



## **ACTIVITY REPORT 2019**

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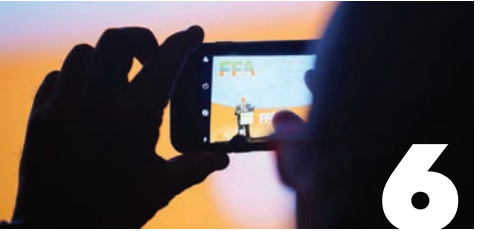
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# Foreword

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

4

A new College of Commissioners has been installed and the new European Parliament has been seated – the time is ripe for action. At the time of writing, The EU has just announced that €1 trillion will be made available to finance the European Green Deal – at long last what seems like an appropriate amount of money to combat the scale of the climate crisis facing us. With the New York Times reporting that the just-passed decade was the warmest ever recorded in human history, now is the time to be serious.

We hope that this funding, along with the revised CAP, a new Farm to Fork Strategy, and the hoped-for resolution

of the EU budget will present a true renaissance for the European countryside. Taken together, this is some of the most serious political and social attention that has been paid to land management in decades.

To make a success of these ambitions, there are certain concepts that should be taken into account; sustainable land and forest management is for the long term – up to 50 years in the case of some tree species – which goes well beyond electoral cycles. Knowing when to sell or buy land, even buying new heavy machinery; these are long-term decisions. As stewards of the land we have accepted that these business decisions carry risk, all we ask is that policies are designed for our sector take the long term into account.

The primary protection for a sustainable countryside remains a strong foundation of guaranteed private property rights. When the land manager is sure that his or her land is secure, they are able to engage in the long-term improvements and investments needed to not just produce a profit but – more importantly – deliver for the environment and at the same time create employment in the rural economy.

Our Wildlife Estates is living proof of not just the need for property rights, but of the desire for landowners to do the right thing. As it keeps growing year on year, it represents a showcase of what we do and backing up our conclusions through our scientific committee. The WE shows that private land managers are more than capable of looking after biodiversity – this is why we are happy work on our LIFE project to promote private ownership. With to the commitment of its staff and members, Wildlife Estates is leading the way in creating a network for private conservation.

It is time that the CAP reform is finalised; the wrangling over the new EU budget is creating uncertainty for our

members and across the countryside. This European financing remains the best tool for impacting land management, and in many ways bringing the financial decisions to then national level – closer to the farmer – can be positive. The last CAP has shown that even the best-intentioned reforms, particularly those on greening, can go awry if they are not designed for the localities of each farm.

However, we must be careful what we wish for. A decentralised, renationalised CAP should not lead to fundamental divergences between Member States, nor should it lead to a race to the bottom for the environment. Furthermore, we must also take care that we do not create administrative shock if we transfer complex control mechanisms to national governments who have, for decades, depended on the EU to do this work for them. A sudden increase in competent, stable national controls may not be achievable even within the timeframe of one CAP reform.

We remain a proud partner of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, which saw its 12th edition “the next generation” in 2019, with a special focus on young land managers – those who will come after us. Together with our new partners from every side of the food chain, from finance to NGOs, we understand that a better, more equitable, more sustainable food chain is necessary. The FFA helps us understand new ideas and test these against daily farm life.

**Thierry de l'Escaille**  
Secretary General of the ELO



# The ELO family



## 1.1 European Landowners' Organization



The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, 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 political level.

Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The secretariat is based in Brussels and provides European support for our member organisations on all facets of the modern countryside, which covers over 90 % of the EU28's land area.

ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through the pillars of private property rights, sustainable land use, and profitable rural businesses. Its policy recommendations are developed by engaging with European, national and international stakeholders, upholding our values, and seeking alliances. ELO supports its policies with practical projects and actions across the European countryside that demonstrate the value of private land management and promote sustainability. Our policies and results are shared with key actors from the rural sector and policy makers at different events on the local, regional, national and European level.

Climate change and biodiversity loss create short and long-term challenges for our members and their enterprises. ELO and its members are there-



fore committed to a balanced approach between strong economic performance, wise natural resource use, and private conservation.

Through its unique combination of policy work, practical actions, projects, and live events, ELO

maintains a unique position across the agricultural, environmental and rural sectors in Brussels and throughout Europe.



## 1.2 Rise Foundation 2019



The 'Future of Crop Protection in Europe' has been the primary focus of the RISE Foundation's work throughout 2019, the result of which will be a comprehensive study to be launched in the spring of 2020.

### Crop Protection study

Pesticides have become a totemic issue of our food production system today. As pressure grows to remove plant protection products from the market, what is the alternative strategy? The Rise Foundation is developing a piece of work which will analyse the current system of crop protection in Europe, understanding how crops are protected and what options are available to farmers now, and in the future. It will look at evidence regarding the impacts of pesticide use, both on health and the environment, and on the

productivity and quality of crops. Finally, it will review European crop protection policy and legislation.

With this study RISE aims to contribute to answering the question: how farmers can protect their crops from disease, insects and weeds while remaining productive, maintaining their livelihoods, protecting our health, natural resources, biodiversity and the crucial environmental services they provide?

The Crop Protection study is being launched at the 2020 Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA), 30-31 March, 2020, in Brussels, Belgium.



### Horizon 2020 projects

In addition to the Crop Protection study, RISE, as part of a 12-partner strong consortium, kicked off the Horizon 2020 **BESTMAP project** which will work to develop improved tools to European policy-makers to predict the impacts of future policies on rural areas. The project will run between 2019 and 2023, and will develop a new flexible, interoperable and customisable framework that will take account of farmers' needs and effectively monitor policy impacts on natural, social and cultural assets in rural areas.

RISE continues its involvement in the **Circular Agromomics project** working between 2018 and 2022 to test innovative solutions for efficient carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus cycling at the farm level in order to reduce nutrient waste and recover and re-use nutrients from biowaste.

Finally, RISE's communication and policy activities around the **SYSTEMIC project** continue. This project has been running since 2017 to demonstrate new approaches to the valorisation of biowaste into green energy, mineral resources, fertilisers and organic soil improvers at five large-scale biogas plants throughout Europe.





## 1.3 Friends of the Countryside

Since 1998 the FCS has created a network of private landowners, decision-makers and managers to ensure a countryside that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Together with the Young Friends, it now numbers over 700 members from “the Rockies to the Urals”.\*



Over 300 members gathered in historic Anjou for the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly where the theme was: Facing the Challenges of a Changing World – a French Perspective. Presenting the theme were Christoph BÜREN, President of Vivescia, Pierre-Olivier DRÈGE, President of ELO and Jean D’HAUSSONVILLE, Director of the Chateau de Chambord. We also welcomed 2 new board members, Mary-Randolph BALLINGER and Joe HOAGLAND who represent the new U.S. members. The Anders Wall Award was presented by Johan NORDENFALK to Baltzar WACHTMEISTER, Wanås Gods in Sweden and the diploma of recognition to Mark TUFNELL, Calmsden Farms, UK. That evening we were warmly welcomed by the owners of the Chateau de Brissac for the Gala dinner.



This warm welcome continued at all the estates visited during the tours with themes such as “Forestry and Agriculture” at Pescheseul, “Natura 2000” at Mazerolles, “Hunting & Regional Productions” at La Maissonnette and “Diversification” at Chateau de la Baronnière & Chateau la Guerinière.

During the Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2019, members gathered for a lively lunch, which will be repeated at the Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2020 on March 31.

The General Assembly in 2020 will take place in UNESCO World Heritage Site, Córdoba, from June 4-7 with

the theme “Biodiversity and the Culture of Water”. This shall be preceded by a smaller tour in Sevilla and Jerez de la Frontera from June 1-4.

The first FCS Study Tour will take place in Abergavenny, Wales from September 11-13 and hosted by board members Ross MURRAY and Jack HANBURY where discussions will take place on reform of and alternatives to the CAP, specifically land payments for public

benefit. The trip will include visits to inspiring farms, castles and estates.

\*Constantin KINSKY, board member

 [www.friendsofthecountryside.org](http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org)

## 1.4 YFCS 2019

The Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) is a membership organisation directed at young, future private landowners and rural entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 to 35.



