European Economic and Social Committee Labour Market Observatory (LMO).

Last, but not least, the Young Friends invited their members to a field trip in London, discovering innovative solutions addressing the future of farming. The Young Friends visited an aeroponics farm and a hydroponics farm, which both locally and sustainably produce vegetables and sell them to their respective urban communities. The Young Friends very much enjoyed discovering those

technologies and discussed their impact not only on traditional farming, but also on the future of food production. In particular, we would like to mention the Friends of the Countryside and Lord James Joicey, who very generously sponsored our field trip to London!

The Young Friends are deeply grateful to the Friends of the Countryside and ELO. Without their support, we would not be able to provide those wonderful experiences to our members. Thank you so much for supporting us, sponsoring us and encouraging us in every possible way. We could not be more excited for 2023.

We very much look forward to seeing our members in person at our YF events in 2023. Please note that you are welcome to bring a friend!

Marie-Christine Schönborn

YFCS President



www.yfcs.eu



info@yfcs.eu



[@youngfriendsofthecountryside](https://www.facebook.com/youngfriendsofthecountryside)



[@yfcs.official](https://www.instagram.com/yfcs.official)



[@young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs](https://www.linkedin.com/company/young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs)

A photograph of two young deer standing in a sun-dappled forest clearing. The deer are in the foreground, looking towards the camera. The background is filled with tall, slender trees and a grassy floor with patches of sunlight and shadow.

Issues and policies

2.1 Food security and resilience

2022 brought back concerns over food security, both at the EU and global levels. The global economic disruptions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine resulted in soaring food inflation and further trade disruptions, adding to the pressures resulting from climate change. The future looks less than rosy, the 2022 EU's Agri outlook report foresees for the next 10 years a slowdown in the production growth of major EU agricultural sectors, with climate change being the main culprit. Also, according to the 2022 edition of UN's "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World", the number of food insecure people has more than doubled in the past year, after years of steady decline.

The EU objectives of ensuring the availability and access to food for consumers at reasonable prices cannot be taken for granted, and the strategies following the EU Green Deal that set out a long-term strategic vision on how to change the way we produce, distribute, and consume food need to consider these developments. We need to strive for a vibrant European farming sector that can deal not only with the short-term crises but also with the structural problems that threaten its resilience.

Looking at the immediate consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while the trade flows have been restored relatively quickly thanks to the

solidarity lanes the EU proposed and helped put into practice, the availability of fertilisers, energy prices, food prices and logistical costs will continue to be felt in 2023. Consequences that are difficult to be dealt with since these exogenous factors limit the options in the farm policy toolkit and thus have limited impact.

The Common Agricultural Policy helps to cushion some of the uncertainties, by helping to provide relative income stability within a very volatile income and price environment. However, it is clearly insufficient for this level of pressure, not only from current events but mainly from the climate and

other environmental challenges. These are often made worse by political ideology and inaction, explained to a certain extent by the complexity of the issues in play and the limitations of our political structures.

The ELO will continue to follow these issues closely, awaiting with interest the commission paper on the drivers of food security and still pushing for food security and competitiveness considerations in the development of the Farm to Fork, the Biodiversity and other strategies, particularly since no impact assessment has been done.



2.2 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

In 2022 the CAP discussions were centred in the Member States, as the different governments were busy finalising their CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) and incorporating the comments given by the European Commission to improve on the delivery of the nine objectives of the new reform. With the approval of the Dutch CAP plan on 13 December, the new 28 CSPs (one for each EU country and two for Belgium) were ready to enter into force on 1 January, running until 2027.

The war in Ukraine has meant that Member States were asked to adapt their CSPs accordingly, the crisis fund was activated and exemptions to the existing CAP rules were introduced through delegated acts, namely a relaxation of environmental measures to increase cereal production, that will be extended into 2023. The €500 million fund – triggered for the first time in April – can be used to finance exceptional measures to counteract market disruptions affecting production or distribution. Currently, it is only about €3 per hectare of the farmland in the EU, which falls short in face of the expected challenges. The fund will probably also be activated in 2023.

This new CAP reform will play out on the ground in 2023 and as it will be the first time, there are likely to be some teething issues. The ELO will continue to follow the process closely, not least because the European Commission is already looking at ways to reshape and improve these plans in the first of their annual updates.

Also, the CAP budget has been stretched thin over the past few months, thanks to soaring inflation, which has risen to over 10% in some EU countries, combined with skyrocketing prices of key input costs, such as fertilisers and feed, mostly due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The EU's Agriculture Commissioner, Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI, is already presenting the case for the increase of the CAP budget in the next seven-year financial programme starting in 2028, as it is due to undergo a review at the end of 2023. While there is not much opportunity to alter the current agreement, he is pointing out that all existing flexibilities under the current framework aimed at minimising the impact of high inflation have already been used and the funds are increasingly relied upon to fund the aims other policies. ELO supports these efforts, to a budget that represents 0.4% of the EU's GDP, which pales in comparison to other policy areas such as military security, where the figure rises to more than 2%.

The ELO expects to start the debate on the future of the CAP in 2023, since the Commission is expected to come out with their proposal in 2025, in time for the EU programming period of 2028-2034. Our members are invited to continue using our well-established structures, take part in the internal policy meetings and restart their involvement with the reformed Civil Dialogue Groups, to compare national decisions and work towards ensuring a strong agriculture policy that allows for a modern sector ready for the coming challenges.

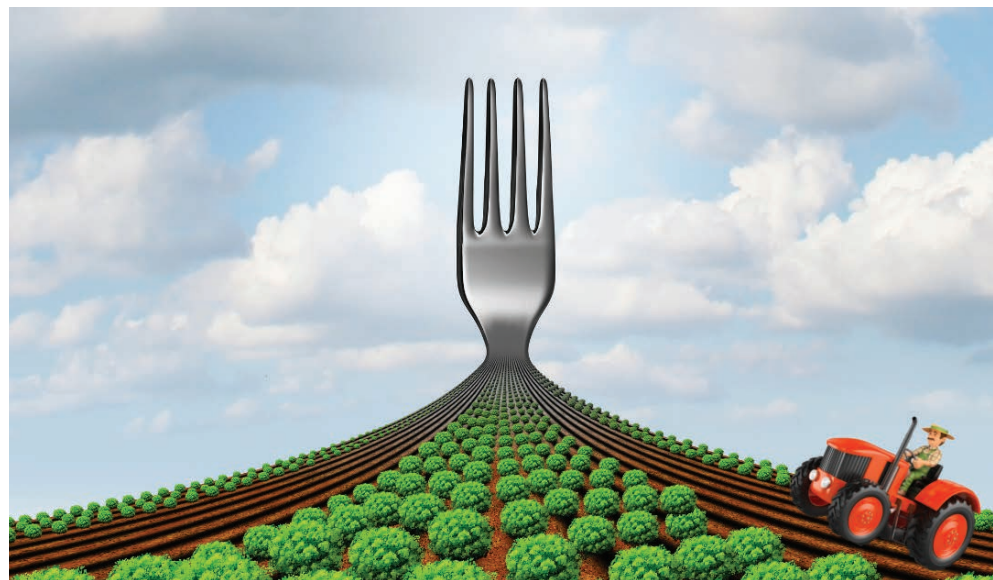


2.3 Farm to Fork (F2F)

As one of the main ambitions on the Green Deal agenda, the Farm to Fork Strategy has delivered several legislative and non-legislative initiatives since its publication.

One of the main highlights of 2022 in the Farm to Fork (F2F) spectrum was the publication of the European Commission's proposal on Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products Regulation (SUR). The proposal sets a 50% Union-wide reduction of the use and risk of chemical PPPs

and the use of more hazardous plant protection products (PPP) compared to the average of 2015, 2016, and 2017. According to the text, each Member State is to adopt national reduction targets, in accordance with a common formula and reliant on their historical use, but not lower than 35%.



A particularly controversial provision was the prohibition to use Plant Protection Products on all sensitive areas, including Natura2000 sites, which was highly criticised by both national authorities and farmers' representatives, including the ELO.

The proposal has entered the co-legislative procedure, with the Council and Parliament already having incipient debates on the topic. In 2023, work on the SUR is expected to continue in the EU Council and to kick-off full blast in the European Parliament, where rapporteurs have been appointed in both the ENVI and AGRI Committees.

In 2022, work continued on New Genomic Techniques with a public consultation, where the ELO expressed its support for the European Commission's initiative to enable access to the market for plants derived from targeted mutagenesis and cis-genesis, while ensuring appropriate traceability and labelling. Furthermore, the ELO has highlighted the potential negative consequences should NGTs continue to be regulated under the current GMO framework, like additional difficulty in reaching the F2F targets or threat of lagging behind compared to other parts of the world that have advanced with these technologies. The legislation proposal on NGTs is expected to be published in the second half of 2023.

With initiatives getting traction in the Farm to Fork area, the ELO's priority in 2023 will be to continue supporting a balanced approach towards the future of agriculture and our food overall system by getting involved in public debates, creating forums for discussion and putting forward to relevant authorities the perspective of European landowners.

2.4 Sustainable Food System

As part of the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy, the European Commission has announced preparatory work on a Sustainable Food Systems legislative initiative which aims to tackle food security by taking into consideration sustainability objectives throughout the entire food system.

The upcoming law proposal aims at providing push and pull measures to foster more sustainable products and practices across the food supply chain (minimum sustainability requirements, sustainability labelling, sustainable public procurement). Other elements of the framework will include common definitions (food system, sustainable food system, sustainable diets etc.), general objectives and principles, governance provisions, enforcement provisions.



While the Roadmap has been published in 2021, the work has gained traction in 2022. In order to increase stakeholder involvement, DG Sante established a new advisory group on food system sustainability to engage with the planning and drafting of relevant legislative proposals and policy initiatives. The members of this group, which began work October 2022, represent public organisations other than the governments of Member States as well as organisations working at the EU level, including the European Landowners' Organization (ELO).

In 2022, workshops with relevant EU institutions were conducted, as well as targeted stakeholder consultations. The European Commission also launched a public consultation on this initiative from April to July. ELO responded to the survey and also provided a position paper that reflected the members' opinions, highlighting the importance of building a more sustainable food system, but stressing some of the challenges that may lie ahead, such as defining a sustainable food system, food prices impacts on consumers' behaviour or the possibility of sustainability labels abundance creating confusion.

The year to come stands to bring even more action in the Farm to Fork sphere. By the end of 2023, a proposal for a Sustainable Food Systems legislative framework will be put forward, afterwards entering the co-legislative process.

2.5 The EU Biodiversity Strategy

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is in full swing.

The year 2022 was marked by the release of the Nature Restoration Law proposal by the European Commission (EC).

This important piece of legislation is considered the cornerstone of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 which was published in May 2020.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 requires Member States to step up their conservation efforts to protect 30% of both Europe's land and sea by 2030, of which 10 % will have to be strictly protected. To reach Europe's protected area target, there will be a need to expand the network of terrestrial protected areas by circa 4% and of strictly protected areas by circa 7%. More work is required for marine protected areas, which must see an increase of 19% by 2030.

As per the EC guidance, the new category of strictly protected areas to enhance Europe's protected area network, the ELO was vocal in appealing to the EC to avoid restrictions on some human activities, including forestry, hunting and fishing. We miss an effective recognition of key stakeholders to promote community-based conservation and believe the level of management and conservation should be decided at the local level balancing out the economic, social and environmental requirements. We explained that we regret the focus on conservation measures and a return to the past, rather than future-proofing our production systems and land management. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to deal with a generally unpredictable multifaceted situation. A proper analysis of the impacts of what was being proposed should have been a key prerequisite.

With the guidelines in place, Member States were asked to start identifying the areas. They had until the end of 2022 to submit their pledges to the EC, but those pledges have not yet been received - they should arrive in the beginning of 2023. The ELO will pay particular attention to the Member States' submissions.

The Commission will organize a series of biogeographical seminars in early 2023 to review the pledges at the level of each biogeographical region to check whether the proposed areas are ecologically coherent and collectively meet the 30%/10% target. By 2024, the EC will assess whether further action or new EU legislation is needed. The ELO stands ready to take part in the processes and to be vocal about the numerous challenges this new designation process would entail, especially on the primary and old-growth forest targets.

In 2023, the ELO will have to be particularly present and active to follow the work on all the components of the biodiversity strategy. Through the coordination of the EU Biodiversity Platform (EUBP), the NADEG and the Working Group on Pollinators (WGP) we will continue our advocacy work towards a more sustainable approach to nature conservation.

Two new online tools to track progress in implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 were released. Hosted by the EU Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, an online actions tracker provides up-to-date information on the state of implementation of more than 100 actions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The dashboard is in its prototype phase, starting with a set of seven indicators that will be further developed. <https://bit.ly/3pY8Ykr>

Two other new pieces of legislation foreseen for 2023 are of particular importance in the context of the EU Biodiversity Strategy: the New EU framework for forest monitoring and strategic plans and the EU Soil Health Law. Please refer to the two concerned articles, to learn about the ELO's involvement. (2.5 + 2.7)



2.6 The new Nature Restoration Law

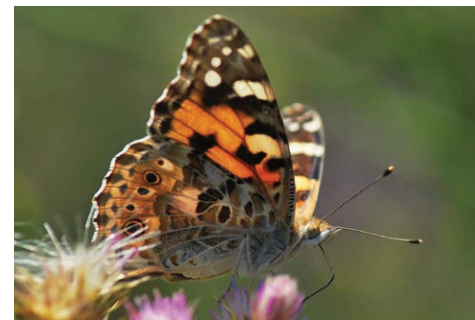
The previous European Unions' target to restore at least 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020 was not reached, partly due to a failure to establish appropriate baseline data and a lack of political will to act at the appropriate scale.

In June 2022, the European Commission adopted pioneering proposals to restore damaged ecosystems and bring nature back across Europe. The proposal for a Nature Restoration Law aims to cover at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures, and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

Therefore, the Nature Restoration Law combines binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species with all-encompassing restoration objectives for the long-term recovery of nature in the EU. The priority focus areas include peatlands, freshwater ecosystems, agro-ecosystems (grasslands in particular) and forests. Member States are expected to submit National Restoration Plans to the European Commission to display how they plan to deliver on those targets. They will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on their progress. However, in the next step, the proposed legislation will be discussed in the European Parliament and Council and needs to be approved by the European Parliament before coming into force. The European Parliament report is in preparation and is expected to be adopted by mid-2023. The ELO will organise debates and expert meetings throughout the process to contribute and offer adequate alternatives when needed.

At this stage, the ELO considers that the current regulation does not offer adequate solutions to the irreversible changes caused by climate change. Resilient ecosystems imply that we adapt to the new normal, to the more frequent extreme weather events that bring uncertainty and difficulties that we are not yet totally measuring. We need to move beyond protection and restoration alone and focus on adaptation and resilience. The nature restoration proposal, in particular, leaves unanswered the question of financing. Without adequate compensation and incentives, the measures will have an immediate negative impact on land managers, as the real costs surpass the potential benefits. We need to reflect upon the negative impacts on biodiversity and the relocation of the EU environmental footprint. While some species need protected areas to thrive, there are many species whose preferred habitats are man-made and managed habitats, like sustainably managed forests. The restriction of production when not accompanied by more efficient use inevitably leads to relocations of production to parts of the world that do not have the same environmental standards, thus leading to carbon leakage and the export of environmental problems.

Finally, the ELO explains that a top-down approach is likely to impede the willingness of land-



owners to (voluntarily) cooperate. Landowners and managers of farmland and forests have shown their support for the implementation of the Natura 2000 network on the condition that social and economic activities can be combined with ecological objectives and they are involved from the early decision process. During the last 30 years, the social and economic component of this agreement was/is systematically undermined. The EU Nature Restoration Law as it was proposed this year will add to this negative feeling, likely frustrating the goals stated in the EU nature policies.

We are well aware that the international context is influencing to a large extent the current European discussions. Adopted after two weeks of intense negotiations at the COP15 summit in Montreal, countries committed to putting at least 30% of the world's land and oceans under protected status by 2030. They agreed to restore 30% of degraded habitats by the end of the decade; to halt the extinction of threatened species by 2050; to cut \$500 billion in environmentally harmful subsidies, among other targets.

2.7 Soil Health Law

The European Commission initiated its EU Soil Health Law to be published by 2023, addressing soil threats and soil-related issues in a coherent way across Europe.

Soil is a complex living organism at the source of multiple ecosystem services, and its use can have a fundamental impact on the way we tackle climate change mitigation. As already a third of our soils are degraded (source: FAO), it is now fundamental to preserve our soil health in order to maintain productive and sustainable agricultural practices.

In the 2006 EU Soil Strategy, the European Commission (EC) had already identified eight soil threats (erosion, contamination, floods and landslides, decline in soil organic matter, salinization, compaction, sealing, and biodiversity loss). These threats can be aggravated by unsuitable agricultural practices, but accurate land management measures have proved to positively contribute to soil quality and biodiversity.

To face these threats, the EC addressed soil health on multiple policies (water, waste, chemicals, industrial pollution prevention, nature protection, or pesticides) and mentioned soil health objectives in various strategies (Green Deal, Zero Pollution Strategy, the EU Climate Law, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the new EU Soil Strategy); yet a dedicated regulatory framework for soil on its own was lacking.

Therefore, the European Commission initiated an EU Soil Health Law expected to be released in 2023 whose primary objectives are:

- specify the conditions for healthy soil;
- determine options for monitoring soil;
- layout rules conducive to sustainable soil use and restoration.

After a public consultation in 2022, the European Commission mandated an Expert Group on the implementation of the EU Soil Strategy to focus on definitions, criteria, possible soil certificates and scopes of action, with the necessity to increase current databases on soil and monitoring practices. The ELO has been selected and is currently attending the Expert Group meetings, where it was pleased to witness the recognition of the role of landowners in the sustainable management of natural resources and their ecosystem services by the European Commission.

The ELO has always followed soil policies closely, as soil represents the main asset of land managers and constitutes largely a non-renewable resource. Landowners already started to look at solutions to ensure their soil's long-term health and productivity, such as regenerative agriculture practices (a.o. precision agriculture). As such, the ELO welcomes the focus on soil in policy debates and its recognition as an essential asset towards sustainable, holistic, and long-term environmental resources management.

Over the last few years, the scientific community managed to gather and share more data on soil



composition and functions mainly through the EU Soil Observatory (EUSO). On its side, the ELO supports research being made toward a better understanding of soil health characteristics and complexity, along with sharing best agricultural practices to enhance soil biodiversity. As such, the ELO contributes to numerous EU-funded projects enabling a broader understanding of the stakes and factors for sustainable soil use and soil management.

The ELO is convinced that the recognition of the variety of field practices is essential to avoid an incoherent "one-size-fits-all" or "top-down" approach when dealing with a heterogeneous asset across Europe. Furthermore, the ELO points to the potential of specific resource management practices to enhance soil biodiversity and health or to increase soil resilience and mitigate extreme weather events. Overall, the ELO welcomes the elaboration of the EU Soil Health Law and the aim towards sustainable soil use and management.

To find out more about the ELO position and actions toward soil health, we invite you to head over to the Position Paper on the ELO website.

2.8 Nutrients & Fertilisers

In 2022, the Russian war in Ukraine led to one of the most serious energy crises in Europe with consequent repercussions on our food chain, nutrient flow and fertiliser prices. These events are putting more pressure on farmers and field practitioners, threatening European food production and security, already challenged by climate change casualties. This crisis of availability and affordability enhances the debate of nutrient use regulation as the European Commission (EC) points fingers at the negative impact of excessive use of nutrients on the environment.

Nutrient losses in the EU today already exceed safe planetary boundaries. They have negative impacts on public health, the environment and several sectors of the economy. Under the EU's Green Deal, the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies announced that the Commission would draw up an Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan to help achieve the 2030 targets set in these strategies to reduce nutrient losses by at least 50%. This initiative is expected to be adopted by the first quarter of 2023.

However, the events of 2022 were critical for food security and availability in the world, putting an emphasis on the role of Europe as a “feeder of the world” and underlying our dependency on market volatility of nutrients and fertilisers. In response to these concerns, the European Commission published in November a Communication laying down some actions to ensure the availability and affordability of fertilisers. Nonetheless, the document gave no significant concrete short-term solution at the EU level, leaving it to the Member States to deal with the crisis, by allowing them to offer state aid or cap on the market revenues of electricity generators.



From the medium and long-term perspective, the EC opened a call for evidence and an open consultation¹ on nutrient use. Through this consultation, the EC intended to gather expertise on how to mitigate nutrient pollution and inefficient nutrient cycle leading to negative externalities on the environment, with the aim of improving food security, protecting human health and preserving our ecosystems.

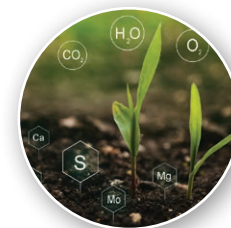
Soil represents the very essence and main structure supporting our farming and food system, and its quality and health is a major concern for the ELO and its members. Therefore the ELO answered the open consultation by advocating for field practitioners' experiences and expertise thus allowing them to adjust the sufficient nutrient

levels on their properties, what they are growing and their specific conditions.

The ELO suggested shifting focus from nutrient use to nutrient losses, moving towards circularity in nutrient flows and aiming towards a more result-based approach by improving monitoring and so have a clear view of potential losses, while also promoting precision farming and sharing of best practices.

This bottom-up approach will enrich and define clear paths of action thanks to knowledge sharing of best practices. In this regard, policies should reward and encourage soil practitioners towards an adapted approach, providing them with sufficient tools and knowledge transfer to choose the most appropriate options.

As a whole, the ELO welcomes an increased variety of nutrient provenance, thus allowing more options to field practitioners to choose from for their specific crops within their soil and climate conditions. In this sense, the ELO welcomes the research being made through the EU Nitrogen Expert Panel and its guidance document on Nitrogen Use Efficiency at farm level. The ELO agrees that European policies should focus on a methodology before proposing EU-level targets for nutrient use.



¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12899-Nutrients-action-plan-for-better-management_en

2.9 Forests and forestry

The Commission developed a large array of initiatives framing and guiding forests and forestry to achieve the Green Deal's objectives. In 2022, EU institutions gave substance to these initiatives, by designing implementation guidelines to the new Forest Strategy, initiating a forest monitoring framework, and adopting the deforestation regulation.

The European Landowners' Organization encourages the development of a policy framework supporting sustainable forest management. EU proposals and legislation aim first at securing the role of forests in the context of the Green Deal by giving precedence to forest preservation. For instance, the European Commission (EC) sees fit to implement the new Forest Strategy by developing closer-to-nature forestry and protecting old-growth and ancient forests. The EC also endeavours to create a common framework for forests through forest management, which should guide the set up of national strategic plans. These approaches tend to disregard the crucial role of forest management and use, which are prerequisites for forest adaptation, resilience and sustainability.

The ELO underlined the necessity to sustainably manage forests, foster forestry innovation and give credit to the expertise and experience of foresters. Only the latter conjointly ensured forest resilience through several channels. It organised a parliamentary intergroup on forestry and climate-ready forests, organised a working group on forest property rights, and a workshop on innovation for a sustainable forest sector. The ELO answered EC consultations and actively commented on the design of the Forest Strategy implementation guidelines. It also organised a workshop on the future of European forests, which served as a basis of reflection for the launch of a forest panel under the Forum for the Future of Agriculture umbrella.

The ELO will carry on with this endeavour with key partners. It will organise additional workshops to raise awareness and strengthen communication with policy makers and civil society. The ELO will also closely follow the forest monitoring file, which still needs to be specified and adopted.



2.10 Fit for 55

The Fit for 55 package, adopted in 2021, sets proposals amending EU climate legislation in order to make the EU climate neutral by 2050. The European Landowners' Organization has been actively demonstrating how land and land management contribute to reducing carbon emission reduction.

The ELO encourages the update of EU climate legislation to reach the Green Deal's objectives. The European Commission (EC) proposed to amend the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED). In the context of the energy crisis, the EC also presented the REPowerEU plan, to produce energy and diversify energy supplies. These initiatives frame land, forests, and biomass as carbon sinks. From that perspective, land management, forest management and biomass should predominantly aim at storing carbon. This approach disregards the actual benefits of land use and management to combating climate change: in addition to their carbon capture potential, using land, forests and forest products is a cost-effective and sustainable means to a green transition, that would also contribute to a vivid rurality.

Throughout 2022, the ELO underlined the importance of using land, forests, and forest products to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal. It did so by providing answers to the EC's stakeholders consultations, discussing LULUCF and RED amendments with the European Parliament, and by participating in seminars on forest resilience to climate change and on the use of forest materials (renewable biomass) for packaging. Overall, ELO contended that sustainable land and forest man-

agement, land and forest products are cost-effective, sustainable, renewable and job-creating means contributing to EU climate neutrality. If sustainably managed, land and forests will provide goods without hampering biodiversity, while securing forests resilience. The ELO will continue addressing these issues in the coming years, in particular concerning the implementation of the Fit for 55 package.



2.11 Carbon Farming

On November 30, 2022, the European Commission published its legislative proposal on the certification of carbon removals. An important step in valuing the efforts of land managers to store carbon in the soil and a milestone in bringing carbon farming to the forefront both as a sustainable agricultural practice and business model. Moreover, this framework is an important step towards achieving the Green Deal's climate target and the revised Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) target of 310 MtCO₂eq net removals by 2030.

The ELO welcomes the approach proposed to introduce an EU certification framework for carbon sequestration based on quality criteria (QU.A.L.ITY) and three transparency requirements: (1) reliable and transparent procedures for operators of carbon removal standards, (2) verification by an independent third party and (3) full disclosure of information on certified carbon removals through public registries. Both verification and certification of the authenticity of carbon removals in agriculture (and forestry) are essential to build trust and interest among buyers of carbon credits or certificates.

in vain and that regional and local differences are adequately taken into account. However, the European Commission's proposal does not yet define baseline, additionality and permanence in detail, which will lead to a lack of transparency in the definition process and consequently to uncertainty, hesitation and criticism.

The proposal will now have to be negotiated by the European Parliament and Council, which is expected to take at least a year. In parallel, the European Commission, with the help of the expert group on carbon removals, will develop the methods for certifying carbon removals, which will then be published in delegated acts. The ELO will closely monitor the negotiations so that the carbon removal certification scheme fully corresponds to the needs of landowners.

24

The definition of carbon farming envisioned in this proposal: *"Carbon removal activities associated with land management that result in increased carbon sequestration in living biomass, thereby improving carbon sequestration and/or reducing carbon emissions to the atmosphere"*, excludes the unilateral reduction of emissions. The ELO reiterates that efforts by landowners/farmers to reduce carbon emissions should also be adequately rewarded.

Furthermore, it is important to define the baseline in such a way that additionality is properly determined, that the efforts of pioneers have not been



2.12 EU Taxonomy Regulation and Delegated Acts

In June 2020, the European Commission proposed its regulation on the EU taxonomy act as part of a broader framework to steer finance towards sustainable investments. The European Commission's aim is to set clear performance criteria to determine which economic activities make a substantial contribution to the Green Deal objectives.

The EU taxonomy framework was created to classify companies' revenues and expenditures according to their sustainability in the light of six environmental objectives: (1) climate change mitigation, (2) climate change adaptation, (3) sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, (4) transition to a circular economy, (5) pollution prevention and control, and (6) protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. To comply with the taxonomy, a substantial contribution must be made to one of the objectives while to the other five a concept of 'Do No Significant Harm' is applied.

The first delegated act (DA 1) supplementing the regulation was published in June 2021 and contains the technical screening criteria, the concrete implementation, for the first two environmental objectives. A second delegated act (DA 2) for the remaining four sustainable objectives is expected in 2023. In the run-up to delegated acts, there is an important role for the Sustainable Finance Platform, which consists of various stakeholders and advises the COM on the technical screening criteria.

Since currently only large public-interest companies have to report on EU taxonomy, it seems not so relevant to the ELO. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that this is not a stand-alone

system and that it will be integrated into other EU policies with relevance for actors beyond those large companies.

Within the CAP, for example, agri-environmental, climate measures and eco-schemes automatically meet the "significant contribution" criterion, as do certified organic farms. This has a number of repercussions because it means that the aforementioned issues are aligned without taking into account the "Do No Significant Harm" principle which leads to inconsistency with activities outside CAP subsidy schemes. Moreover, leaving the EU taxonomy criteria to national implementation of the CAP would result in the same activities being considered sustainable in some countries and not in others, which could distort markets and investor confidence.

Another example of taxonomy inclusion in EU legislation that is relevant to the ELO is the recently published legislative framework for carbon removals, which states that carbon removal activities must provide a net benefit or generate co-benefits with the minimum sustainability objectives. Moreover, they should build on the 'Do No Significant Harm' principle and, to the extent possible, encourage the generation of co-benefits to biodiversity beyond the minimum sustainability requirements. Although the taxonomy legislation



is not literally mentioned in the proposal, it is a clear reference to it.

It is obvious that this legislation must be closely monitored. The original purpose of the EU taxonomy is unclear and its implications for appropriateness, proportionality and compliance costs for inclusion in other policies should be adequately assessed. There should be sufficient transparency in setting the criteria and its potential impact on different target groups. The ELO will provide advice and information for its members to respond to this in a timely manner.

2.13 Land access and property rights

ELO strongly believes that the following four freedoms- free movement of people, goods, services and capital- should be applied across all Member States. Property rights have been and remain as a cornerstone of ELO activities since its creation.