This year, YFCS hosted and took part in several exciting events. In February 2019, the Forum for the Countryside Entrepreneurship (FCE) took place in Belgium and the Young Friends were very generously welcomed by Charles Edouard JOLLY and the FUMAL family. A few weeks later, in April, the Young Friends joined the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) in Brussels and had the privilege of listen-

ing to some of the most world-renowned experts addressing the most pressing issues concerning the next generations. In June 2019, the Young Friends joined the Friends of the Countryside at their General Assembly in Angers (France) and held their own General Assembly at the Château de l’Epinay. The new YFCS Board was then determined and finally presented after its first board meeting in October

2019 at the Château de Montjardin (Belgium) for a brainstorming session with the new members.

Furthermore, thanks to the Famigro Award initiative of Mr. GROTENFELT, each year the YFCS can support a start-up project that provides answers to the current challenges of the rural sector. The aim of the Famigro Award is to increase the chances of these kinds of valuable projects to succeed and grow, allowing them to benefit from the support of the network of the Friends and Young Friends of the Countryside. The prize also includes a check for 5,000 euros, an article published in the Countryside Magazine and the opportunity to join us during our General Assembly. Applications for the 2020 Edition were open until March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

In 2020, the General Assembly of the Young Friends will take place in Córdoba (Spain) – together with the General Assembly of the Friends – from June 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. Save the date!

 [www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)  
 [info@yfcs.eu](mailto:info@yfcs.eu)  
 [youngfriendsofthecountryside](https://www.facebook.com/youngfriendsofthecountryside)  
 [young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs](https://www.linkedin.com/company/young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs)



## 1.5 The Welcoming Estates

The Welcoming Estates Website is a unique hospitality platform that showcases private countryside estates throughout Europe that in one way or another open their doors to the public.

Welcoming  
Estates  
Website

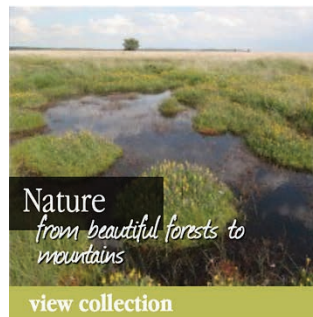
Owners of the estates are either members of the Friends of the Countryside and/or the European Historic Houses Association who wish to attract nature and culture lovers to the beautiful countryside and historic estates. They may offer whatever facilities the estate may have be it a simple hike to organic produce for sale to nature sports, lodging, guided visits or private venues and more...

Thanks to an attractive, user-friendly and well-organised website, visitors are presented with a list of these countryside estates by location or category which they can then contact directly should they wish to have more information and make reservations. The website also features a new 'News' section.

The Welcoming Estates Website now features an Instagram account where the latest photos and news from the estate are displayed. Information about the website is also displayed on both the FCS and EHHA websites and an advertisement appears in the Countryside magazine. Postcards of the website are distributed to all members.

Please note that subscription fees to join the WEW are used for maintaining and developing the website.

For more information about either becoming a member of the WEW, or about visiting the estates please visit:



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

 [welcoming\\_estates\\_website](https://www.instagram.com/welcoming_estates_website)

2

Issues and policies



## 2.1 New EU institutions

**2019 was marked by European elections and several new faces in the major institutions, not only from the European Parliament and Commission, but also with Charles MICHEL (BE) taking over the position of Council president and Christine LAGARDE (FR) being chosen to lead the European Central Bank.**

The elections have been far from smooth sailing, with the uncertainty over how much longer the UK will remain a member and the rise of both green and populist movements throughout Europe, which changed the composition of the European Parliament.

ELO shared its manifesto calling for EU for policies to support prosperous rural businesses, considering the importance of property rights, to tackle climate change, to modernise the agriculture and forestry sectors and to stimulate proactive action on the environment. With that in mind, ELO was pleased to have gathered enough support to re-establish the Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside".

There were questions over the Spitzenkandidat process, with the heads of state choosing instead to nominate Ursula VON DER LEYEN (EPP, DE) and making her the first woman to hold the office. Despite the late start of her team, following the rejection of three of the candidates and the rename of some Commissioner portfolios, the new Commission came out strong, with the presentation of the EU

Green Deal soon after. ELO welcomed it by sending a letter confirming the importance that land-based activities and of landowners in achieving the goals of the Green Deal.

Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI (PL) got the agriculture portfolio, replacing Phil HOGAN who moved to

trade. Frans TIMMERMANS (NL) remains Vice-President, but this time leading the work on the European Green Deal and overlooking, among others, the agriculture, environment and food safety portfolios. ELO looks forward to having constructive discussions in 2020, when several key proposals will be presented.



## 2.2 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

**Both the 2019 European elections and the Brexit conundrum led to some delay in discussions over the CAP-post 2020, especially in the parts of the commission proposal dependant of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The discussions remain difficult, with some countries wanting to see a smaller post-Brexit budget than the one proposed by the European Commission, who suggested 1.1 percent of the bloc's Gross National Income, while others push for a bigger share. Most EU countries defend maintaining agriculture spending at current levels. A position that ELO favours. ELO is particularly worried about the cuts proposed to Rural Development.**



ELO remains supportive of the move towards performance, considering the new delivery model an opportunity to develop a different culture for policy design and implementation, both between the EU and the Member States and between authorities and the land managers on the ground. The delivery of meaningful results is best achieved if the engagement of the parties is based on trust and accountability, rather than on mere compliance with a set of rules.

There has been some advance at Member State level to prepare their CAP Plans, starting with a SWOT and needs analysis based on the nine policy objectives agreed, and with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders, including European landowners. It is important that this work continues to be supported

and overlocked by the EU Commission, to ensure sensible subsidiarity, particularly when it comes to complex eligibility criteria and new definitions.

ELO was also in favour of giving a more prominent role to innovation and technology due to its simplification potential but also to transform the tensions between agriculture and environment into synergies, especially in the face of climate change. This reform needs to allow the modernisation of the sector, which is already happening in other parts of the world.

The discussions continue among the different institutions, with the new Parliament having decided to resume the work of the previous Agriculture committee, even if the competence for the CAP file continues to be shared between the agriculture and environment committees. The European Council is not yet close to finalising its position and thus the subject will remain on the agenda in the months ahead. Some diplomats even say that the factions are so far apart that an agreement could only be reached at the last possible moment, under the German presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2020. Once each institution adopts their negotiat-

ing position, with the vote in plenary and the partial general approach for council, the trilogues start. A process that ELO will continue to follow closely.

In 2019, the EU Commision presented their proposal for the transitional arrangements, to ensure continuity of CAP support based on current rules and to allow a smooth transition until the Strategic Plans are in place. While part of the proposal was agreed quickly, the main part is set to be adopted by summer 2020 and is in line with the "old rules, new money," principle. Still there are voices pushing for a two year transitional period instead.

ELO will continue to use its well-established structures, take part of the relevant Civil Dialogue Groups and will continue to organise several meetings to cement a strong agriculture policy that allows for a modern sector ready for the coming challenges. This includes the coming 'Farm to Fork' Strategy, expected in the Spring of 2020. If Europe is serious about its ambitions, especially those related to climate change and biodiversity, it needs to properly fund the CAP when the time comes to decide on its budget.

## 2.3 Biodiversity and Natura 2000

**The debate in 2019 was focusing on the post-EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and increased contribution of the Nature Directives to the achievement of the goal of halting and reversing biodiversity loss. The new President of the Commission presented the New Green Deal and priority actions will be translated into EU legislation including the CAP. The publication of the Biodiversity Strategy was delayed until early 2020.**

ELO actively participated in the debate during the Nature Directors meetings, GGBN (Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature), and related sub-groups (MAES, IAS, new Forest and Nature etc). ELO highlighted that during and after the REFIT process, the legislation is in place and fit the purpose, additional layers are not necessary but better implementation is required, especially in order to encourage participation of the private sector where most of the Natura 2000 areas are located. There are already a sufficient number of indicators in place in the draft legislation for the CAP through which the environmental delivery of the new policy can be ascertained. ELO does not see the need to add to the already strong environmental conditionality, as some others have proposed, neither does ELO believe that all the problems relating to the environment can be solved through more constraints on agriculture, forestry and rural activities.

Farmers, foresters, rural entrepreneurs need to know what is expected from them in order to protect and promote biodiversity and what should be an appropriate environment to achieve this objective. ELO is currently working, through projects and initiatives, on best practices at various levels of decision making favouring the participation of private stakeholders to



specific voluntary schemes and additional biodiversity friendly practices.

ELO also pushes for decisions at local level to be taken on a scientific basis, especially when dealing with species population, such as for large carnivores and advocates for better stakeholder consultation paving the way for a smooth implementation of the legislation in the long term, even if the cost of organising this consultations is considerable. For specific

habitats, we are supportive of the results based payment going beyond the simple action/non action payment system. Nevertheless the process needs to be scientifically based, agreed with stakeholders and taking into account all the costs of implementation.

2020 will be an intensive year as biodiversity will also be influenced by the CAP and the "From the Farm to the Fork" Strategy.

## 2.4 Forestry and Cork

**Like previous years, 2019 saw several discussions on the impacts of climate change on European forests. The recent past clearly shows how reduced forest resilience has a dramatic impact on the health of forest ecosystems, leading to an increase in insect pests and fungal diseases. The latest reports state that mortality in conifer stands alone will amount to more than 100 million m<sup>3</sup> in Europe this year. Beech and oak broadleaved forests are not spared, neither are Natura 2000 sites. For this reason, ELO worked on a position paper titled, "Healthy forests for a healthy future", which will be presented in 2020.**

Another consequence of the long-lasting dry periods is the increasingly devastating forest fires with an ever-greater geographical reach. This led the European Commission to unveil its first firefighting fleet under the new rescEU system to tackle natural disasters. While the EU is focusing on preparedness, ELO co-organised a conference on Climate Change and Forest Fires in Europe, hosted by the EU Parliament. Ahead of this event, representatives of European forest owners and managers released a joint statement calling for a clear and firm engagement from all relevant policymakers and stakeholders at national and European level to remain fully dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management and multifunctional role of forests.

On the EU Forest Strategy, ELO welcomed the Commission ongoing work for its revision, with the new Strategy expected by the end of 2020. ELO remains supportive of the principles of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and multifunctionality, but would like to see it updated and simplified to better correspond the climate change mitigation goals in line with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. ELO, together with other organisations will organise a joint event entitled "Seeing the forest for the trees - the multifunctional role of EU forests" in 2020.



The legislative proposals for the CAP post 2020 were also a major event, as co-financing of forestry measures under the Rural Development Regulation represents the main means of EU-level funding for forests. In 2019, during the "Our Forests, Our Future" conference, Commissioner Phil HOGAN announced the "1 hectare initiative", which proposes to reward farmers with payments for the afforestation of one hectare, within the framework of the CAP strategic plans and at the discretion of each Member State.

Apart from the different positions published throughout the year, ELO remains an active member of the

Civil Dialogue Group on Forest and Cork, and participates at both the Forest Europe Process and FAO Committee on Forestry. On the Forest Europe process, discussions continue on a possible Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) after the decision was made to transmit this file from Forest Europe to UNECE and FAO.

In 2020, ELO will resume its work on these issues, particularly the EU Green Deal, starting with the role of landowners and managers in achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, and in the implementation of the coming Biodiversity Strategy post 2020.

On the first, ELO sent both, a letter to the Commission President, and a joint position entitled "Multifunctional European forests are crucial to reach the objectives of a European Green Deal". Overall, foresters are willing to play an active part in the future Green Deal for Europe.

On the second, ELO will respond to the Biodiversity Strategy post 2020, expected in early 2020. In parallel, DG ENV created a new Working Group on "Forests and Nature. ELO is an active member and reacted to the group both through a joint letter and by suggesting alternative topics of discussion for 2020.



## 2.5 Digital Farming

**Clearly one of the big themes in agriculture and land management in the 21st century will be the ongoing digitalisation of farm management and control. These technologies provide extraordinary opportunities to increase the efficiencies of the farm, boost production and vastly reduce input uses and thereby help reduce pressures on the environment.**

There is not one single defining characteristic for digital farming; at best they are holistic systems that can be combined farm data from several sources. Drones and satellites can provide aerial data such as detailed terrain mapping, soil types and detailed weather predictions, while soil sensors can provide nitrogen and phosphorus data to a real-time level and cloud-based IT systems create user-friendly maps and application advice. The newest generations of agricultural machineries are designed to act as a focal point for this information and serve as a hub for precise applications.

Key issues still remain before this technology is widely taken up. While the tech industry and the farming community have made great strides in Europe through the Code of Conduct on Agricultural Data Sharing, this is an issue we will need to be vigilant for. Nevertheless, we look forward to a more diversified supply chain for digital tools due to their relatively cheap development costs.

However, large parts of the European countryside are still not equipped with high speed internet or 4G (and higher) mobile data connections. Without these, many of the new digital tools do not have the necessary networks to communicate with each other or send and receive the large quantities of data necessary to create high level field analyses. If Europe is serious about adopting precision farming and wide data use, this must be remedied first.



## 2.6 Crop Protection

**Nearly without exception, all productive European agriculture depends on the use of crop protection products. Without these, farmers would lose staggering amounts of yield and consumers would be at serious risk of food-borne diseases.**

By necessity, the crop protection tools must be toxic, otherwise they would not counteract the pests, diseases, and weeds that can cause serious harm to our food supply. ELO fully understands that this toxicity is a matter of concern to many.

However, Europe currently appears to be on an unsustainable track of removing such products from the market without providing adequate alternatives to farmers, or even forcing them to rely on other, often more harmful, products and methods. Very often, European and national politicians seem satis-

fied to take products off the market without providing suitable, equally safe alternatives.

In 2019, the election of the new European Parliament has seen a further uptick in this attitude, with many new Parliamentarians issuing dire but unfounded warnings about the use of chemical crop protection. As citizens and consumers, everyone has a right to question the production methods of their food and ask for it to do better, but this should always rest on a firm scientific foundation.

In 2020, we will see the rollout of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy which has promised to reduce the use of crop protection in Europe; a goal that all land managers can support as long as it is scientifically founded, realistic in practice, and ultimately better for human health and the environment. We will also see the return of the argument over glyphosate, which has just started its submission for re-authorisation.





## 2.7 Climate Change

**2019 has been another exceptionally warm year according to data released by the EU's Copernicus satellite system, which will be upgraded to also monitor anthropogenic CO2 emissions.**

Agriculture and forestry are among the areas most directly affected by climate and, therefore, exposed to actual and potential climate change. A reactive response is not enough for the challenges that climate change is and will present. Instead, it requires proactive and flexible actions that may contradict assumptions, for instance on how to deal with alien species.

The very large carbon stocks in biomass and soils, and the potential to increase or diminish those carbon stocks, ensure that land use sets the context for much of the EU climate policy. Policies should be designed in order to incentivise land managers actions to sequester carbon.

ELO welcomed the "A Clean Planet for all" strategy that sets the pathways of EU climate and energy policy, which outlines ways of achieving emission reduction targets, in which the circular bioeconomy and carbon sinks play an essential position.

While the international climate discussions are going a slower pace than what is required, the ELO still took the opportunity to, during the COP25 climate summit in Madrid at the end of 2019, present their contribution for policy proposals.

In 2020, the EU will aim to enshrine the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 goal in a 'Climate Law'. Major policies are likely to be reviewed, starting with the Renewable Energy Directive and the Energy Efficiency Directive, but also the Emissions Trading Directive and the Effort Sharing Regulation, as well as the infamous LULUCF directive dealing with land use change. A new circular economy action plan is also expected.



## 2.8 Issues – Innovation

**ELO believes strongly that only continuous innovation in the agricultural sector can deliver the results needed for Europe's land managers; a flourishing farm business at a time of climate change and unstable markets, better results for our ecosystems, and plenty of safe food for Europe's demanding consumers.**



To meet these challenges, the modern farm business should not just embrace the latest tools and technologies, but also work out his or her own innovative practices. This quest, therefore, does not just take place in the laboratories of agricultural industries, but very much in the fields of our members.

Over the last few years, the EU has shown increased support to integrate the concept of innovation into European policy. The new CAP has funds additionally reserved for agricultural innovation, which is most welcome, and we welcome the investment that is planned for the European Green Deal that will help farmers utilize technology to achieve sustainability.

In 2019, ELO continued to push for more and better access to agricultural innovation. We continued to push for broad access to plant breeding innovation tools and urged the institutions to come together and revise the current Directive on GM, a necessary step in allowing these tools to be used safely by our members.