The latest EU endeavours influencing land and their property are numerous. They comprise strategies and laws that are already adopted, such as the New Forest Strategy for 2030, the Biodiversity strategy, and the Deforestation regulation. Other legislative initiatives that are still under negotiation are expected to have similar effects. One example is the EU Forest Monitoring and Strategic Plan. These initiatives have an impact on property rights across the EU. These initiatives create a hurdle: property rights in the EU are as diverse as there are states and levels of power. As a consequence, the impact of EU initiatives on property

rights is variable and disparate, having different implications for different (sub)national entities.

The ELO advocates for taking better accounting of national and subnational specificities into EU policy making. This way, land ownership and property rights will not be overridden, and landowners will be able to manage their land best. Yet there is serious danger that the problems of today are being addressed in the context of the world of yesterday, whereas the need is to develop a vibrant, sustainable and resilient rural economy in which the actors of the past will still have a valid, and validating, role in the future.

To develop this idea further, the ELO engaged in internal discussions with property rights specialists, such as academics and lawyers. Moreover, the ELO issued a reflection paper on property rights, bridging theoretical reflection and case studies, in order to draw conclusions on how to address better EU legislative initiatives having major impact on property rights.



Projects and Networks

3.1 AGRIWATER

AGRIWATER (Innovative and Sustainable Measures of Keeping Water in the Agricultural Landscapes) is an ERASMUS+ project that focuses on educating farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders on possible ways to adapt to climate change and droughts innovatively and sustainably.



All the publications and outputs of the project, including a summary report, case studies and the learning hub, are available through the web-site through free access. The aim of the summary report is to provide a general overview of the agricultural water situation in Europe and the highlighted partner countries including the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium. The case studies offer snapshots of a variety of drought management and adaptation practices. While the learning hub allows farmers and landowners to learn more practical adaptation strategies and water management systems, which can be adapted to their own water management projects. This platform also provides information on the problems and possibilities of innovative adaptation tools to drought from each country focused on in the project.

 [@AGRIWATERERASMUS](https://www.facebook.com/AGRIWATERERASMUS)

 [@AGRIWATER_ERASMUS](https://twitter.com/AGRIWATER_ERASMUS)



28

Through a variety of factors, drought has become a persistent problem throughout Europe. The AGRIWATER project started in December 2020 and finished in September 2022. It aimed to help farmers and landowners through the provision of a learning hub on how to implement and sustainably manage water in the agricultural system and/or adapt to methods of drought.



HOF UND LEBEN



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

Project No: 2020-1-CZ01-KA204-078212.

3.2 ALL-READY

The ALL-Ready project, funded by the EU Horizon 2020 funding programme. The overall goal of the project is to integrate agroecology knowledge into agricultural production systems, by engaging all the stakeholders in the value chain. The Living Labs and Research Infrastructures in coordination with farmers and researchers will generate scientific results that will benefit agroecology transition.



Agroecology is a different way of farming and organising food systems. It is a way of working with food that uses diversity, considers the local context, and employs adaptive management at all levels of the agri-food system. Agroecology is not just a concern of producers. It is rather a profound change in reasoning about the shape and role of food systems, and so includes citizens and policy makers at the local and global level, individually and collectively.

To set up the framework and pave the way for a future network of living labs and research infrastructures for agroecology transition, the ALL-Ready consortium identified the key principles, concepts, and criteria which are applicable to place-based open innovation arrangements such as living labs (LLs) and research infrastructures (RIs).

The primary goal of the All-Ready project is to develop a network of LLs and RIs that will be known as "AgroEcoLLNet." The network will use highly participatory and inclusive methods to conduct a range of different experiments in real-life environ-

ments, enabling and generating the knowledge required to further the agroecological transition in Europe.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Define the mission and vision for the AgroEcoLLNet with all relevant stakeholders
- Identify, map and evaluate existing components of AgroEcoLLNet
- Develop an implementation plan (2023-2030) for AgroEcoLLNet
- Prepare and initiate a capacity building programme for the AgroEcoLLNet
- Roll out a communication programme to ensure a common understanding of agroecology among key stakeholders

If you would like to access the project results and learn more, do not hesitate to visit the project website.



 <https://www.all-ready-project.eu/>

 **ALL-Ready**

 **@ALLReady_EU**



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number 101000349, ALL-Ready project, within the Innovation Action.



3.3 BioScape

Improving Biodiversity in the landScape in Denmark.

Almost two-thirds of Denmark is covered by arable land, whereas natural areas account for less than 10%. Most of these natural areas (85%) are smaller than 5 ha.

The BioScape project was set up to restore and maintain three ecosystems and their services.



This project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under grant agreement LIFE20 NAT/DK/000048

BioScape will, in collaboration with relevant actors, develop new tools and methods to make the process around land distribution more inclusive and transparent. In addition, the project focuses on creating more coherent nature and biodiversity, ensuring clean drinking water and making room for recreational values in nature. Three pilot projects will show how restructuring of agricultural land can benefit landowners, biodiversity, the environment and climate action. Experiences will be shared within the EU through collaboration with relevant practitioners, agencies, associations and NGOs on the project results, for which ELO will play the key role in the coming years.

In this project, there are about 145 landowners involved. The key word is volunteering. It will focus on finding not just one, but many good solutions that landowners can agree to, to make sure there is at least one working for each.

Besides the awareness raising and campaigning, the project has the objective to restore 80ha to optimal hydrology and reduce eutrophication, restore 1500m watercourses in Denmark and establish 260 ha grazing area.



3.4 BIOWILL

The BioWILL project is an Interreg NWE-funded project focusing on integrated "Zero Waste" biorefinery utilising all fractions of willow feedstock for the production of bio-chemicals/materials, renewable energy, and natural fertilisers. The project brings together multiple partners varying from academic institutions to industry representatives from all over northwestern Europe (Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland).

BioWILL aims to deliver a biorefinery model for northwest Europe using willow by producing high-value salicylates from willow bark for medical applications. The bark residue and bark-free willow pulp will be converted into safe food-quality packaging material to replace fossil-derived plastics. The end-of-life packaging will be hydrolysed and used as a feedstock in an innovative bio-energy anaerobic digestion system producing biogas suitable for grid injection. Technology demonstrations will validate how technology integration can increase efficiency, qualifying as "best available practice". Intensive market, regulatory, financial, technical & environmental analysis will produce a "toolkit" (LCAs, business models, etc) for dissemination to all market actors via an extensive communications programme.



Recently, the project partners got together in October 2022, at the Wales House offices in Brussels, more specifically at the Wales Higher Education - Brussels office (WHEB). Here, preliminary products (medical cream and initial versions of reusable packaging) of the willow circular chain were showcased and will be presented publicly once all the administrative aspects have been taken care of.

The ELO leads on the communication work package, and at the most recent project meeting in Brussels, focused on updating the partners about their requirements to contribute to such tasks. The ELO also highlighted a key difference for such activities: disseminating scientific research involves explanations of the work that has already been and is being done, and not shaping the scientific work on how it should be disseminated.

Infrastructure and construction sites of the project financed by Interreg NWE.



Project website:

 <https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/biowill/#tab-1>

Project Twitter account:

 https://twitter.com/BioWILL_NWE

 <https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/biowill/>

 [@BioWILLNWE](https://www.facebook.com/BioWILLNWE)

 [@BioWILL_NWE](https://twitter.com/BioWILL_NWE)

 [@biowill_nwe](https://www.instagram.com/biowill_nwe)

 [@BioWILL](https://www.linkedin.com/company/BioWILL)

 [@BioWILL NWE](https://www.youtube.com/BioWILL_NWE)



NWE 964

31



3.5 CARBON CONNECTS

Carbon Connects is an Interreg North-West Europe project focused on peatland restoration whose original four-year duration has been extended until December 2023.

At a global level, peatlands store at least 550 gigatonnes of carbon, equivalent to more than twice the carbon stored in all forests or 75% of all carbon in the atmosphere. When degraded, these peatlands emit carbon into the atmosphere, but they can also contribute to avoided emissions when restored. Therefore, peatland restoration is an important part of achieving the revised LULUCF target of 310 MtCO₂eq net removal by 2030 in Europe, and achieving climate neutrality thereafter.

Making these restoration projects and sustainable peatland farming activities economically viable requires external funding. Therefore, Carbon Connects aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from drainage practices while proposing new viable and sustainable economic models for peatland use. Led by partners from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, the Carbon Connects project has been able to manage and innovate ten pilot sites in north-western Europe.

After four years, the project has now entered the capitalisation phase, with a full focus on providing new financial incentives to facilitate peatland restoration. Many private companies today could invest in peatland restoration to meet their carbon offset targets, but lack connections, financial mechanisms and a sufficiently reliable framework for certifying carbon credits. A Market Acceleration

Board has been set up within the project to initiate a dialogue on this subject between investors, brokers and land managers.

Recently, the Carbon Connects partners, led by AC3A, published a report on the basis and methodology for a carbon credit scheme for peatlands in North-West Europe. Furthermore, the partners plan to organise Farmer to Market events outside the Board to bring together land managers and private funders to initiate the implementation of payments for environmental services.



This project has received funding from the North-West Europe Interreg Program. EU FUNDING: € 3.2 m TOTAL BUDGET: € 5.3 m
TIMELINE: 2018-2023.



 <https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/cconnects-carbon-connects/>

 @CarbonConnects

 @CarbonConnects



3.6 CLIMATE FARM DEMO

Climate Farm Demo is a 7-year Horizon Europe project that aims to establish a European network of pilot farmers who will implement and demonstrate climate-smart solutions for a carbon-neutral Europe.



A key challenge for the land use sector is to ensure that forest, soil and agricultural activities in the EU contribute to the Green Deal targets. Therefore, it is important to test and implement innovative climate-friendly solutions. The transition to sustainable agriculture is a long process that requires considering how innovations connect to and influence changes in mainstream farming systems.

Thus, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of European farmers to implement climate-friendly farming practices across the EU. This implies (1) a network of pilot farmers to facilitate knowledge exchange (2) advice and support to pilot farmers in the implementation and demonstration of climate-friendly agricultural practices, and (3) the adoption of climate-friendly agricultural practices across Europe.

In concrete terms, this will be achieved through the establishment of an EU network of 1.500 pilot demo farms in 27 European countries (24 EU member states, the UK, Serbia and Switzerland) covering all European agro-climate zones and agricultural sectors and through the co-creation of a set of new and innovative climate-smart solutions in 10 multi-actor Living Labs (LL). Lessons learned from the implementation of the LL approach will then inform scale-up and future multi-actor partnerships for climate-smart innovation and application.

Climate Farm Demo is coordinated by Idele (FR) and takes a multi-actor approach by bringing together 80 partners representing different actors at agricultural, national and EU level. The ELO plays a key role in the project and will coordinate engagement with policymakers, co-lead the rewarding



mechanism analysis and provide support in other tasks. In November 2022, the partners met in Paris for the kick-off meeting, where the first foundations of a long-standing cooperation were built.

[in](#) @Climate Farm Demo



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation programme under the Grant Agreement no. 101060212.

3.7 CONSOLE

CONSOLE (CONTRACT SOLUTIONS for Effective and lasting delivery of agri-environmental-climate public goods by EU agricultural and forestry) is a Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation project that focuses on promoting innovation in the delivery of agri-environmental climate public goods (AECPGs) by EU agriculture and forestry.




Twenty-four partners in thirteen countries make up the CONSOLE consortium, representing different organisations, including farmer organisations, regional administrations, consultancy agencies and research institutes. The European Landowners Organization's role focuses on dissemination and outreach, particularly to landowners who are essential in delivering public goods and are critical stakeholders to the process.

The project concluded in October 2022 and all public deliverables are available on the website including videos of the final conference of the project. A highlight of the project include the examples of existing innovative and effective contract solutions aimed at improving the provision of AECPGs as case studies from partner countries. There are sixty case studies, categorised as result-based, collective, value chain or environmental tenure-based. This project had a primary objective to produce a framework designed to use different contractual solutions and be made available to practitioners.

Through environmental policies and the CAP, the research results of CONSOLE are aimed at contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Further this project contributes to the roadmap of sustainable agricultural development and contribution to environmental transitions and protections.

 <https://console-project.eu/>
 [@Console.project](#)
 [@ProjectConsole](#)
 [@CONSOLE Project](#)
 [@Console-project](#)



 The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 817949.





3.8 DigitAF

DigitAF is a 4-year Horizon Europe project aiming to increase agroforestry (AF) from pioneers and early adopters to 50% of all farmers in the EU by 2035, making it a mainstream practice.

As part of the Green Deal, the European Commission has set the goal of making the agriculture, forestry and land use sectors climate neutral by 2035. Agroforestry is an important component of this process because of its impact on climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, soil protection and agricultural sustainability. However, there are currently several barriers, such as the willingness to adopt agroforestry, economic feasibility and institutional resistance.

DigitAF therefore aims to create the right conditions for the implementation of quality AF to unlock its full potential. In doing so, the project intends to address the knowledge gaps that prevent widespread adoption of AF and transfer newly generated knowledge to relevant actors, including policymakers, practitioners and beneficiaries of agroforestry products and services. Meeting the needs of these three groups is the starting point and determines the further structure of the project.

A user-centred and multi-actor approach will be developed by setting up six Living Labs (NL, IT, CZ, FI, DE, UK) that will contribute knowledge to the DigitAF database and work on their own region-specific questions. This knowledge is then formalised into models that form the basis for practical tools. Testing of new technologies will take place in "lifelong learning" or on demonstration farms.



The above objectives will be achieved by a consortium of 32 partners from 20 countries, coordinated by INRAE (Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, l'Alimentation et l'Environnement). The ELO is mainly involved in Work Package One, which deals with strengthening agroforestry and carbon farming policies while developing tools for policy makers. More information can be found on the website.

 <https://digitaf.eu/>



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. The European Union cannot be held responsible for them. Grant agreement: 101059794.



3.9 European Networks for Private Land Conservation



European Networks for
Private Land Conservation



This project develops an overarching initiative for private land conservation in Europe connecting conservationists and landowners to contribute to the objectives of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

Climate warming and the increasing loss of biodiversity constitute an existential threat to private land. This project was initiated by the ELO together with Eurosité, the European umbrella organisation of conservation organisations. Despite a shared concern for nature, conservationists and landowners' communities have been working mostly separately on the topic of private land conservation, when there is much to learn from each other. This project brings people and resources from existing networks together, from EU high level to the field, to learn from each other and stimulate a mutual understanding in protecting and restoring private land for nature and the climate in Europe.

The initiative aims to expand the use of voluntary conservation tools on private land in the EU for which we test, improve, and harmonise common and innovative tools across a variety of settings in Europe. We actively advocate for better financial incentives for landowners and conservationists to apply voluntary measures and provide access to state-of-the-art resources, ensuring high ambition standards for nature conservation on private land. This goes together with raising awareness on private land conservation and helping landowners to receive recognition and public support for their ef-

forts. As a powerful tool to educate and involve the public in our actions we facilitate citizen science and volunteering initiatives on private properties.