In 2020, we will therefore push the new European Parliament and Commission to employ the legal and political tools that will clarify the ambiguities left by the ECJ decision and to create as broad a field as is legally possible for these tools to be used in Europe.



## 2.9 Land Access and Property Rights

**ELO is founded on the belief that property rights are the cornerstone of the European Union, and that the four fundamental freedoms - free movement of goods, persons, services and capital - should be applied across all the Members States. In addition, well-functioning land and forestry markets are vital for sustainable and profitable European countryside.**



© Natta

issues continue to give rise to distortions. This is currently happening in Poland, which is still without a general law on restitution and has a discriminatory law restricting land sales and ownership for farmland on its books. ELO also shared its opinion on potential ideas which may breach EU laws in the ongoing discussions on access to land taking place in Romania and Croatia.

In relation to the CAP reform, 2019 was also an important year to give concrete solutions to the new entrants, allowing them to have an income, a decent livelihood and ensuring that the next generation is willing to take over in order to keep a thriving countryside. Therefore, ELO played an active role in the workshop on 'Farmland Market Regulation', organized in June by DG FISMA and DG AGRI, hosting around 70 participants representing Member States, stakeholder organisations, land agencies, and academics. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss challenges for farmland markets, with the intent of supporting Member States to keep regulation in line with EU law and to exchange best practices regarding new challenges such as share deal transactions in farmland. Special attention was placed on the implication of CJEU judgments: C-235/17 Commission v. Hungary of 21 May 2019 and Joint cases C-52/16 and C-113/16 – SEGRO

and Horváth of 6 March 2018. As underlined in the summary of the workshop: *"Both judgments were very important for farmland market regulation, each on different aspects of the EU law. They not only confirmed what could be concluded from previous jurisprudence, but also went beyond in clarifying investors' rights, what constitutes discrimination as well as the interplay between fundamental freedoms and fundamental rights. The 2019 judgment has shed light on the right to property, in particular that it applies next to fundamental freedoms and that it extends to forms of indirect expropriation."*

2019 kept us busy advocating for the rights of our members as ELO believes that a long-term vision and legal stability are a must in order to have a diverse and multifunctional rural economy and to ensure employment in the sector. It is also much more important to introduce positive incentives than to impose restrictions on access to agricultural land and forestry.

We will continue dealing with topics such as taxation, inheritance, land tenure contracts, and ownership and management of land, on a daily basis to ensure that our members have the right information and tools to face numerous challenges while ensuring that their basics rights are respected.

3

Projects



## 3.1 CO-FARM

Cooperation is about working with others, breaking down silos and learning from each other.



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After 30 months, 6 Transnational meetings and a lot of hard work, the COFARM project came to an end this year. The final conference took place in Residence Palace in Brussels, on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

The COFARM project has developed free and accessible training materials that will give farmers, landowners, and rural entrepreneurs the skills to implement

initiatives of cooperation. The outputs have included:

- A Summary Report about the State of the Art of cooperation amongst farming entrepreneurs in Europe and in the involved Countries;
- A set of 35 Case Studies gathering best practices related to cooperation processes in the involved countries;

- An interactive training module providing the necessary knowledge needed to start and implement a cooperation initiative.

The farming sector often experiences common issues throughout Europe and sharing and exchanging the benefits that can be achieved through cooperation can go a long way in improving efficiency and facilitating growth in the sector. There are still some barriers and challenges to overcome, often with the need for regulatory bodies to be flexible with new structures and ways of working. Farmers and Rural entrepreneurs also need to be willing to open up to these new ways of working, and the sector (along with policy) needs to overcome the concerns that come with the succession, tax and new agriculture policy.

Project No: 2016-1-IE01-KA202-016870



## 3.2 FEAL



Launched in 2016, the aim of the Erasmus+ FEAL (multifunctional Farming for the sustainability of European Agricultural Landscapes) project is to promote entrepreneurial approaches at the juncture between farming and European Agricultural Landscape.

Launched in 2016, the aim of the Erasmus+ FEAL (multifunctional Farming for the sustainability of European Agricultural Landscapes) project is to promote entrepreneurial approaches at the juncture between farming and European Agricultural Landscape.

The Final Conference of FEAL was hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels on 6 May 2019.

The outputs of the project include:

- A Summary Report gathered from 5 National Reports linking the relationship between sustainable and multifunctional farming practices and European agricultural landscapes
- An interactive e-Atlas that represent the diversity of EAL's across Europe
- A database of 28 case studies showing best practices of successful business strategies of sustainable and multifunctional farming whilst at the same time maintaining EALs values and quality.
- Interactive training modules that integrate theoretical knowledge from the Summary Report, as well as including implementation models of best practices represented by Case Studies and from the farm environment expressed through the e-Atlas.



Landscapes have an important cultural value and play a crucial role in the conservation of biodiversity and productivity of farmland. Knowledge on landscape values of European agricultural landscapes can open up new horizons for the establishment of a farm performing different non-agricultural activities, with successful concepts of business strategies in this field improving the possibility of further employment in the farming sector.

Although this marked the end of the project, the e-Atlas will continue to expand, and all training

modules, information and experiences will continue to be available for the future.

Project No: 2016-1-SK01-KA202-022502



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## 3.3 FARMID

**Agriculture has been identified as a sector that can improve the social inclusion of people with mild intellectual disability whilst providing a positive economic position for farms. These group of workers are often underestimated, and the social and personal reward of providing such opportunities is evident.**



The 4th meeting for the FARMID project took place in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Granada, Spain in November 2019. Within the picturesque landscape, the meeting was an opportunity for partners to discuss and view the training modules that had been prepared.

These training modules aim to provide farmers, landowners, social entrepreneurs, students and trainers the ability and knowledge relating to employing persons with mild intellectual disability on farms. The meeting was followed by a visit to el Parque del Seminario which is partly managed by the Centro Especial de Empleo Municipal Jardines y Naturaleza'. An employment centre that employs People with Mild Intellectual Disability (PMID) with the aim of securing paid work and the provision of personal and social inclusion services.

The main goal of the training and work experience provided by the employment centre is to enable them to find work in the private sector. It is the expectation, in line with FARMID project objectives, that the barriers and prejudices surrounding people






with mild intellectual disabilities will be broken to show that people with mild intellectual disabilities are capable workers and can be fully active members of the workforce.

The next project meeting will coincide with the final conference held at the European Parliament in

Brussels on Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2020. If you are interested, register via our website.

Project No: 2017-SI01-KA202-035535

 [www.farmid.bc-naklo.si/](http://www.farmid.bc-naklo.si/)  
 [FARMID\\_ERASMUS](https://twitter.com/FARMID_ERASMUS)  
 [FARMID](https://www.facebook.com/FARMID)

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



## 3.4 CARE-T-FARMS

**CARE-T-FARMS (Care Activities Raising Employment and Training on Farm Adaptation to Responsible and Mental Health Services) was launched in November 2017. It is funded by the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Union under Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices.**



The goal of CARE-T-FARMS is to create training materials on social farming for farm workers, farm managers, and social and healthcare professionals in order to promote the use of farms for its positive effects on mental and physical health and wellbeing. Since the project began, the consortium has examined and combined the best practices from all over Europe

with theoretical knowledge about the optimal ways to run a social or care farm.

The three education and training modules which were developed as outputs from the project each have their own target audience, "Care Farm Tutor", "Care Farm Manager" and "Care Farm Social/Health Educator", and are in line with different levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) according to their different expected learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. The three training modules along with national reports on the State-of-the-Art of social agriculture and care farms and a transnational Summary Report on main issues from the national reports have been incorporated into a free online training system available in several languages including English, French, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Turkish. The training system includes case studies from not only the partner countries, but other European countries as well such as Belgium, Czech Republic and the Netherlands.

The CARE-T-FARMS consortium met for their final meeting in Kraków, Poland in September 2019, where the project coordinator, Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów (CDR) and project partner, Stowarzyszenie ARID, hosted their multiplier event on 17-18 September. The event included experts in the field of social agriculture, mental health issues and accessibility for people with disabilities. The free online training system is now accessible from the project website (<http://care-t-farms.eu/edu/>).