All insights, outcomes and findings of the project, as well as of predecessor projects are shared on the project website which is becoming not only a valuable repository for the project, but also for decision makers and for people who are interested to implement voluntary conservation measures on their land.

 www.enplc.eu
 [@LIFE_ENPLC](https://twitter.com/LIFE_ENPLC)
 [@lifeenplc](https://www.instagram.com/lifeenplc)
 [@life-enplc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/life-enplc)



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



3.10 EUWAY

In recent years, climate change has caused a remarkable instability which is affecting the availability and quality of water in many European regions. The lack and difficulty of managing this matter, not only within the farming sector, is generating tensions between regions and enterprises due to the availability, quality and distribution of water. Considering also the fact that certain products are of notable high water demand and that in certain countries the hydraulic network for agricultural activities is old with many leakages, the gravity of the presented issue is imperative.



This evidence and missing short-term and long-term solutions/ perspectives for sustainable solutions build the basis for this project aiming at raising awareness about the danger of water shortage and the risks of pollution, develop training allowing the optimisation of the use and quality of water resources, and an exchange of examples related to more efficient and less polluting farming techniques.



The project follows a bottom-up approach which means learning from practitioners and making their knowledge, patterns and methods in the field of sustainable water management on farming, based on 3 elements: summary guide, case studies, and training modules.



The project's training methodology is based on the Open Educational Resources (OER) approach, thus developing digital training materials that will be available under a creative commons license allowing their use and distribution free of charge. The training materials will be available in English, Spanish, Slovenian, German, Italian and French languages. Users of the final product will gain extensive knowledge of sustainable water management and be able to adapt useful input from other farmers from all across Europe to find adequate solutions for their specific situations as well as learning how to assist others struggling with the same issues.

At present, the project website can keep you updated on all the latest deliverables, including the Summary Report and is set to conclude in mid-2024.

 @EUWAYproject

 EuwayProject



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

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The publication 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 N° 101049678 – ERASMUS-EDU-2021-PCOOP-ENGO

3.11 FARM ELDER

Farm Elder, Social Farming for the Elderly, is a collaborative social farming project funded under the Erasmus + Programme that aims to offer farmers the opportunity to engage in social farming.

The idea of exploring social farming opportunities for elderly people resulted from the work completed on the Erasmus + funded FARCURA project (<https://farcura.eu/>). During the consortium's work on that project, it became evident that social farming could meet some of the core needs of Europe's growing population of elderly people. Some of the needs that were identified in the preliminary research were:

- Europe's population is ageing rapidly;
- the current care home/nursing home models do not meet the needs of many elderly people;
- there is a need to develop meaningful activities to facilitate active ageing;
- a lack of intergenerational connection means that elderly people are not able to contribute fully to society.

The purpose of our FarmElder project is to demonstrate how social farming can meet these needs. FarmElder has project partners from Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Slovenia and Belgium who will work together to examine the issues facing elderly people and study social farming interventions in

their countries that are emerging to address these needs. The project will produce 14 case studies, as well as reports on the challenges facing elderly people in each of the participating countries.

There will also be a unique FarmElder stories element to the project. Here, some of the most inspiring case studies on social farming for the elderly will be highlighted through a series of short films.

Based on the findings from the reports and case studies, the project partners are working on a series of modules to make learning content on social farming with elderly people available online.

All project news and resources can be accessed through the FarmElder website. If you have any questions regarding the project or social farming, please do not hesitate to contact the ELO project team.

 <https://farmelder.eu/>

 [@farmelder.eu](https://www.facebook.com/farmelder.eu)

 [@farmelder_eu](https://twitter.com/farmelder_eu)



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

Project No: 2021-1-IE01-KA220-ADU-000033663.

3.12 FERTIMANURE

The goal of the Horizon 2020 project FERTIMANURE is to produce high-value fertilisers from animal manure using "innovative nutrient recovery from secondary sources." Twenty partners, including universities, research centres, cluster organisations, public agencies, SMEs, and NGOs, work in the manure research sector and across the value chain in this project. The partners come from seven European (EU) nations and Argentina and Chile. The project is expected to end in late 2023 when a public final conference will be held.

To effectively recover mineral nutrients and other pertinent products with an agronomic value from animal manure, cutting-edge Nutrient Management Strategies will be created, integrated, tested, and validated throughout the project. To compete in the European fertiliser markets, this initiative seeks to establish a zero-waste strategy for managing manure.

All pilots have been set up and have been running since the project's start, producing 16 different bio-based fertilisers that are being tested and assessed. Additionally, these will be employed to produce customised, high-value fertilisers. The

year ahead will see the project visit Argentina to attend a series of Agriculture expos and discuss the technologies that have been developed in the project. A series of business-related deliverables related to these fertilisers will also be published at the end of the project.

 www.fertimanure.eu/en

 @fertimanure

 @fertimanure

 @FERTIMANURE

 @FERTIMANURE



FERTIMANURE



The project has revived funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 862849.



3.13 HERIT

Heritage Efficient Management through relevant IT use.

While the historic crisis that began in 2020 has slowly come to an end, the effects are still being felt across many industries, especially tourism. Faced with decreasing visitor attendance, heritage houses are seeking new methods to bring in visitors and raise revenue. To help in this endeavor, the ELO has been coordinating the project HERIT (Heritage Efficient management through Relevant IT use). This project, which began in 2021, was developed based on a needs assessment by

the European Heritage Houses organization. It was discovered that there was a strong need for training amongst managers and owners of historic house owners. Combined with the damage to the tourism industry by COVID19, this project became more vital than ever.

As such, the European Landowners' Organization, EHH, AMHZ, and several other organizations and universities joined together for this Erasmus+ pro-

ject. With the project ending in May 2023, nearly every objective has been met! The project has published a summary guide, 10 case studies, and will soon develop a MOOC (Massively Open Online Course). All the content will be available in English, Spanish, Italian and French, allowing 240 million people to learn in their native language, and many more to follow along!

We are particularly excited about the MOOC. Assisted by the Universidade da Coruña, who is ensuring that the product is of university quality, the outputs are some of the best we have ever put out! Owners and managers of heritage houses will even be able to get a certificate of completion upon finishing the course! If you would like to engage with the free course, visit the HERIT website. We look forward to seeing you at the final conference in May 2023.

 <https://herit-erasmus.eu/>

 [@erasmusherit](#)

 [@ErasmusHerit](#)

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

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The publication 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 N° 2020-1-BE01-KA226-VET-082730



3.14 MICROSERVICES

Did you know that just even a tiny amount of soil can contain 1 billion microbes? These microbes are vital to ecosystem functions. But what happens when climate change begins to damage the soil and affect them? This is where the Microservices project enters. In order to study the effects of climate change as well as the dynamic crop-soil-microbiome system, a combination of natural climate gradients and in-situ field manipulations are very accurate research pathways. MICROSERVICES will adopt both these frameworks in a dual-framework strategy.

With this dual approach in mind, the main goal of the MICROSERVICES project is to improve the forecasting capacity of the cascading effects of climate change on: Crop-associated microbial diversity, crop-microbe interactions, and agricultural ecosystem services delivered by the microbiome. This is done in the hopes of actively contributing to a sustainable agricultural sector: fostering widespread benefits across the agricultural economy, society, and environment, positively impacting conservation, developing sustainable policy briefs for decision-makers, and raising public awareness of the importance of soil biodiversity both on local level as well as across the world.

During 2022, the project partners dived deep into the deliverables of the project. The effects of drought are being simulated using rain-out shelters installed in one of the world's longest running agricultural field experiments comparing different conventional and organic farming systems since

1978, the DOK trial in Switzerland. The multi-level responses of the crop-soil-microbiome nexus are to be assessed by harnessing ground-breaking methods from different scientific disciplines that range from metagenomic assessments and isotope labelling techniques to the implementation of Earth Observation tools and machine learning



MICROSERVICES



algorithms. Soon, results will be made operative and accessible for stakeholders and policymakers through a communication and dissemination plan operating at the national and European level. Be sure to follow the project on social media, to learn how the project will better prepare the world for the effect of climate change.



This research was funded through the 2019-2020 BiodivERsA joint call for research proposals, under the BiodivClim ERA-Net COFUND programme, and with the funding organisations Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF (31BD30_193666),

Agencia Estatal de Investigación AEI (SPC1202000X120679IV0), Agence nationale de la recherche ANR (ANR-20-EBI5-0006), Federal Ministry of Education and Research BMBF (16LC2023A), and General Secretariat for Research and Innovation GSRI (T12EPA5-00075).

3.15 PathFinder



The PathFinder Project (Towards an Integrated Consistent European LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry)) aims to develop and demonstrate an innovative forest monitoring and pathway assessment system allowing consistent EU greenhouse gas reporting of LULUCF in combination with advanced pathway assessments. The goal here is to assist in the planning of essential policy and implementation steps towards achieving sustainable forestry policy targets through continuous forest monitoring. The project goes beyond the current state-of-the art, utilising field and remotely sensed data to produce high-resolution maps and precise estimation of forest attributes.

PathFinder marks the cooperation of the largest forest monitoring organisations operating in the EU, that all provide extensive databases that will be complemented by innovative field surveys. The analysis of this data aims to improve the understanding of forests as carbon pools, which in turn will feed into developing a new scenario framework that forecasts the outcomes of forest management alternatives. This framework will be the result of a co-creation activity and serve as a key tool for future policy development.

In mid-November in Ås, Norway, the PathFinder project hosted its kick-off meeting to elaborate on

the direction it should take. There, ELO emphasised its role as leader of the communication work page as well as a key member of the policy work package.

From the get-go, ELO representatives were able to present how the project partners could contribute to communication strategies and how without their input, communication would not be as effective. From a policy perspective, ELO will have an important role in the co-designing of forest pathways through workshops, bringing a wide range of forestry stakeholders together (scientists, political, societal, and economic actors). Doing so will

lead to a co-design of policies that foster desired forestry management pathways. These workshops will empower forestry stakeholders with the necessary tools and knowledge to shape a more sustainable European forestry sector.

 **@EuPathfinder**



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon Europe (HORIZON) Research & Innovation programme under the Grant Agreement no. 101056907

42



3.16 PROPAGRI

The Professional integration of young people through agriculture or Propagri started in January 2021 and will continue until April 2024. This project brings together five organisations from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Serbia.



The aims of this project are: to provide tools to youth workers by increasing the awareness of opportunities to NEET (not in employment, education or training) youth through sustainable agricultural professions; to develop innovative training which provides young people with basic skills and knowledge in environmentally conscious agricultural practices; to increase the attractiveness of the farming sector by ensuring sufficient working capacities for sustainable farming development in Europe and; to increase farmers interest and ability to have and teach NEET youth sustainable farming techniques.

By providing training and tools for NEET youth and farmers, the project will have produced a pedagogical framework, theoretical content, courses, and practical



examples. This project will also produce a matching platform connecting NEET youth and farmers by displaying courses, available internships and workshops.

Propagri focuses on strengthening the employability of NEET youth in the agricultural sector by developing innovative training which targets youth workers and trainers, farmers and naturally NEET youth. At a higher level, national and European level policymakers are a targeted audience. The educational materials and tools developed will bridge to better integrate youth into the agriculture sector as well as build resilience in European farming.

 [@propagri](https://twitter.com/propagri)

3.17 REFLOW

REFLOW is an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral European Training Network within the Horizon 2020 programme, under the Marie-Skłodowska-Curie actions.

The REFLOW (phosphorus REcovery for Fertilisers from dairy processing Waste) project aims to tackle the challenges that result from excess phosphorus (P) from the dairy industry by closing the P production loop thanks to recycling processes. The resulting benefits would be minimising leakages, increasing cost-effectiveness, as well as producing high-value, effective, and also safe fertilising products.

The project brings together a wide range of stakeholders from across various scientific disciplines, industry representatives, as well as 13 early-stage-researchers (ESRs) who perform research for the project as well as undertake a PhD within their time in the project.

Having started in 2019, 2022 marks the second to last year of the project, as REFLOW has been extended until the end of 2023. In 2022, a handful of events occurred, both for the consortium as well as for the individual ESRs of the project. For the latter, several ESRs have completed their allocated 36 months within the project and their PhD along with it. We wish them all the best on their future endeavours.

In May 2022, the ESRs gathered together for their final Summer School, hosted by project partner UniLaSalle in Rouen, France, where they were able to learn important skills in socio- and techno-economic modelling, on developing new financial models for the circular economy, vertical integration of value, financial modelling, business case-developments, as well as market activation instruments. The goal here was to assist them in the post-research aspect of fertiliser product development. This, in turn, was also complemented by leadership classes, career development, and transferable skills learning.

In June 2022, the ESRs met one last time in Vienna, Austria where they partook in the 4th European Sustainable Phosphorus Conference and presented their work on new and recycled phosphorus fertilisers and nutrient recovery from dairy industry processing wastewaters, which for the latter they were coordinating the breakout session on this topic. Here was the culmination of their work on the project, where they were able to showcase what they have done, but also emphasise the interconnectivity between all the work of the ESRs.



The project is scheduled to end in 2023, and until then ELO will continue to take the lead on the project communication, dissemination, and exploitation tasks.

 www.etn-reflow.eu

 [@ETNReflow](https://www.facebook.com/ETNReflow)

 [@etnreflow](https://twitter.com/etnreflow)

 [@etnreflow](https://www.instagram.com/etnreflow)

 [@reflow-etn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/etn-reflow)

 [@REFLOW Project](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



This Training Network has received funding from European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number 814258, REFLOW project, within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action.

3.18 SAFEGUARD

Have you heard the buzz about Safeguard?
Bees, butterflies and hoverflies are vital to the environment.

But how do we convince policymakers and stakeholders to recognize this? The SAFEGUARD project is a Horizon2020 project that seeks to investigate spatial distributions and temporal trends of pollinator biodiversity, pollination services and responses to multiple pressures in (i) (semi-)natural habitats, (ii) agricultural landscapes and (iii) urban areas. Safeguard will also develop and test best-practice tools and methods for targeting intervention types, and assess the effectiveness of combinations and spatial arrangements of interventions. Consisting of partners from across Europe and China, the project began in September 2021. The project and aims to reverse the trend of decreasing wild pollinator numbers.

The year 2022 was quite busy for the project. In April 2022, the partners met in Seville, Spain for 5 days. Beginning with a partner dinner Monday night, the work began in earnest Tuesday morning, with a discussion of progress in the previous year, a discussion of affiliated pollinator projects, and introductions to WP3 and WP6 (assessments and strengthening pollinator policy). With so much content, the groups divided up on Wednesday into parallel break-out groups, to discuss WP2, WP5, and WP1 (i.e. pressures on pollinators, trends, and an integrative assessment framework). This day concluded with a meeting amongst all the PhD and Postdoc students. On Thursday, the group worked on WP4 and 7, consisting of com-

munication and knowledge exchanges as well as effective responses to counteract wild pollinator declines. Finally, on Friday, the entire group traveled to Aznalcázar Pine-lands, where they studied the different bees in the area followed by Dehesa de Abajo, where they engaged in bird watching.

The next transnational meeting is scheduled for March 2023 and will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria. If you'd like to get more involved in this project, and help protect the world from devastation, let us know.

 <https://www.safeguard.biozentrum.uni-wuerzburg.de/>

 [@SafeguardProject](#)

 [@Safeguard2021](#)



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101003476.



SAFEGUARD



3.19 SOILGUARD



Soilguard is a Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation programme project which envisages a future where the conservation of soil biodiversity and people's well-being is guaranteed and aims to achieve this through its three key innovative tools: the SOILGUARD Network of Knowledge (SNoK), the Soil Biodiversity and Well-being Framework, and the SOILGUARDIANS app.

SOILGUARD is centring its research on obtaining a holistic picture of soil biodiversity status in relation to two major challenges, land degradation, and unsustainable soil management. To do that, we are creating an ambitious cross-biome network of sites in different parts of the globe, with the aim to increase our understanding of soil species distributions across biogeographical regions. This network includes sites corresponding to three different biomes (agroecosystems, grasslands, and forests), under different types of management (unsustainable vs sustainable), and with different statuses of soil degradation. The biodiversity and ecosystem services assessment will be crucial to depict the effects of degradation and unsustainability on soil life and the cascading effects on people's well-being.

On 9-10 June 2022, the SOILGUARD project held its consortium-wide meeting in Terrassa and Bar-

celona, Spain, hosted by Project Coordinator, LEITAT. Partners from 25 European and international organisations joined together to discuss the progress that has been made over the first year of the project implementation. The meeting also served to identify and address any project-related challenges and pave the way for another successful year ahead.

SOILGUARD's second year promises to be full of exciting results with the final aim to boost societal awareness of the importance of soil biodiversity for future global resilience and sustainability.

Participative methods, the sharing of knowledge, and empowerment are the heart of SOILGUARD. If you want to belong to our Network of Knowledge and benefit from a collective experience to ensure the environmental, economic, and social well-being of our societies, do not hesitate to contact the Projects team.



- soilguard-h2020.eu
- [@SOILGUARD](https://www.facebook.com/SOILGUARD)
- [@soilguard_h2020](https://www.instagram.com/soilguard_h2020)
- [@soilguard](https://www.linkedin.com/company/soilguard)
- [@soilguard](https://www.tiktok.com/@soilguard)
- [@SOILGUARD_H2020](https://twitter.com/SOILGUARD_H2020)



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation programme under the Grant Agreement no. 101000371.



3.20 SoilValues

SoilValues is a Horizon Europe project that aims to improve soil health through value-based business models.

Soils are an important asset for agriculture and food production and for society as a whole, as they generate important ecosystem services such as clean water, carbon sequestration and biodiversity. Although awareness is growing, soils and their role are still relatively invisible in the business rooms and among the general public. Land managers must constantly invest to keep soils in good condition, but usually have limited incentive to do so because they cannot adequately capture the value generated by these ecosystem services.

SoilValues will contribute to the development of successful soil health business models across the EU in order to improve soil quality and provide land managers with the necessary incentives. Thereby linking better soil management, including agricultural and landscape management, resource circularity, ecosystem services and involvement of other stakeholders.

To improve the conditions for developing successful soil health business models, the project will provide a comprehensive assessment framework for all factors influencing the development of business models for soil health investments. This will involve setting up six living labs across Europe to test emerging and new soil health business models and twelve communities of practice of land managers, value chain actors, investors and public authorities. A toolbox of incentives and policy recommendations to promote soil health will also be developed. To achieve these specific objectives, SoilValues will carry out activities in three phases: an exploration phase, a testing phase and a scaling-up phase.

SoilValues will last four years and will be implemented by 14 partners under the coordination of KU Leuven and ELO. The project started on the 1st of January 2023.



47



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation programme under the Grant Agreement no. 101091308.



3.21 STAY

STAY is an Erasmus+ project that promotes vocational and educational training for touristic accommodations that are willing to specialise in the agrotourism sector.

Agrotourism, or agritourism, comprises agricultural activities bringing visitors to a farm. This type of tourism, which has grown popular in Europe since the 1990s, and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, include experiences like vineyard tours, camping, hunting trips, farmers markets, wildlife watching, etc. The lack of experience from farmers starting out in agritourism is one of the issues that puts their businesses at risk. Professionalisation, through a training process, is one of the essential solutions to make agrotourism establishments succeed.

The STAY project strives to provide farmers and livestock breeders, along with rural touristic accommodations, with a training platform that contains materials needed to start an agritourism business. These establishments offer a source of additional income for inhabitants of the rural areas, while also preserving the natural and cultural resources linked to the territory. The contents consist of factsheets on the status of agrotourism in the partners' countries of origin (Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Portugal), as well as a collection of case studies of best practices from those same five countries. The lack of statistical consistency and the difficulties of finding comparable data among countries are one of the biggest challenges lying ahead of the project.



According to the distribution of roles settled up by the grant agreement, the ELO is responsible for the tasks detailed in Work Package 6, related to the communication and dissemination objectives. That includes the management of the project's social networks, which aims to make the platform available to all the tourist establishments dedicated to agritourism or interested in starting out in the business.

The project, started in November 2022, held its kick-off meeting in Naklo (Slovenia) in December. The event was devoted to presenting the first initial analysis of the situation of agritourism in the five countries and at a European level. The partners also had the opportunity to visit a farm engaged in agrotourism and share impressions on the best way to develop the different working packages.

 [@StayProjectEU](https://www.facebook.com/StayProjectEU)



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

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The publication 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 N° KA220-VET-BA0B4C2B.



Asociace
soukromého
zemědělství ČR



3.22 TERRANOVA



TERRANOVA is a Horizon 2020 Marie-Curie funded project that trains 15 PhD candidates in landscape histories and futures. TerraNova's mission is to develop an unprecedented digital atlas of Europe compiled by an interdisciplinary group of researchers that combine human population patterns in the past, plants and disturbances, animal development, and climate change.

Based on the atlas, strategic guidelines and policy measures will be provided to politicians and landscape practitioners. This will further showcase the strength and value of interdisciplinary research in academia and raise sustainable awareness on landscape reforms among academia, the commerce sector, and the general public.

TERRANOVA's ultimate mission is to inform policymakers and the general public on how to best manage and cope with the current transition to the Low Carbon Society.

By developing a more nuanced understanding of the deep history within our cultural landscapes and the effects of changing human-environment interactions, we are better able to develop sustainable methods of dealing with future landscape changes. Currently, events dating back several decades are taken as a baseline for addressing landscape management issues, while archaeological research highlights that intense anthropogenic impacts on the environment have a much

longer history. Studying them therefore prevents overlooking critical phases in landscape processes and better informs future sustainable landscape management.

TERRANOVA has been training Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) to coproduce responses to the diverse interdisciplinary challenges faced in the land management sector. A specific focus is placed on ecosystem services, cultural heritage, economic qualities and the ongoing effects of climate, environmental, and social change.

The TERRANOVA project and its ESRs have already published a number of different research results and outputs. Be sure to access the project website in order to access key research results, policy recommendations, and more!



 terranovalt.itn.eu
 [@TERRANOVA4EU](https://www.facebook.com/TERRANOVA4EU)
 [@TERRANOVA4EU](https://twitter.com/TERRANOVA4EU)
 [@TerraNova ITN](https://www.youtube.com/TerraNovaITN)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 813904.



3.23 The AgriLife Label



As the first ever pan-European label to establish a common methodology based on scientific criteria to assess agrobiodiversity conditions of European farms, AgriLife is an ambitious and unique holistic approach that will reward farmers for high-quality efforts toward sustainable practices to improve agrobiodiversity in Europe.

2022 was dedicated mostly to the establishment of the methodological and scientific basis of the label. An extensive list of pre-tests with over 15 farms in Europe were involved in the elaboration of the *AgriLife Questionnaire*. Thanks to European farmers' extremely proactive involvement in providing comments and suggestions, the ELO team improved the overall approach and the questionnaire. In parallel, we introduced the data from our questionnaire into Qualtrics survey software so that the farmer can use an e-questionnaire in the next pilot phases.

The online questionnaire as well as the methodology for assessment were also at the heart of the discussion of the Scientific Committee. Composed of 8 experts of various scientific backgrounds, the committee agreed on the basic criteria that will prevail. The soil, land management and landscape features/ biodiversity elements were chosen as among the most important criteria of the grid of evaluation.

AgriLife has reached phase 2 of implementation, it is time to bring in pilot farms across Europe. The data collection should allow for the refinement of the questionnaire and the evaluation criteria until performance levels and corresponding scores are reached. It will run until the middle of 2023 to award the first labels by autumn. The remaining



farms will either not be eligible for labelling or will receive a pre-label of level 1 or 2 with recommendations for further improvements and potential labelling at a later stage. In parallel, the AgriLife Coordination team is securing the support of the European Commission and various important partners in the Scientific Committee and the Steering Committee.

The AgriLife project aims to create an alliance of farmers, experts and key players in the agri-food chain. This is why we have created communication tools to mobilise all stakeholders to advance

the project for sustainable agriculture and transition. A logo, a brochure and several other communication materials were developed to give the project the necessary image and substance to exist as a fully-fledged European brand.

For more information, please contact:

Alain SCRIBAN

✉ alain.scriban@elo.org

Delphine DUPEUX

✉ delphine.dupeux@elo.org

3.24 TRANSFARM

TRANSFARM is an ERASMUS+ project that aims at promoting the farming practice of transhumance as a sustainable management of land by providing free training resources to farmers.



Transhumance, defined as the method in which livestock moves from established winter grazing areas to summer ones, and vice versa, gives solutions to some of the most important difficulties related to land use and rural matters. It presents an opportunity for inhabitants of rural areas, which usually face a lack of job alternatives. Transhumance practices also fulfill the increasing society demand for access to locally-produced food, something that, in turn, reduces the carbon footprint spawned by the transport of agricultural products. The project revalues the rural environ-

ment too and boosts and attracts cultural tourism through protecting traditional farming practices as a cultural heritage.

The TRANSFARM project strives to tackle the issue by providing young farmers and rural entrepreneurs with an open-source training platform where they are able to find a high-quality selection of material, in the form of e-modules, related to transhumance and the knowledge needed to engage in it, including business development and communication skills, all of it free of charge. The materials include factsheets regarding the situation of transhumance in five different countries (Germany, Greece, Norway, Slovakia, and Spain), as well as a compilation of case studies of best practices from those same countries.

The ELO is mainly in charge of the communication and dissemination tasks, which include managing TRANSFARM's website and social networks. These activities seek to reach a wider audience so that the platform implemented within the project will be useful for as many interested stakeholders as possible.



The TRANSFARM's national reports containing an individual analysis of the transhumance practices in each of the partners' countries are under way. The summary report gives an overview of the situation of transhumance in some other countries (Czech Republic, France, Italy and Hungary) and at a European level in general. It is currently being written with the collaboration of the ELO. Furthermore, the case studies of best practices are also being collected and they will serve to highlight success stories from transhumance practitioners in the countries of origin of the partners.

 <https://transfarm-erasmus.eu/>

 [Transform/100083124921160/](https://www.facebook.com/Transform/100083124921160/)

 [@eu_transform](https://twitter.com/eu_transform)



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The publication 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 No: N°KA220-VET-235CB0C8.

3.25 WATER2RETURN

In light of climate change, land limitation, and soil degradation, there is rising demand for alternative and sustainable solutions to maximise water use efficiency and to recover resources from going to waste to minimise environmental degradation.

However, the European food industry, especially the slaughtering sector, has a high water and energy consumption, producing significantly large amounts of wastewater, containing nutrients that end up being discarded: this results in serious environmental risks. So what if we reverse this process and turn wastewater treatment facilities into nutrients' bio-refineries?

The Horizon 2020 project “Water2Return” provides a cutting-edge solution for slaughterhouse wastewater treatment. It adopts a circular economy approach: In the project's pilot plant in Salteras in Andalusia, a region well versed in water scarcity challenges, an integrated wastewater treatment system is tested while recovering nutrients of the nearby slaughterhouse “Matadero del Sur”, turning them into high market value products for the agro-chemical industry. This generates raw materials such as nitrate and phosphate concentrate, hydrolysed sludge, and algal biomass, forming the basis of further manufacturing agronomic products: organic fertiliser and biostimulants, ready to be used by the agricultural sector.

Although the project concluded in March 2022, the results and outputs continue to grow. Videos, deliverables, and other content are all available on the Water2Return website and on YouTube, including a commercial developed by the ELO in 5 different languages! If you would like to learn how this innovative fertiliser product can work for you, be sure to let us know. By using locally developed

products, you would be able to get products made in Europe, rather than having to worry about imports from places like Russia (which previously imported a significant amount of the EU's fertilisers).

 www.water2return.eu

 [@Water2REturn](https://twitter.com/Water2REturn)

 [@Water2REturn](https://www.youtube.com/Water2REturn)



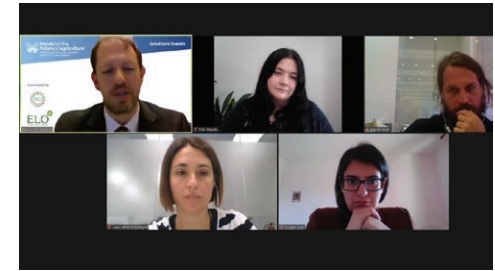
This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 730398.



University of Ljubljana



UECBV
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union



3.26 Wildlife Estates Label

The Wildlife Estates project is an ELO initiative that aims to promote sustainable wildlife management on private properties in Europe. The project seeks to engage landowners in biodiversity conservation by recognising and promoting sustainable wildlife management on their land.

It includes the promotion of sustainable game management, habitat restoration and conservation, and the implementation of sustainable agricultural and silvicultural practices that benefit wildlife. It also seeks to publicise examples of good practice through the creation of a network of "Wildlife Estates" properties with a quality label.

The Wildlife Estates project is an example of how cooperation and collaboration between different stakeholders can lead to sustainable wildlife management and the development of a culture of conservation.

The project has more than 500 estates between Level 1 and 2 and more than 2 million hectares to its credit. This year, the scientific committee has revised several of its methodologies with modifications from each of the national delegations as well as to adapt to new EU standards and best practice guidelines, to produce the fourth edition of the methodologies.

The plenary session was held in Skokloster (Sweden) on the 13th and 14th of September by our Swedish delegate Gustav HAGEMANN.



The next plenary session will take place in Edinburgh (Scotland) in the first week of September 2023.