Project No: 2017-1-PL01-KA202-038380

 <http://care-t-farms.eu>  
 [CARE\\_T\\_FARMS](https://twitter.com/CARE_T_FARMS)  
 [CareTFarms](https://www.facebook.com/CareTFarms)

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





## 3.5 AGFOSY

**Agroforestry Systems: The Opportunity for European Landscape and Agriculture is a new project that began in November 2018.**



The aim of the AGFOSY project is to create a complex yet flexible training system relating to agroforestry. It is based on case studies and best practices that will provide farmers and landowners with the skills, knowledge and competencies to implement agroforestry systems on their own farms. Agroforestry (AF) measures are able to bring a wide range of positive benefits to land management, as well as helping landowners to achieve the goals of the CAP. It can provide solutions to different issues from unemployment to income diversification as ecological services.

The AGFOSY project partners met in Toulouse, France on May 23-24<sup>th</sup>. During the day, discussions included summary reports, case studies, project dissemination and workshops. Partners from France, Spain, Belgium, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic all shared their unique viewpoints and research so far. Depending on the country, support and development of AF measures vary.

The most recent meeting was held on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in Zvolen, Slovakia. Each project partner

presented Case Studies from their respective areas, with ELO having multiple case studies from both Flemish and Walloon regions. These case studies will help provide a history of agroforestry in their respective countries; how it has been developed; and where it's future lies. This will then help to form training modules and videos which will be accessible to farmers and landowners across Europe who wish to develop agroforestry practices on their land, which ELO has already made great progress on. The meeting also included visits to multiple farms that participate in agroforestry.

Project no: 2018-1-CZ01-KA202-048153

<https://www.agroforestrysystems.eu/>  
 **AGFOSY\_ERASMUS**  
 **AGFOSY**

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



## 3.6 REWARD

**The project REWARD: Raising Employability of Women through entrepreneurial Activities fostering Rural Development aims at providing rural women with the tools to manage a wide range of multifunctional activities that relate to agriculture and rural cultural heritage.**





Entrepreneurship has been identified as a new opportunity for women to deliver alternative services to diversify the scope of their activities and their role in society with effect on social inclusion, poverty and economic development in rural areas. As multifunctional farming is a sector that offers opportunities for integrating heritage values into strategies for economic and social sustainability of rural areas, this EU-funded Erasmus+ project seeks to pave the way for integrated and new business activities.

Over the past year, the project progressed significantly and reached several milestones. The summary report *"The Situation of Women in rural areas: employment and opportunities linked to multifunctionality and cultural heritage"* was released to provide a broad vision of the situation of women and their role in rural society. One of the main findings is that the more multifunctional our agriculture becomes, the greater the role of women. Each of the partners selected, in their respective countries, 5 case studies of women entrepreneurs in European rural areas that develop activities fostering rural development linked to cultural heritage. These case studies will be used to create best practices as well as help form the training modules for the final output of the project.

The next step of the project is the development of the case studies chosen and of the training materials in order to equip women in rural areas with the entrepreneurial skills necessary for integrated and new

business activities. The upcoming partner meeting will take place in Krakow, Poland in Spring hosted by the Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego w Brwinowie.

Project No: 2018-1-FR01-KA202-047809

<https://reward-erasmus.eu/>  
 **REWARD\_ERASMUS**  
 **REWARDERASMUS**

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





## 3.7 LAND MOBILITY

**The Land Mobility project seeks to provide a service to facilitate workable arrangements and is based on a successful pilot programme in Ireland.**

The fundamentals of the service are to provide information, to outline and explore options, to act as an honest broker, to provide a confidential service facilitating land mobility and to work with farmers' existing professional advisers. Essentially it allows older farmers and landowners seeking to retire to work with younger farmers looking to enter the field of agriculture.

The purpose of the service is to facilitate collaborative arrangements tailored to suit any specific situation. These arrangements may be as simple or as complex as desired. They must be workable for all parties involved and can be within or outside the family or a combination of both. In many cases it is envisaged that the arrangements will evolve over time, to help develop dynamic, progressive, and profitable farm operations. The "Honest Broker" element is particularly important in that all parties will be fully respected and in particular the rights of the landowner. As this program expands across the EU it will be helpful for ELO members seeking to retire and help new generations of farmers.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, the Land Mobility pro-



ject held their kick-off meeting in Dublin, Ireland. Amongst the activities were partner introductions, timelines and milestones, roles and responsibilities and communication strategy. The meeting closed with presentations by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and The Marine, Michael CREED and Land

Manager, Austin FINN. The project will run for two years.

Project No: 2019-1-IE01-KA202-051449



## 3.8 FARCURA

**(Fostering inclusion through Social Farming) is a new Erasmus+ project which started in October 2019 and will operate across Ireland, Slovenia, Germany, Portugal and Belgium.**



Social farming refers to the therapeutic use of farming landscapes and practices on a working farm in order to provide health, social, educational and/or vocational support to a small number of people at risk of social exclusion. It is considered as an innovative approach to fostering social inclusion amongst marginalized groups within rural society. To develop and enhance this practice, the project FARCURA will identify innovative models of social farming and share them with stakeholders involved in social farming through a training

course to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skill-sets and competencies.

After assessing the needs for key stakeholders involved in models of social farming, the transnational project will create suitable training and learning resources for farmers who require ex-

pertise in working with participants' needs and abilities, and in communicating effectively with participants. Engagement with policymakers, rural development organizations and health/care providers with regard to replicate the innovative programme will complete the project.

The Kick-off-meeting was held at the beginning of the year 2020 in Thurles, Ireland hosted by the Limerick Institute of Technology. The project partners discussed the first output, the state of the art report on innovative models of social farming across Europe. The next part of the project will consist of developing training course materials on social farming and disseminate it on a training website. The next meeting will be held in Germany in Spring 2020 hosted by Hof und Leben.

Project No: 2019-1-IE01-KA202-051446





## 3.9 FERTIMANURE

**FERTIMANURE is a Horizon 2020 project entitled “innovative nutrient recovery from secondary sources - Production of high-added value FERTilisers from animal MANURE”.**

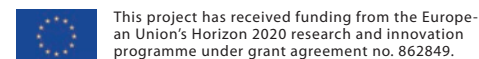


Farm livestock in Europe excrete around 1400 metric tonnes of manure annually. More than 90% of manure produced is returned to agricultural fields either through the spreading of collected manure or directly by grazing. However, this is not being done in the most efficient (and least leaky) way. The project focuses on “how to improve the agronomic use of recycled nutrients from livestock manure” to reconnect nutrient flows between plant and livestock production.

recovery and nutrient management. To that end, 5 innovative & integrated nutrient recovery on-farm experimental pilots will be implemented in the most relevant European countries in terms of livestock production (Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands), whereas the nutrient management will be addressed through 3 different strategies adapted to mixed and specialised farming systems. A total of

31 marketable end-products (11 Bio-Based Fertilisers & 20 Tailor-Made Fertilisers) will be obtained. The agronomic and environmental performances will be assessed. The project aspires to provide an innovative circular economy model to favour rural development in the agricultural sector by creating real synergies and links within farmers and other industrial activities.

ELO will lead the social impact assessment along with the assessment of the current legislation framework of bio-based fertilisers, and will participate actively in communication and dissemination activities. The Kick-off meeting took place in January at the UVIC University in Vic, Spain.



## 3.10 CONSOLE

**CONSOLE (CONtract SOLutions for Effective and lasting delivery of agri-environmental-climate public goods by EU agriculture and forestry) is a project that focuses on promoting innovation in the delivery of agri-environmental climate public goods by EU agriculture and forestry.**



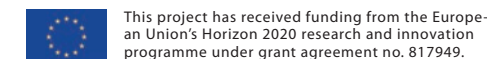
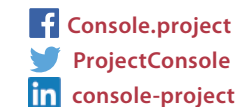
The CONSOLE multi-actor and multidisciplinary team brings together 24 partners in 13 countries, covering a range of representation from farmer organisations, regional administrations, consultancy companies, research institutions and water and forest management bodies. ELO will be participating in the co-design of research, providing case studies and is the Work Package Leader for dissemination and outreach. A key stakeholder for the project is the private landowner who is vital in the delivery of public goods on the ground.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Project Meeting at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, partners discussed how they will go about co-creating an empirically validated contractual framework that will then be used to design and test effective and efficient contact models to support their implementation by multiple actors.