For more information visit:

 www.wildlife-estates.eu

 [@Wildlife_EU](https://twitter.com/Wildlife_EU)

 [@wildlife_estates](https://www.instagram.com/wildlife_estates)



© Jose María Finat

4

ELO Awards



4.1 European Bee Award

The European Bee Award has been acknowledging projects of great commitment to enhance pollinators' wellbeing and bee-friendly farming practices since it was established in 2014 by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA).

The 2022 edition, hosted by Member of the European Parliament Franc BOGOVIČ, awarded two innovative, efficient, and scalable projects to protect bees and other pollinators in arable environments. The ELO and CEMA were delighted to provide the prizes to this year's winners at the European Parliament in Brussels:

- Category 'Land management practices': the winner is Veitshöchheimer Hempmix ('Veit-



shöchheimer Hanfmix') by the Bavarian State Institute for Viticulture and Horticulture (LWG). LWG designed a wildflower mixture of 30 predominantly native wild and cultivated annual, biennial and perennial flowering plants that deliver diverse floral resources, as well as biomass that can be used for the production of biogas. This creates an agricultural cultivation system that combines productivity and biodiversity.

- Category 'Innovative and technological solutions': the winner is IT Beekeeping by AmoHive. Amohive created a small 3D model of a hive that monitors hive activity (through an electronic scale, temperature sensors, GPS and a solar panel that powers the electronics) and sends information to a server. An algorithm processes the data and decides in which mode the hives should continue to work. The data can be followed in real time in an app which is already used in Poland, Ukraine and Canada.

In addition, the special mention of the Jury was awarded to the Birr Castle Bee Project by the Irish Birr Castle Estate, who implemented changes in the land and forest management across the estate's 900 hectares in order to create, protect, and enhance bee habitat wherever possible.



To learn more about this award please visit:

 www.europeanlandowners.org

 www.cema-agri.org

 [#EUBeeAward](https://twitter.com/EUBeeAward)



4.2 The Land and Soil Management Award

The award is annually granted to an outstanding project that contributes to and acts as a role-model for soil protection, and emphasises the best management practices on the field.

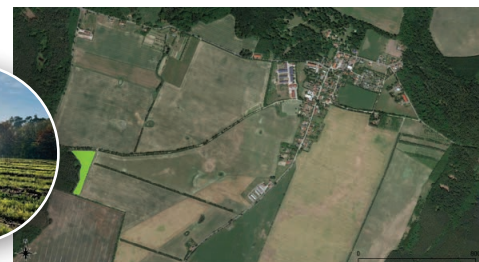


The Land and Soil Management Award was launched in 2008 by the European Landowners' Organization, under the auspices of the European Commission (DG Environment and the Joint Research Centre) and in association with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) of Vienna, Syngenta, as well as the Centre for Soil and Environmental Sciences of the Ljubljana University. Since then, the award jury has selected outstanding achievements throughout the EU in the field of sustainable soil and land management.

The presentation of the prestigious 2022 Land and Soil Management Award was done during the closing event of the ForumforAg 2022. Prof Martin GERZABEK, Institute of Soil Research, Vienna, as president of the jury, announced from a field of 12, the Geographical Institute Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences in Budapest as the 2022 year winner for its long-term agricultural trials. "The jury was especially impressed by the long duration of the experiments of 19 years, which is not easy to achieve for a research institute," he said.

Andrea VETTORI, Member of Cabinet of Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Commissioner Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, announced diplomas of recognition to two further projects: French farm Lo Biais al Maset, Albi, which has been applying agriecological measures for almost two decades and GUT&BÖSEL Keyline agroforestry, Germany, a regenerative organic farm that minimises soil erosion while enhancing biodiversity and careful use of water. He emphasized that 60-70% of soil ecosystems in Europe are downgrading. "This is

why many years ago, the European Commission, DG Environment, decided to partner with Syngenta and the European Landowners Organization to create the award."





4.3 Belleuropa Award

Initiated by Giuseppe NATTA, the Belleuropa award honours estates that have been labelled or renewed during the year. Within the excellent management of the Wildlife Estates project, there is always one estate that stands out among those that have been labelled that year.

The Belleuropa Award rewards this added value placed by the landowner. The winner for 2022 was Wolfsburg/Drömling, owned by Günther Graf VON DER SCHULENBURG. With an area of almost 4,000 hectares, it is home to 131 vertebrate species, 26 of which are of valuable interest. A considerable proportion is included in the Natura 2000 network. It is part of the Bisdorf project, where the improvement and combination of different habitats in a rather small area has been carried out. Composed of waterlogged meadows, wet woodland fragments, shrub areas, hedgerows, dry grasslands and populations of wild pears and apples. This melting pot of different habitats gives us an incredible wealth of biodiversity. Biodiversity management is done in such a way as to cause as little impact as possible within the tranquillity levels of the whole estate. Farming techniques have also been updated to cause as little impact on wildlife as possible. Since 2020, it has played an important role in carbon sequestration in a pilot project that ends this year.



This year, the Belleuropa prize will be awarded to a new candidate at the end of the Biodiversity Conference in Brussels.

For more information or to register for the conference please visit:  www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference

4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year

The "Bruine Kriekpeer van Klerken" was crowned the winner of the Baillet Latour Belgian Tree of the Year competition, a yearly event that highlights a remarkable tree. The competition is organised by SBNL-VL (Stichting Behoud Natuur en Leefmilieu Vlaanderen), financially supported by the Baillet Latour Fund, and in cooperation with ANB, BOS+, ELO, APB, Landelijk Vlaanderen and the Bosgroepen.



On 26 November 2022, the winning tree was officially inaugurated, with a ceremony attended by the chairman of the jury, the Baillet Latour fund sponsoring the competition, the submitters and many interested citizens of Klerken. With the help of music and poetry dedicated to the tree, the certificate was presented to the winners.

Besides the honourable title 'Belgian tree of the year', the pear tree of Klerken will receive €2.500 to spend on care and redevelopment of its nearby surroundings. Together with the village of Klerken, the submitters will look for ways to highlight this tree even more and allow passers-by to fully enjoy this unique piece of nature. Moreover, the Belgian tree will compete with 15 other European trees for the title "European Tree of the Year" in 2023. The initiative is organised by the Environmental Partnership Association in cooperation with the European Landowners' Organization.

Some 30 trees from all over Flanders were submitted, but it was the brown cherry pear tree of the West Flemish village of Klerken that received the largest number of votes, no less than 1.565. According to the submitters, the non-profit association Pear Procession Klerken, this was due to the many volunteers who went to collect votes in Klerken. The tree contributes to the cultural identity of the village as there is a tradition of holding an annual parade centered around the fruit of the tree, the brown cherry pear.



 <https://boomvanhetjaar.be/>

 @boom_van_het_jaar

 @Boom van het Jaar



5



Events

5.1 ForumforAg 2022 Month of March

The ForumforAg 2022, through multiple events during the year, brought together a wide and diverse range of stakeholders to inspire new thinking on how European and global agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges of delivering both food and environmental security.

The annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture was founded by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta; they were joined by Cargill, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Thought for Food, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Europe as strategic partners.

The theme of the 2022 Forum for the Future of Agriculture's Month of March events was 'Striving for food system transformation' and included open discussions on topics ranging like 'Integrating climate mitigation and biodiversity regeneration in food system transformation', 'Unlocking greater collaboration between the EU and Member States to deliver food system transformation', 'Food price mechanisms: How does the food system pay for its true cost transformation?', 'Making healthy food the easier choice' and many others, giving the floor to many high-level experts like Amina J. MOHAMMED, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations & Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, Geneviève PONS, Director General of Europe – Jacques Delors in Brussels; Honorary Director of the European Commission; Former Director of the WWF's European Office, or Jack BOBO, Director Global Food and Water Policy, The Nature Conservancy.

The annual conference was followed by 16 "Solutions events" focusing on a vast range of topics; from Carbon farming, Regenerative agriculture, forestry to unlocking the potential of innovation, and many more. The month was concluded by a "Policy day" dealing with global biodiversity targets and the role of agriculture, and a Final wrap-up of the debates and the Soil and Land management ceremony.

The discussions started in Brussels were continued during the ForumforAg 2022 regional events.

Sustainability at ForumforAg 2022

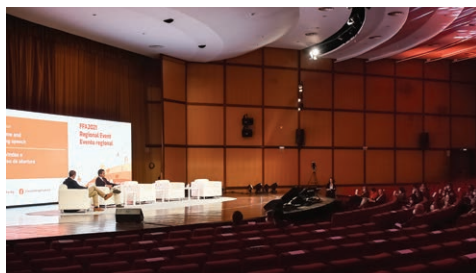
ForumforAg 2022 has chosen to work with "CO2logic" to ensure our event is sustainable. The CO2-Neutral label guarantees that labelled organisations are actively calculating, reducing and compensating their local and global climate impact.

🌐 www.forumforagriculture.com
🐦 [@ForumForAg](https://twitter.com/ForumForAg)
📘 [@forumforagriculture](https://www.facebook.com/forumforagriculture)
🌐 [@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://www.linkedin.com/company/forum-for-the-future-of-agriculture)



5.2 ForumforAg 2022 Regional Event in Czech Republic

The Forum hosted its first of two regional editions this year in May at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. More than 200 participants joined a truly international event. Throughout the day, sessions discussed biodiversity, environmental targets, climate mitigation, food system transformation and forestry.



Janez POTOČNIK, Chair of ForumforAg 2022 emphasised in his opening speech that *"Solving the current conflict-related crisis should not, and cannot, compromise our ability to tackle the triple planetary crises of climate emergency, biodiversity loss and pollution"*. COVID and Ukraine have only accelerated the need to transition our food system to one that is robust and sustainable, restores biodiversity, reduces emissions, sequesters carbon, and provides affordable, nutritious food for us all.

Ladislav MIKO, Deputy Director-General for the Food Chain, Health and Food Safety Department (DG SANTE), European Commission and special advisor to Czech Minister of Environment, and Lukas VISEK, Member of the Cabinet of Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Frans Timmermans, discussed ways to restore biodiversity above and below ground.

The pressing question posed during session 1 'Can we achieve the environmental targets with the new CAP and the National Strategic Plans?' brought plenty of challenges - livestock reduction, how best to improve soil, and the need for wide consultation on the national plan were among them. How best to integrate climate mitigation and biodiversity regeneration in food system transformation? tackled the complexity of this 3-way challenge and how to implement practical solutions, while still giving choices.

The final session was an opportunity to hear experts discuss the type of forest the world needs to mitigate climate change. Constantin KINSKÝ, Vice President and Member of the Board of the Private

Forests Chamber in the Czech Republic (SVOL) set the scene by saying that what was common to all parties was that we do not know how far climate change will go.

To read the full summary and to watch the recording of the full discussion:

www.forumforagriculture.com

@Forum for the Future of Agriculture

@ForumForAg

@Forum for the Future of Agriculture



5.3 ForumforAg 2022 Regional Event in Sweden

The Forum moved to Sweden for its second regional event. Throughout the day, sessions discussed environmental targets and the CAP, biodiversity and climate mitigation, food system transformation and forestry.



Montreal where he was leading the EU presidency representation at COP15 –The aim, he explained, was to agree a global framework for biodiversity after 2020, akin to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. *“I want us to agree on a global biodiversity framework at the end of the year... because it can make life on this planet better for all of us,”* he said.

All speakers of the “Food security and National Strategic Plans – how to deliver environmental targets” panel agreed on the crucial role innovation must play to achieve the different goals.

An expert panel representing landowners, industry and government research discussed ways to integrate climate mitigation and biodiversity regeneration in food system transformation. Ideas raised ranged from technical innovation, economic incentives and more effective communication on agriculture’s contribution to the transformation.

The final session focused on forestry and took place the day after the European Commission had presented a proposed EU certification framework for carbon removals.

The day closed with the presentation of the outcomes of the ForumforAg Regenerative Agriculture workshop series and of the Forestry workshop series: How to bridge the gap between civil society and the forest value chain.

A full summary and all recording of the full discussion are available on the ELO website:

www.europeanlandowners.org

www.forumforagriculture.com

[@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://www.facebook.com/ForumfortheFutureofAgriculture)

[@ForumForAg](https://twitter.com/ForumForAg)

[@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ForumfortheFutureofAgriculture)

62

Janez POTOČNIK, Chair of ForumforAg 2022 emphasised the crucial role natural resources play. He emphasised that UNEP’s next Global Resources Outlook in 2024 would redefine sectors as systems, focusing on those that provide associated human needs like nutrition, mobility, shelter, essential consumer goods, water and energy. This would allow cross-sector innovation and a more future fit business model.

Ladislav MIKO, Advisor to the Minister of Environment and special envoy of Czech Government for international negotiations Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, sent a video message from



5.4 ForumforAg Global

The Forum's Transatlantic Panel, new Global initiative and series of workshops on 'Regenerative Agriculture and Forestry'.

Over the past twelve months, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture was actively supporting the transatlantic dialogue on food system resilience and sustainability, specifically from an agriculture, environment and climate change perspective.

The starting point was the Policy event during the March annual conference focusing on the value of transatlantic collaboration to increase the resilience and sustainability of the global agri-food system, bringing together our International Partner, the Chicago Council of Global Affairs, and former U.S. Secretary for Agriculture, Dan GLICKMAN among others.

This and many other discussions led to the formation, in October, of the collaborative initiative known as the Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation (GFFPI) to increase the sustainability of agriculture across the world, between four leading independent agricultural organizations from Australia, Canada, the European Union and United States.

The final discussion took place during the December event on "Building the transatlantic partnership for a more resilient and sustainable, and climate-smart food and agriculture system". Noting that the meeting was taking place on World Soil Day, Janez POTOČNIK, Chair of ForumforAg 2022 emphasized that together, the EU and the US, "have enormous influence and the ability to affect change on the big strategic challenges of our time". Among many high level speakers, Robert BONNIE, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, USDA, explained the US approach towards global food security and climate change. Lukas VISEK, Member of Cabinet, Executive Vice-President, European Green Deal, European Commission, set out some of the institution's recent initiatives like a first ever soil health law.



The ForumforAg also organized a series of workshops on Regenerative Agriculture and Forestry: How to bridge the gap between civil society and the forest value chain. These topics will also be incorporated, among others, in the 2023 programme.





5.5 ELO General Assemblies in 2022

Twice a year, the ELO General Assembly, with the support of its member organizations, takes place in the country that is about to take up the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The meetings in 2022 took place in June in Prague and in November in Stockholm. This was the perfect opportunity to listen to and debate the priorities of the, respectively, Czech and Swedish Presidencies, and to hand over the ELO's main messages for agricultural and environmental priorities. The unanimous vote of the members also adopted the "Stockholm Declaration".

ELO delegates underlined that the EU must address global food security issues and food system resilience. Food security is now, understandably, at the forefront of political debate. The triple-C effect of Conflicts, Climate events and Covid-related economic impacts weighed on the situation of global food security, leading to a point when around 40 million people became food insecure in 2021; a situation made worse by the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine. All delegates agreed the need to unlock the potential of land-based sectors for an EU Green Deal; striving for competitive sustainable food systems and how to integrate the 2030 Farm to Fork and Biodiversity targets. The CAP remains the best tool for land managers across the EU and is also key to future-proofing European rural areas. The role of carbon farming was debated and how to boost the climate mitigation potential of land-based sectors. Special attention was also given to the importance of a

vibrant, diverse, and multifunctional forest sector and a lively discussion around the Forest Strategy.

The ELO would like to warmly thank all its members in the Czech Republic and Sweden for their support in putting these events together, as well as the authorities from the Czech Ministry of Agriculture and Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation.

More information is available on ELO website.

 www.europeanlandowners.org

ELO 
European Landowners' Organization

5.6 European Biodiversity Conference 2023

6 December 2022 *"Climate-ready EU forests"*

At the beginning of the conference, Simone SCHMIEDTBAUER, member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside, emphasised the need to raise awareness of forest potential to tackle climate change while being vulnerable to it and identify the right compensation and incentive for landowners and managers to take an active role in this discussion. Without their expertise, the EU framework on forests will not 'reflect the reality on the ground'. Roby BIWER, a member of the Committee of the Regions, drew attention to forest vulnerabilities originating in climate change, such as drought, fire, pests, and strong winds. These

not only threaten forests but also their biodiversity and biomass useable for energy purposes. He suggested regionally tailored approaches to forest management, and to increase EU forest funding in supporting forest owners to adapt their practices.

Keynote speaker Gert-Jan NABUURS, professor of European Forest Resources at Wageningen University and Research, and IPCC Coordinating lead author, explored the relationship between European forest productivity, resilience, and their capacity to reduce or remove CO₂. Harvest is growing slightly faster than forest increment, and forests suffer from climate change. Therefore, forest sinks are shrinking. In this context, Gert-Jan NABUURS introduced the concept of climate-smart forestry. He was confident active collaboration between foresters and Brussels will lead to constructive endeavours and will overcome mutual misunderstandings.

The first panel moderated by Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, Forum for Ag Director at ELO was introduced by Arygro ZERVA, leader of the forestry team of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. She underlined that even if forest restoration constitutes a first step towards forest resilience, concomitant developments must be carried out. Among other things, she underpinned the need for research and innovation and forest monitoring, as tools of forest growth and sustainability. European Commission and stakeholders should work hand in hand. Peter Löffler, policy officer at the Directorate-General for Climate Action, made a strong statement: forests are going to change, either by design or by a disaster. He firmly believes we must intervene in the structure of forests to be prepared for extreme events and minimise their impact. Therefore, the EU develops a policy framework to support forest adaptation.

The second panel, moderated by Luc BAS, Head Coordinator, Network and Strategy at the European started with the statement of Els MERTENS, from



the Jane Goodall Institute. She explains the institute believes that forest planting, youth empowerment, and advocacy are complementary approaches for encouraging actions for climate-resilient forests and biodiversity. Voluntary carbon offsets should also be available for companies unable to reduce their emissions, underlining the international dimension of the forest-climate nexus. Constantin KINSKY, Vice-president and member of the board of the Private Forests Chamber in the Czech Republic (SVOL) strongly recommended four mindset shifts, revisiting the time, space, scale, and forestry approach. He added that we need to manage forests by goals and not by process, and we need not decide what forests should look like but what service the forests should provide. Finally, Silvia MELEGARI, Secretary General of the European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry, called for policy makers to include the (sawmill) industry in the policy-making process. She stressed the future needs for wood products worldwide, particularly in the construction sector. 'Wood is a climate-friendly material', and should therefore be considered as part of the solution to achieve the Green Deal.

Jurgen TACK concluded that 'we can't afford to make any more mistakes. The valuation of Ecosystem services should be part of the future of our economy and be part of the EU's long-term strategic planning.



5.7 European Tree of the Year

The “Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest” tree, or “Oak Dunin”, was crowned European Tree of the Year 2022. The impressive oak brought the title to Poland with an historical record of 179.317 votes. The close follower of “Oak Dunin” was of the same species, the Spanish “Oak of Conxo’s Banquet Forest” which received 168.234 votes. The Portuguese “Big Cork” closed the winning oaks triumvirate at third place.



The European Tree of the Year contest is organised by the Environmental Partnership Association in collaboration with the European Landowners' Organisation, under the auspices of MEP Ludek NIEDERMAYER and MEP Michal WIEZIK. The unprecedented number of 769.212 votes registered this year easily surpassed the records of all former editions, clearly showing the still growing wave of enthusiasm and interest around the contest.

The Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, a 400 years old Common oak is growing at the edge of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, one of the most known lowland forests in Europe. The tree has been an inspiration for many artists and became the symbol of the area with the threat of building a concrete wall throughout the Forest. With the war conflict in Ukraine, the message of the “protection role of the tree” got another context and the Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest became a widely known symbol against aggression.

With the award ceremony, the Partnership Foundation organised the Planting4Future working conference to address the European Commission's plan to plant 3 billion trees by 2030. Representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, Ministries, the corporate sector and NGOs from across Europe, shared their experiences and recommendations to reach this ambitious objective. The contest received patronage from the EU ENVI Commissioner Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, who also delivered a keynote speech in the Planting for the Future Conference.



5.8 Trade Conference

On February 22, 2022, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) held its trade-related conference. The online event called '*The unintended impact of European sustainability standards on global food systems*' brought together participants from all around the world to explore how the European Green Deal will affect international trade and agricultural operations.

Participants included policymakers, business executives, and farmers. The ELO is honoured to have brought together more than 800 stakeholders from all around the world for this online debate, as well as a diverse and prominent panel of experts, from policy makers to academia, industry representatives and mass media. The keynote speeches were given by Carla MONTESI, Director DG INTPA, and Prof. Alan MATTHEWS, Trinity College Dublin.

The first panel focused on coffee and cocoa beans trade, with the participation of MEP Paolo DE CASTRO, Dr. Rathana PEOU NORBERT MUNNS from FAO, and Rodrigo LIMA from Agroicone, Brazil. The panellists shared their expertise on the importance of functional global trade systems that ensure availability of products, as well as fair income, while enabling environmental protection.

The second part of the conference channelled the discussion around pulses, dry fruits and nuts. Anna BOULOVA from FRUCOM, Okisegere OJEPAT from Fresh Produce Consortium, Kenya, and Lynn Fortin from the Canadian Mission to the EU gave valuable insights into the potential consequences of EU Green Deal ambitions on third countries, from a social, economic and environmental point of view.

Following the event, Prof. Alan MATTHEWS published a study on the "Implications of the European Green Deal for agri-food trade with developing countries". The paper examines how European measures taken to implement greater coherence

between agriculture, trade and Green Deal policies might impact on developing countries. This study primarily examines mirror clauses while also taking a look at other multilateral, bilateral, or unilateral trade policy measures.

**The unintended impact of
European sustainability
standards on global
food systems**

22 February 2022, 15.00 (CET)
Online conference

ELO
European Landowners' Organization

MEDIA PARTNER: **TEURACTIV**



does the food system pay
transformation?

el discussion

ss
ce, Rewe Group
yre
sMetro for FoodSHIFT 2030

e del Río
on Earth



6



Communication and
Scientific Publications

6.1 CountrySide Magazine

For almost 27 years, our publication has served as a forum for the exchange of ideas and best practices among landowners, forest owners and rural entrepreneurs. It exists to connect many facets of agriculture, the environment, and rural companies in addition to providing such a platform. Furthermore, it is the ideal venue for presenting the many projects that ELO is engaged in.



It provides a dedicated space for showcasing innovative ideas and breakthroughs in policy. This kind of resource aids in bridging gaps, publicising events, and educating a large readership about issues impacting agriculture and the environment at the local, national, European, and international levels. More than 15,000 readers, including academics, policymakers, ELO members, and anyone else with an interest in rural areas in Europe and around the world, make this possible. The CountrySide Magazine is the ideal spot for land managers and rural business owners to have their views heard, distributed, and acknowledged at every stage of the decision-making process. It is edited every two months in English and French. The paper version is composed of 16 pages.

For more information, please contact:

✉ countryside@elo.org

All the past issues are available on the ELO website.

6.2 ELO Online

The importance of online communication was once again demonstrated this year. It was possible for our staff, which is situated in Brussels and other locations, to be in touch with our members and partners on a daily basis and explore the realm of possibilities offered by online platforms. Even though business is starting to get back to normal, online communication remains integral to raise awareness and increase accessibility since meeting physically is not always possible.

The ELO team has optimised the usage of numerous communication channels and created new processes to interact and communicate information with our network in a quick and effective manner. Many events were held virtually or in a hybrid format and others in person where the situation allowed as the COVID-19 restrictions have loosened. We kept enhancing the ELO tools designed specifically for our members, such as the weekly newsletters, monthly online policy meetings, and biannual general assemblies, as keeping them informed is a priority for us and getting their input is important for ensuring that their own voice is heard in Brussels.

The ELO website is still our supporters' primary means of communication and serves as our organisation's "digital" window to the outside world. We publish all pertinent information on laws, invites to conferences, ELO initiatives, and other valuable information here. It was noted that the ELO's social media presence was particularly important because it provided the quickest way for members to learn about events, contact the organisation, ask questions, and get real-time updates. Please share your thoughts with us and don't forget to follow us!

We invite you to:

- Like our page on Facebook and get continuous updates about our events, meetings, field visits, projects and publications.
- Follow us on Twitter @EULandownersOrg, and be part of a buzzing discussion on topics related to agriculture, environment, and innovation from Brussels.
- Members can contact our office to request access to our intranet services.

Stay tuned!



 www.elo.org
 [@EULandownersOrg](https://twitter.com/EULandownersOrg)
 [@europeanlandowners](https://facebook.com/europeanlandowners)
 [@European Landowners' Organization](https://linkedin.com/company/european-landowners-organization)

7

Cooperation with the EU Institutions

7.1 2022 Intergroup

The European Landowners' Organization cherishes its long-lasting involvement in the Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside. Thanks to the current President, MEP Alvaro AMARO and the Board Members, the ELO and FACE, the European Hunting Federation managed to bring to the forefront many subjects of EU importance which are often going beyond the legislative agenda.

One of the major issues of the past year was the preparation of the European Commission's proposal for a European Forest Strategy. Already in 2020, several key elements were mentioned such as the need to foster the socio-economic dimension of forestry, the active role of forest managers to maintain forest ecosystems and the need to reward their stewardship. The EU Forest strategy for 2030 was unveiled in July 2021. It was the perfect timing to discuss how to further support the multifunctional role of European forests. An online workshop was organised and entitled "EU Forest Strategy for 2030- Reflecting European forests' multifunctionality" and it aimed at identifying the current assets and flaws of the strategy. The debate focused on the question of how to build a balanced policy that takes into account all the realities around forest management.

Beyond this important topic, the 2022 intergroup highlight was the conference "Delivering the Nature Restoration Law for rural stakeholders and biodiversity". It was the occasion to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the ambitious EC proposal on binding restoration targets. The proposal, unveiled on June 22, 2022, aims at putting into place time-bound obligations for ecosystem restoration together with an overarching EU target. The aim is to cover at least 20% of the EU's



land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures, and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. Members of the European Parliament, European Commission officials and relevant stakeholders provided their views on the proposal. The discussions revolved around the role of stakeholders, including farmers, land managers and hunters, whose contribution is key to developing successful conservation measures.

By the end of the year, the EU Biodiversity Conference was the ultimate The ELO event sponsored by the Intergroup and dedicated to the adaptation of EU forests to climate change.



For all information related to these events and also on other meetings that took place in 2022 such as the one dedicated to wolf conservation in Europe and the other related to wildlife management in Africa, please consult the Intergroup website.

 www.biodiversityhuntingcountryside.eu



7.2 EU Large Carnivores Platform

As we have seen from recent events in the European Parliament, the Council and discussions at the Bern Convention Standing Committee, the coexistence of wolves with livestock breeding remains a contentious and highly politicised topic. The EU Platform members represent a range of interest groups and of course also have varying viewpoints on the precise management measures that should be permitted.

The ninth annual meeting of the EU Large Carnivores Platform took place in May 2022 where a range of policy initiatives, including the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, new LIFE projects, the LIFE EUROLARGECARNIVORES project as well as updates on the CAP Strategic Plans and the Rural Development programmes were discussed.

In Vercors, France, the regional platform was presented at a meeting in collaboration with the EU Platform in October. The platform has now decided on a range of other actions to raise awareness to finance and promote the narrative and have a better understanding of the work of livestock keepers in the region.

74

The last regional platform joint workshop is planned for January 19 in Karlstad, Sweden. The main purpose of this meeting is to bring the local, regional and national level actors together with EU actors and discuss how the multi-level platform process has functioned and the potential for continuing it in the future.

On November 24, 2022 the parliament voted in favour of the European Parliament resolution on the protection of livestock farming and large car-

nivores in Europe . The resolution was proposed originally by the Agri committee. The resolution, which focuses on the impacts of wolves on sheep and other extensive livestock systems, makes a number of requests to the Commission and Member States to measure and reduce these impacts.



Photo: Wolf © Rudi Debruyne

Website EC Large Carnivore Platform:  https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform.htm



8

Partners

8.1 European Historic Houses

European Historic Houses (EHH) is an umbrella association covering 27 national associations of privately-owned historic houses. EHH defends the preservation, conservation and transmission of heritage houses throughout Europe.



2022 proved to be a very dynamic year as EHH organised seminars and cultural gatherings and was involved in various EU-funded projects and meetings. The year has started digitally with the *Historic Houses in Green Transition Webinar*, co-hosted by the MEP Pernille WEISS. The event attracted more than 200 participants and aimed at discussing the European Green transition. The Green Deal, the Fit for 55 and the EU Climate Action may be a step towards preserving the environment but it is a threat to the millions of unlisted historic houses across Europe, which are worthy of protection.

In April, the first in-person meeting since the pandemic was organised with the NextGen Annual Conference that took place in Dublin.






On June 15, 2022, EHH organised the *European Union's functioning and access to funds* seminar. Experts from the European Commission and EU-funded project advisors shared their expertise on EU funding programmes and projects organised by Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. The owner of the Manoir du Catel talked about his experience of bringing his castle to life with the help of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The *NextGen Young Heritage Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2022* was organised for the first time in June 2022. Numerous young private owners talked about their inspiring projects organised at their estates. The winning project was Vianney-Marie AUDEMARD D'ALANÇON's acquisition and restoration of Château de la Barben, the oldest castle in the Provence region of France.

The enthusiasm and proactiveness of the NextGen group were present until the end of the year. 30 young private owners participated in the Cultural Weekend that took place at the end of November in Lisbon.