During this project ELO will interact with its members and notably the WE members in order to share their input to the research team. Synergies with another important project, LIFE Land Is For Ever will

take place in order to gather information on the concrete needs of landowners supporting biodiversity provisions whilst undertaking rural activities. It is expected that the research, outcomes and work carried out by the project will improve policy design towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular through environmental policies and the post-2020 CAP.

Project website <https://console-project.eu>





## 3.11 AgriDemo - F2F

**AgriDemo-F2F (Building an Interactive AgriDemo Hub community: enhancing farmer to farmer learning) was launched in January 2017, funded by the European Union Horizon 2020 Research and innovation programme and the goal of the project is to enhance peer to peer learning within the commercial farming community.**

In order to enhance peer to peer learning among the farming community, the consortium created a free online geo-referenced inventory of open commercial farms that engage in demonstration activities in Europe, detailing the sectors, themes and topics on which they provide expertise and the mediation techniques they apply. The experience of different actors and involved practitioner partners throughout the project deepened the understanding of effective on-farm demonstration activities. Several case studies were described, analysed and compared on their network structure (actors, roles and governance characteristics), and mechanisms and tools used for recruitment, interaction and learning.



The final meeting of the project coincided with the FarmDemo Conference in Brussels, Belgium on 21-22 May 2019, where the results of the project were shared with farmers, advisors, researchers, and policymakers. Participants heard from commercial farmers and innovation actors involved in on-farm demonstration, were able to learn how demonstrations can be or-

ganised successfully to optimise impact, actively test and try different tools for effective demonstrations and participate in a round table discussion with an expert panel to discuss the future of farm demonstrations in the EU. This discussion facilitated the finalised version of the best practical approaches for both the on-farm demonstration of research results and the


dissemination of best farming practices among practitioners and recommendations for AKIS governance and policies on how to support effective on-farm demonstration activities.

If you are interested in accessing an EU-wide inventory of demonstration farms where farmers can showcase or find relevant farm demonstration activities, join FarmDemo hub online for free.

 [www.agridemo-h2020.eu](http://www.agridemo-h2020.eu) | <https://farmdemo.eu/>

 [AgridemoF2F](#)

 [Agridemo F2F](#)

 This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 728061.



## 3.12 Water2REturn

**Water2REturn (W2R) is an Innovation Action co-funded by the European Commission under its Horizon 2020 (H2020) programme focused on the recovery and recycling of nutrients from slaughterhouse wastewater.**



These nutrients (nitrate and phosphate concentrate, hydrolysed sludge and algal biomass) will create 2 biostimulants and 1 organic fertiliser manufactured in production lines built up within

the W2R project, free of pathogens and pollutants and ready to be commercialised, that will enhance nutrition efficiency, abiotic stress tolerance and/or crop quality traits. This is a novel project that revolutionises the relationship between many different industries including slaughtering, wastewater treatment and fertilisers to create a circular economy for organic fertilisers while simultaneously dealing with wastewater challenges and harnessing energy. Amongst the benchmark goals are reducing wastewater discharge by 90%, saving up to 40% of freshwater in the meat industry, recovering up to 95% of the nutrients contained in the wastewater and producing up to 4.19% of total chemical N-fertilisers consumed in the EU.

ELO is a key partner for the stakeholder engagement part of the project, seeking to build up a rapport with representatives from the industries that are associated with the objectives of W2R, as well as to increase acceptance of the technologies amongst consumers.

The project began in 2017 and will run for three and a half years. It brings together 15

partners from 8 countries such as Spain, France, UK, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Germany, and Romania.


In June, 2019, the second General Meeting was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia and focused on the continued progress of the project, including discussions on social awareness, dissemination, and reducing barriers. Project members attended a visit to University of Ljubljana's Algal Park, where AlgEn has produced and tested different pond designs. The conference ended with a heavily technical discussion on fermentation, energy production, and digestates for algae treatment.

The next meeting will be held in Seville, Spain in April 2020.

 [www.water2return.eu](http://www.water2return.eu)

 [Water2REturn](#)

 [Water2REturn](#)

 This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement no. 730398.





## 3.13 InnoForEST

**InnoForEST (Smart information, governance and business innovations for sustainable supply and payment mechanisms for forest ecosystem services) started in November 2017 and includes 16 partners representing 9 EU countries.**



The goal of InnoForEST is to catalyze a shift in the European forest sector by steering policies and businesses towards the provision of a wide range of forest ecosystem services. The project has examined best practices, innovative governance approaches and alternative income streams from forest ecosystem services across Europe.

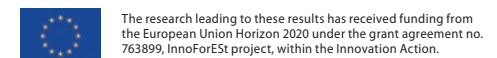
InnoForEST has selected 6 groundbreaking case studies in Austria (Value Chains for Forest and Wood), Finland (Habitat Bank), Italy (Forest Pasture System Management), Germany (Waldaktie), Slovakia/Czech Republic (Collective Governance of Ecosystem Services) and Sweden (Love the Forest) which represent a range of successful coordination approaches and business models. These innovation regions (IRs) target a variety of different forest ecosystem services

such as biodiversity, tourism and recreation, timber, water regulation and natural hazards protection, with various policy and business approaches in place.

In 2019, the Innovation Region partners finished their workshops with local stakeholders in their regions. The opinions expressed by the stakeholders assisted the innovation region teams in selecting the prototype scenario, namely an innovative management approach that will be shared among other project partners and promoted at the European level at the

end of the project. The consortium met for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Consortium Assembly meeting in Schlierbach, Austria hosted by project partners, STUDIA and University of Innsbruck (UIBK) on 30<sup>th</sup> October-1<sup>st</sup> November 2019, where they discussed how the governance innovations in the IRs can be put into policy recommendations at the EU level and exchanged ideas with local forest owners and managers.

The InnoForEST project will finish in November 2020 with the final meeting and conference taking place in Brussels, Belgium, hosted by the European Landowners' Organization.



## 3.14 UNISECO

**UNISECO, launched in May 2018, is a European research project aiming to develop innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.**

The objectives of the meeting were to review the status quo of the project and the progress of the first year. To prepare forthcoming activities in the WPs until the end of the second project year at the end of April and to review the next steps until the next project meeting, to review the multi-actor engagement and agree on revisions, to review dissemination activities and targets and discuss the tools of the Agro-ecological Knowledge Hub. During the meeting, Stakeholder Champions were invited to participate in workshops along with the Consortium, where they heard presentations from FAO, commented on case studies and the best way of reaching target audiences, as well as shaping the UNISECO Knowledge Hub.

On the second day, group discussions of key sustainability issues of the case study farming systems, key barriers and governance issues for the promotion of agro-ecological farming, including perennial, arable, and livestock systems. There was also a visit to one of the largest sprout farms in Switzerland. Partners were able to explore the factory and



see environmentally-friendly vegetable production. In addition, a tour of the exterior of the farm showed how farmers have begun to diversify their crops. The third day consisted of scenario development workshop and discussions of the case studies while the final day wrapped things up and made plans for the next meeting. To review the case studies, learn more about agro-ecology, network with experts, or simply discover more about the project, please visit us on our website.





## 3.15 BIOPLAT-EU

**The BIOPLAT-EU (Promoting Sustainable Use of Underutilized Lands for Bioenergy Production Through a Web-Based Platform for Europe) project was launched in November 2018 and will run for three years. BIOPLAT-EU addresses the Horizon 2020 call for Global leadership in renewables, and more specifically the topic of Market Uptake Support.**

The overall objective of the project is to promote the market uptake of sustainable bioenergy in Europe using marginal, underutilized, and contaminated lands for non-food biomass production through the provision of a web-based platform that serves as decision support tool. To achieve this, BIOPLAT-EU is creating a database of maps of Marginal, Underutilized and Contaminated (MUC) lands in Europe and a public user-friendly tool (STEN: Sustainability Tool for Europe and Neighbouring countries) that gives the user specifications about these lands.

Many of the project partners have carried over their work from the previous Horizon 2020 project, FOR-BIO (fostering sustainable feedstock production for advanced biofuels on underutilized land in Europe). The STEN tool will be based on existing recognised and test methodologies for the assessment of 9 environmental indicators (GHG emissions, Air Pollutants Emissions, Soil Quality, Water Quality, Water Use and Efficiency, Biodiversity, and LUC). These will be shared on the web-based platform as a core source of information and utility related to this topic for stakeholders.



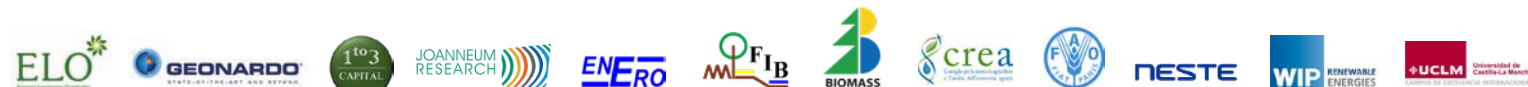
On 26 September 2019, Scientific Engineering Centre "Biomass" (SECB) hosted the BIOPLAT-EU project consortium in Kiev, Ukraine, where ELO joined for the second progress meeting of the project. The next consortium meeting will be held in Bucharest, Romania in April 2020, hosted by project partner, EN-



ERO. ELO will continue to collect existing MUC land data from each Member State until the database is complete. Interested persons with relevant information are encouraged to contact the ELO Projects Team at [lindsey.chubb@elo.org](mailto:lindsey.chubb@elo.org).

<https://bioplat.eu/>  
[BioplatEu](#)  
[Bioplat-Eu](#)  
[BIOPLAT-EU](#)  
[bioplat.eu](#)  
[Project BIOPLAT-EU](#)

This project is Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union (Contract No. 818083).



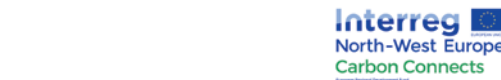
## 3.16 Carbon Connects

**Reducing the high footprint of degraded peatlands in North-West Europe, by introducing innovative business models based on sustainable land management practices.**



Globally, peatlands store 1.4 trillion tones of carbon which is equivalent to 75 % of all carbon in the atmosphere - twice the carbon stored in forests! Today, one third of the global CO2 emissions are caused by drain-

ing and/or burning these peatlands for agricultural use. There is an urgent need for sustainable alternatives and innovative business models for farmers and land managers of rewetted peatlands (paludiculture).



With the project, CarbonConnects, we aim to reduce the high carbon footprint of peatland soils in Northwest Europe by introducing new bio-based business models developed for sustainable land management practices. We collect examples of successful models, support knowledge sharing through farmer-to-farmer learning programmes and facilitate land use. Ten pilot sites have been developed to field test promising models in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, UK and Ireland. We promote a market for sustainable bio-based (innovative) construction materials, fuel sources and food products cultivated on peatland in NW-Europe as well as a carbon and blue-credit scheme system for wet agriculture.

[www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/cconnects-carbon-connects/](http://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/cconnects-carbon-connects/)  
[CarbonConnects](#)





### 3.17 BioWILL

**Integrated "Zero Waste" Biorefinery utilising all fractions of Willow feedstock for the production of high to medium based Bio-Chemicals/Materials, Renewable Energy in the form of Bio Methane production and Natural Fertilisers**



The recovery of relatively small quantities of high value extractives from biomass has the potential to transform the economic viability of biorefineries promoting transition to a zero-waste circular bioeconomy. Through transnational collaboration, BioWILL addresses the problem of poor vertical integration of value for biomass by developing a zero-waste willow biorefinery utilising all fractions of the feedstock to produce biopharmaceutical chemicals, energy and materials ensuring sustainable economic development. This project will demonstrate the commerciality of scalable rural biorefineries for Northwest Europe (NWE) providing alternative income for farmers and employment across a wide skill base. The project will deliver a biorefinery model for NWE using willow, by producing high value salicylates from willow bark for medical applications.

BioWILL is a 36-month project which just started and brings together 10 partner organisations from Belgium, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom. The regions selected have small amounts of willow which are currently providing low income to growers. The UK has a developed cottage craft industry for willow, and bio-fibre food packing manufacturing. All regions have national or regional bioeconomy policies, but none has an extractive based cascading biorefinery. The partnership provides an integrated research and commercial exploitation platform.

ELO's role will be to promote the potential of sustainable willow growing in the NWE and the commercialisation of commodities produced from the willow extract. The overall message will promote the benefits of zero waste biorefineries and the long-term sustainability through policy support, publications and information sharing..

Project No. NWE 964



### 3.18 COUPLED

**Land use and sustainability as key challenge of a globalized world: A Telecoupling Approach**



Human consumption of food and agricultural products have a significant impact on the environment and the societies in the regions where they are produced. Given Europe's large and growing

land use footprint abroad, Europe has a special responsibility to develop concepts and tools needed to achieve sustainability in an interconnected world. Various sectors, consumers, businesses and politicians are increasingly demanding more environmentally and socially sustainable land use both inside and outside Europe.

However, the limitations of current research approaches to adequately understand and address the increasing complexity of land system dynamics, which are often characterized by strong non-linearity, feedback mechanisms, and local contexts, and where places of production, trade, and consumption of land-based products are increasingly separated. Land systems are increasingly coupled across large distances via flows of biomass, capital, information and regulations. Given that distal couplings are often key in shaping how land is used, a new generation of scientists and entrepreneurs is needed.

Future EU policy will consider the negative effects of telecoupling. To facilitate this political process, it is important to be involved in this process from an early stage. For this reason, a team of researchers, coordinated by the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, has developed a European training network in order to better integrate research, innovation and social responsibility framed around the concept of telecoupling, and of course, where agriculture meets the environment, ELO plays a role.

[www.coupled-itn.eu](http://www.coupled-itn.eu)  
 CoupledITN  
 Coupled ITN

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 765408.





## 3.19 REFLOW

**REFLOW is a Marie SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE Horizon 2020 project aimed at phosphorus recovery for fertilisers from dairy waste, which began in January 2019 and will carry on for four years.**



The REFLOW project set out with the following goals: (i) to develop and demonstrate processes for the recovery and reuse of phosphorus products from dairy processing waste (DPW), (ii) to establish their fertiliser value and optimum application rates through laboratory protocols and field trials, and (iii) to address the environmental, social, food safety and economical challenges, ultimately finding market-driven solutions for the new processes and fertiliser products. To achieve its goals, the consortium has established an innovative and entrepreneurial training environment for the next generation of researchers in countries such as Denmark, France, Ireland, Poland, Spain and Sweden.



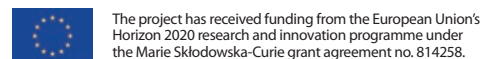
© Shutterstock

REFLOW is an multidisciplinary cross-sectoral European Training Network bringing together world-leading scientists and key stakeholders in dairy processing, fertiliser production and phosphorus recycling with early-stage researchers (ESRs) to address important technical and socio-economic challenges associated with the recovery of phosphorus from dairy processing wastewater and its

recycling into fertiliser products enabling sustainable expansion of the dairy industry in Europe. This project provides researchers the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to develop and deploy new technologies for socially and environmentally responsible innovative manage-

ment of DPW and to stimulate new markets for recycled phosphorus.

ELO is hosting an ESR enrolled at Ghent University who is focusing on the development of new financial models for the circular (bio)economy. Outputs of this research will include data on the market acceptability of DPW and REFLOW products; an assessment of the potential contribution of REFLOW in providing job opportunities, job quality, and the distribution of social benefits as well as alternative financial models for a sustainable (bio)economy.



## 3.20 TERRANOVA

**The European Landscape Learning Initiative: Past and Future Environments and Energy Regimes shaping Policy Tools**



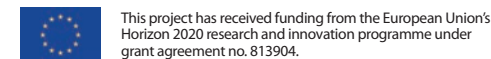
TERRANOVA is a consortium of high-profile universities, institutions with acknowledged heritage, landscape and planning expertise, civil society organisations and SMEs, located in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The project aims at improving our diachronic long-term understanding of landscape histories and land use strategies in Europe in the Holocene and Anthropocene. Previously identified socio-cultural transitions and the effects of natural forcings will be critically assessed in a new intellectual interdisciplinary arena created by the TERRANOVA project. Regional and continental syntheses will be used to anchor a new generation of landscape and climate change models which include the effects of past human actions and generate scenarios for landscape management and rewilding. Ultimately this project will contribute to identifying major previous shifts in resource use and energy regimes and provide options for the future transition to a low carbon society.