Multiple events will be organised in 2023, four of which will be the highlights of the year: the launch of the HERIT project's MOOC, the educational programme during the final HERIT conference; active participation in the EU-funded projects and further development of the NextGen group.

Find out more info at:

-  www.europeanhistorichouses.eu
-  [@EuropeanHistoricHouses](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanHistoricHouses)
-  [@europeanhistorichouses](https://www.instagram.com/europeanhistorichouses)
-  [@european-historic-houses](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-historic-houses)
-  info@europeanhistorichouses.eu



8.2 EUROPA NOSTRA

For a value-based and culture-driven Europe.

2022 was undoubtedly a particular year for Europe and the world. The ruthless invasion of Ukraine by Russia not only marked the brutal return of war on the European continent but represented a serious blow to the humanistic values which form the core of Europa Nostra's actions, namely peace, democracy, solidarity and respect for human rights.



Faced with this unprecedented situation, Europa Nostra – the highest representative network of heritage organisations in Europe – did not remain silent. The gravity of the threats provided an occasion for increased mobilisation at all levels of activity. In partnership with the Global Heritage Fund, Europa Nostra launched a crowdfunding campaign to support the defenders of Ukraine's endangered heritage in March and relaunched it in December.

In line with its strong commitment to put Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal, Europa Nostra contributed to many international fora dealing with climate action, from the first New European Bauhaus Festival in June in Brussels and the first Ministerial Conference dedicated to Culture in the Mediterranean in June in Naples to the COP27 in November in Sharm El-Sheikh.




Europa Nostra hosted the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2022 in September in Prague. On September 26, the winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2022 were celebrated. On September 27, the full-day European Heritage Policy Agora addressed some of the most pressing challenges facing the heritage

ecosystem in Europe, such as the need to mobilise forces in solidarity with Ukraine's endangered cultural heritage.

Europa Nostra launched the Prague Manifesto "For a Value-based and Culture-driven Europe", which aims at unleashing the potential of culture and heritage for the implementation of the New European Bauhaus initiative, for the advancement of a value-based European Political Union, as strategic assets to foster international cooperation, to support and speed-up Europe's transition to a climate-neutral continent as well as to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Europa Nostra also opened its first Heritage Hubs in Kraków and Athens. It actively contributed to the European Year of Youth 2022 through several activities and events.

Find out more & join Europa Nostra!

 europeanostra.org
 [@europeanostra](https://www.facebook.com/europeanostra)
 [@europeanostra](https://twitter.com/europeanostra)



© Josef Rabara / Europa Nostra



8.3 Future for Religious Heritage

Future for Religious Heritage (FRH) is an independent, non-faith, not-for-profit organisation working to promote religious heritage buildings and their contents across Europe. It currently includes more than 80 organisations and 120 individual professionals from over 35 countries.



European Year of Youth - Throughout the European Year of Youth 2022, FRH carried out several campaigns and activities to bring religious heritage closer to young people and encourage them to find creative solutions for the future: the Run for Heritage campaign, Photo Competition, collaboration with the European Students Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH) and a bi-monthly column for youth in our newsletter, among other actions.

Religiana is a project that brings places of worship to visitors, by giving them Europe-wide visibility. The output of the project is the Religiana website, hosting more than 8,200 religious heritage sites from 46 countries, and constantly expanding. The website provides visitors with accurate information and key characteristics of sites.

FRH Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year - This competition recognises projects that make a significant contribution to the preservation of Europe's places of worship while keeping in line with the values of engagement, sustainability, protection and innovation. This first edition focused on the theme of sustainability.

In 2022, FRH organised 3 FRH Talks (Roubaix, Saint-Joseph church: preserving and sharing heritage; Youth and heritage: challenges and opportunities for the new generations; and Sound

Heritage: tips and tricks to promote places of worship), 2 Masterclasses (Living Religious Heritage through a Narrative Approach: from Preservation to the Continuity of Creation; and Exhibiting religious language?), 3 face-to-face members meeting (one in person in Sweden and two online from Portugal and Lithuania) and 5 Run for Heritage activities (4 in Spain and 1 in Italy).



Religiana:

 <https://religiana.com/>

Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year:

 <https://www.frh-europe.org/religious-heritage-innovator-of-the-year/>

FRH Photo Competition:

 <https://www.frh-europe.org/frh-photo-and-video-competition/>

 [@frh_europe](https://www.instagram.com/frh_europe)

 [@FutureForReligiousHeritage](https://www.facebook.com/FutureForReligiousHeritage)

 [@FRH_Europe](https://twitter.com/FRH_Europe)

 [@FRH - Future for Religious Heritage](https://www.youtube.com/FRH_Future_for_Religious_Heritage)



8.4 EFFORTS EUROPE

EFFORTS stands for the European Federation of Fortified Sites and is the European network organisation for the collaboration of almost 200 of Europe's forts, fortified cities and regions in 23 EU countries. EFFORTS' aim is to enhance structural European cooperation and coordination, to share expertise, to promote personal cooperation and to put fortified heritage on the agenda as a permanent link with our common European history. This in order to make a sustainable contribution to Europe's economic, energy, spatial development and social challenges.



EFFORTS organised its annual congress in Kaunas (LT), as a partner of Kaunas 2022 European Capital of Europe. The congress addressed green solutions for the development of fortress cities and regions. The ongoing project 'EFFORTS Goes Green' will continue to the 2023 Annual Congress in Maastricht, in October. The main subjects are youth involvement, digital connectivity and the integration and well-being of citizens through the advancement of military built heritage policy.

In 2022, EFFORTS organised the EFFORTS – Ukraine Twinning and Partnership Programme, where now 4 Ukrainian EFFORTS site members are partnered with EFFORTS counterparts.

EFFORTS is also successfully integrating the first national co-operations in its structure. This allows the European organisation to work from a bottom-up approach. EFFORTS has stressed the need for innovative governance between sites of common heritage. This with the objective to enhance the use of this shared heritage for regional development (green, tourism, well-being, civil society integration).

Members are called to participate in the Efforts European Fortress Summer, the annual showcase



of fortress activities, of which the most innovative participant receives the annual EFFORTS Award. This year, a Night of the Fortresses will be part of the Summer activities.



More information:

 www.efforts-europe.eu
 [@Effortseurope](https://twitter.com/Effortseurope)
 [@effortseurope](https://facebook.com/effortseurope)
 [@efforts_europe](https://instagram.com/efforts_europe)

8.5 European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform



The ESPP promotes sustainable phosphorus management, in particular nutrient recycling.

In 2022, ESPP saw progress towards phosphorus recycling in Europe with significant regulatory developments, including:

- Regulatory proposal for Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, a framework to set minimum reuse & recycling rates for nitrogen and phosphorus
- EU Fertilising Products Regulation, entered into force July 2022 and included composts, digestates, precipitated phosphates, ashes, biochars
- Inclusion of recovered precipitated phosphates in Organic Certified Production (Public Consultation closed 21/11/22)
- EU Communication on fertilisers (9th November 2022) promotes nutrient recycling

- Legal obligation to recover phosphorus from sewage notified to EU by Austria, not yet legally ratified in Austria but expected, making it the third European country, after Switzerland, Germany, to have regulatory phosphorus recycling obligations.

ESPP modified its statutes to widen the association's objectives and actions to cover "recycling of other nutrients", but ESPP's core competence remains phosphorus.

ESPP organised the 4th European Sustainable Phosphorus Conference, followed by the 5th Phosphorus in Europe Research Meeting (June 2022), with active engagement of Vienna City and of Bozalis, with more than 300 participants.

ESPP continues to develop communications to enable networking between stakeholders, companies and researchers interested in nutrient sustainability and to promote phosphorus recycling:

- ESPP emailing list, with over 93 000 recipients
- Social media: c. 3500 followers including LinkedIn and Twitter
- ESPP website: c. 60 000 users/year

In 2023 ESPP will engage with INMAP (EU Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, Sewage Sludge

Directive, phosphorus in the EU Critical Raw Materials List, EU Taxonomy, ... We will continue to extend the ESPP-DPP-NNP Nutrient Recycling Technology Catalogue and to promote nutrient recycling through different meetings and events including the 2nd Summit of the Organic Fertilisers Industry in Europe (SOFIE), a 1st Nitrogen Recovery Workshop (with the aim to establish a Nitrogen Recovery Group within ESPP), and meetings on P4 chemistry, iron-phosphate interactions, adsorbents for P-removal, Cat1 animal by-products valorisation and PROPRE (Phosphorus Recycling for Organic Production in Europe).

 www.phosphorusplatform.eu

 [@phosphorusfacts](https://twitter.com/phosphorusfacts)

 [@phosphorusfacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/phosphorusplatform/)



8.6 EUROPEAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE

Working together to strengthen synergies on the European cultural heritage scene.

The European Heritage Alliance is an informal European sectoral platform composed of 52 European or international networks and organisations active in the wider field of cultural heritage. In 2022, the members of the European Heritage Alliance convened online for their first plenary meeting on 28 April. The meeting focused on key policy developments and the respective contributions by Alliance members, including cultural heritage and climate action, the European Year of Youth 2022 and the New European Bauhaus initiative. Special attention was also given to the war in Ukraine and the ways Alliance members had responded to support Ukrainian cultural professionals.

On 6 December, the European Heritage Alliance met online for the second plenary meeting of the year, which was chaired by Lilian GROOTSWAGERS, President of Future for Religious Heritage (FRH). The meeting focused on the current challenges that the heritage sector has to address: Support to Ukraine, the Heritage Movement for Climate Action and the outcomes of the COP27, the New European Bauhaus initiative, the European Year of Youth 2022 and the European Year of Skills 2023.

The Alliance applauded the due inclusion of cultural heritage concerns in the new EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, which was approved by the Council of the European Union on November 29.

The Members of the Alliance also approved the membership requests of its 52nd member, EXARC – the International Association of Archaeological Open-Air Museums, and of the European Investment Bank Institute as the first Associate Member of the Alliance.

The Alliance is coordinated by Europa Nostra as part of its network project European Cultural Heritage Agora: “Empowering Europe’s Civil Society Movement for Heritage” (2022-2024), which is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.



Screenshot of the Autumn meeting.

(Credits: Europa Nostra)

 <https://europeanheritagealliance.eu/>

8.7 European Partnership Association (EPA)

EPA is a consortium of six foundations from Central and Eastern European countries (CZ, SVK, HU, PL, BG and ROM). Its main goal is to protect the environment and support local communities and civil society. The cooperation between ELO and EPA celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 2022. Since 2012, ELO has hosted a representative of EPA in its premises.



ELO and EPA have traditionally organised a joint project, the European Tree of the Year (ETY) contest. In spring 2022, the EPA responsibility for the European Tree of the Year contest was handed over to its leading member, the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (CEPF).

ELO is responsible for participation of Belgium in ETY and coordination of the Belgian Tree of the Year. It is organised with financial support of Fonds Baillet Latour.

ELO also traditionally provides technical and financial support for organising a ETY festive award ceremony in Brussels. The Covid19 epidemic interrupted the tradition of having this event in the European Parliament. The target of 2023 is to bring ETY back to European institutions.

The CEPF is one of the strongest players among environmental foundations in the CEE region. It is not only providing funding for other organisations, but also in developing its own expertise within national and European projects. It is currently focused on climate change adaptations, using its capacities to improve the situation both in cities and in the countryside. Other important programmes are the tree planting campaign Plant for Future (www.sazimebudoucnost.cz - 10 million trees to be planted by 2025) or the Living Soil programme (www.ziva-puda.cz) focused on improvement of the soil quality through land owners and through farmers. The focus is on regenerative farming promoted with the support of food corporations, such as Nestlé. There is a lot of shared common interest between CEPF and ELO.

The ELO has participated in the Planting for the Future Conference, organised by CEPF for the second time. In 2022 ELO used facilities of the Czech presidency, and we joined the P4F conference with the ETY award and with the LIFE TREE CHECK project final conference at the same date.



The focus was on the EU initiative of planting an additional 3 bn trees in Europe by 2030, and how the national initiatives can help to reach this goal.



EPA website:  <https://www.environmentalpartnership.org/Home.aspx>

CEPF website:  <https://www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz/>



9

Perspectives

Perspectives

The Green Deal will continue to frame the EU's agenda, with little changes despite this year's surprises. Most of the current policy proposals arising from the Farm to Fork and biodiversity strategies push for both production de-intensification and land use change by taking land out of production, with little regard to the consequences of the combined pressure. A lot of thinking behind it implies the acceptance of higher food prices without tackling the issue head-on, and at a time of food inflation, we can expect consumers to adjust their spending habits to cheaper products, thus further jeopardising efforts of those asked to do more for the environment.

The 2022 EU's Agri outlook report foresees a slowdown in the production growth of major EU agricultural sectors for the next 10 years, with climate change being the main culprit. The severe drought faced during the summer showed that we need to focus on mitigating the impacts of such occurrences in a strategic way.

There were some positive moves that we will continue to pay attention to, namely the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the long-awaited proposal for an EU certification framework for carbon removals that aims to harmonise the voluntary carbon market. These are the few recent initiatives that showed some fresh thinking towards promoting those who are making more efforts to be sustainable.

A big part of the political agenda has been focused on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Regulation and Nature Restoration Regulation, presented the same day and competing for attention. These files will continue to impact our daily work. We also expect much discussion on the future Soil Health law and the Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan.

The new Common Agricultural Policy starts in January 2023 and is likely to have some teething issues, but the ELO will already focus on the CAP post-2027, focusing more on modernising the sector. The long-awaited proposal on New Genomic Techniques can support the move in that direction. Likewise, we hope that the coming Sustainable Food Systems pay more attention to areas that have been overlooked, namely retailers, consumer behaviour, and food waste.

On forestry, we mostly await the EU Forest Monitoring and Planning Framework, but also the coming guidelines and actions related to Close to Nature Forest Management. We need to continue promoting Sustainable Forest Management and the Bioeconomy, thus ensuring the balance between the three dimensions of sustainability.

Finally, 2023 is the EU Year of skills and the ELO will use this and other opportunities to remain proactive, even when there are many policies to react to. We will keep on promoting bottom-up initiatives, like Wildlife Estates and private conservation, and also more recent initiatives such as the AgriLife and carbon certification.



©European Landowners' Organization and ©European Landowners' Organization projects.

No part of this activity report may be reproduced in any form whether by print, photo print, microfilm, photocopy or any other means without the prior permission of the association. All personal data contained in this publication is for the exclusive and internal use of the association. Any other use is forbidden.



European Landowners' Organization Asbl


Rue de Trèves 67 - 1040 Brussels, Belgium


Tel: +32 (0) 2 234 30 00

Fax: +32 (0) 2 234 30 09

Email: elo@elo.org

 [EULandownersOrg](https://twitter.com/EULandownersOrg)

 [Europeanlandowners](https://www.facebook.com/Europeanlandowners)

 www.elo.org