There is a consensus that the intensity of management and impacts of land management on natural systems today is unprecedented. This leads on to consideration of themes of sustainability and societal impact upon landscapes in the 21st century. From this perspective knowledge of past energy regimes

and landscape interactions are essential components in understanding the present transition to a low carbon society.

ELO's role will be to document pathways and perceptions of future landscape change contextualised in the long-term landscape history of Europe. In order to do so, the role of perception in decision-making for landscape planning will be quantified. Along with this, ELO will be highly involved in communication and dissemination activities.





## 3.21 Land Is For Ever

Adapting new conservation tools to engage private landowners in national and European conservation efforts



More robust efforts are needed to support biodiversity conservation on privately owned land complementing the public sector investments. The use of innovative tools (e.g. fiscal benefits, legal protection, safe harbour agreements, easements, private protected areas, land swaps, etc.) aimed at promoting private land conservation has great potential to accomplish this objective. This project aims to contribute significantly to private landowners' knowledge of available conservation tools, as well as the expansion and development of innovative tools.


In 2019 the project brought together more than 200 European landowners, land users and local policy makers and interviewed more than 1000 owners and managers to build a better understanding of the barriers, benefits and knowledge gaps they are facing today in implementing conservation activities on their land. With the support of experts and national agencies we are developing an overview of the available tools in EU Member States. Combining these information sources will give us the opportunity to identify both gaps of knowledge and awareness and gaps of available effective tools in the EU Member States. Five innovative examples of private initiatives for land conservation have been selected in BE, FR, GE, NL, SP and SW to learn from their experiences and to inspire land managers elsewhere.

These actions will contribute to a reliable basis to develop recommendations for more effective private land conservation policies in Europe and a network to expand and facilitate the use of them.

 [www.landisforever.eu](http://www.landisforever.eu)  
 [LIFEprojectLIFE](#)



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 This project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under grant agreement LIFE17PREBE001.



## 3.22 LIFE E-Natura.edu

Supporting e-learning and capacity building for Natura 2000 managers



This innovative three-year project explores the potential of building new approaches and learning methods to improve knowledge and capacity amongst Natura 2000 Managers in both public and private land, across the EU. Taking a competence-based approach, it will enable peers to connect and learn about what managers need to know and be able to do.

The project will analyse training needs and make available new ways of access-

ing information about the multiple skills required for Natura 2000 management and policy implementation.

On 24 September at the 2019 EUROPARC Conference in Latvia, the call for applications for the "LIFE e-Natura 2000.edu" project, "LIFEedu" for short, was launched. Applications were invited from individuals with responsibilities for Natura 2000 management. A total of 60 applicants were selected to form the project's core cohort of participants. In addition, the project will create wider opportunities for more than 500 participants who can join in the project's online learning events.

Project participants will work together in face-to-face workshops and a summer school; and use a range of online and digital tools, such as webinars, demonstration videos and a new smartphone app to support networking, all of which will be available to ELO members at no cost.

The project partners met in Brussels, Belgium on November 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the progress of the project. Included were discussions on training methods such as videos, classes (on-line and in person), and the digital application being developed by ELO.

 [www.europeanlandowners.org/projects/e-natura2000](http://www.europeanlandowners.org/projects/e-natura2000)

  The project and all actions are made possible with support from the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community





## 3.23 The Regional Large Carnivore Platform

Regional Platforms on coexistence between people and large carnivores

Conflicts on large carnivores vary significantly across the EU, depending for example, on the socio-economic activities in the areas which large carnivores are returning to and the biogeographic and natural conditions.

The project 'Regional Platforms on coexistence between people and large carnivores' aims to work together with stakeholders to discuss potential solutions for conflicts around large carnivores in the national, regional or local context. The project is managed by Instituto di Ecologia Applicata (IAE) and supported by a team including facilitators, social scientists and communicators. The team's goal is not to propose particular solutions but to support the parties affected in discussing the problems and potential solutions together. ELO, as co-chair of the European Large Carnivores Platform, links this project and the regional platform to the European Large Carnivores Platform. Platforms are currently being scoped in Castilla y León (Spain), Harghita county (Romania), Grosseto, Tuscany (Italy), and Trentino (Italy).



## 3.24 Heritage Houses for Europe. Exchange & Innovate



Heritage Houses for Europe is the first Pan-European study on family-owned heritage houses. It assesses their added value for Europe and identifies innovative business models.

Through this study we gained an improved bottom-up understanding of the socio-economic contribution of those houses and how innovative models can support and help their sustainable preservation.

More than 40% of European heritage houses belong to families. However, their contribution to European society **has never been valued properly at European scale before**. This study underlines the **multiple contributions** that family-owned heritage houses generate, not merely through the conservation and maintenance of the houses, but also by generating **cultural, economic, social, educational and environmental benefits** that reach far beyond the physical boundaries of their properties.

This Study provides an overview of existing business models, their activities, strategies and SWOT analysis. Although some of them are innovative, most of them are not. It is therefore **important to trigger innovation**. The full study provides a concrete number of suggestions for heritage houses owners.

The ultimate goal of this project is to strengthen owners position within our society, by reinforcing their skillset and capacity, while raising awareness



This project is a Preparatory Action of the European Parliament implemented by the European Commission. It was granted in July 2018 to the consortium led by the European Landowners' Organisation, with the European Historic Houses Association and IDEA Consult.

The full study is available on the project website and the office of publications portal.

Project Number: EAC/2018/0313

 [www.europeanlandowners.org/heritage-houses-for-europe/](http://www.europeanlandowners.org/heritage-houses-for-europe/)  
 [marie.orban@elo.org](mailto:marie.orban@elo.org)

of their value for European citizens and society as a whole. This study formulates policy recommendations for the European Commission and other stakeholders on how they can support the sustainability of the sector in Europe. This project is an important first step, though many more are required to preserve our common cultural heritage across Europe.







## 3.25 Wildlife Estates

**The wildlife Estates label (WE) was created in the belief that the positive impact of sustainable land management practices should be encouraged, and land managers should be recognized for improving the environment. The territories, which voluntary adhere to WE philosophy, demonstrate that local human development and sustainable land use have to be integrated in the same project, even in protected areas.**

Made up of 19 national delegations, the WE network counts 371 members. With a continuously growing labeled surface since its establishment in 2004, it is the largest European private wildlife label, with over 1,800,000 ha included. WE label is granted under strictly scientific criteria to territories that practice the highest standard of wildlife and land management, and maintain close collaboration with local authorities or the wider public, in order to enhance biodiversity; the label is renewable every five years.

This year, the WE Plenary Session took place at the labeled estate Esterházy Betriebe, Austria, between 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September. It included a conference open to the public, entitled "Cultivate and Protect". The forum provided a forum for foresters, farmers, hunters, landowners, scientists and politicians from the EU, to share their knowledge and experiences on biodiversity friendly farming practices.

In 2020 the Scottish National delegation will host the WE Plenary Session.

**For more information, visit**

 [www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)  
 [Wildlife\\_EU](https://twitter.com/Wildlife_EU)



## 3.26 Pollinator Network initiative



**The Pollinator Network initiative (PNI) is a network of farmers and land managers who are committed to ensuring a rich biodiversity on their territories. Created in 2010 in collaboration with Friends of the Countryside (FCS), PNI encourages the creation of habitats for pollinating insects.**



One major tool is the use of field margins, which have the potential to provide multiple benefits both for agribusiness and the environment. Different types of field margins are implemented, including establishing grass strips, beetle banks, sowing wildflower mixes for insects, and introducing sources of seed for farm birds. These increase the quality of the environment for numerous species, but are also beneficial for the landowner who will witness an improvement in the soil quality linked to the presence of earthworm population and activity, a reduction of flood risks, and a reduction of soil erosion and linkage. Research shows that if pollination is managed well on small diverse farms, with all other factors being equal, crop yields can increase by a significant median of 24%.

ELO, together with Wildlife Estates (WE), has continued its efforts in 2019 to raise awareness about the benefits of multifunctional field margins for farm biodiversity. It has been supporting the work of DG Environment on the elaboration of the EU pollinator initiative adopted 1 June 2018. It is setting strategic objectives and actions to be taken by EU and its Member States.

ELO, while already active in the sector decided to increase its action on research and knowledge. ELO, in collaboration with Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE), launched a series of training for landowners on butterfly data collection. These volunteers will collect data on a regular basis in order to provide data for an app on specific species.





# 4 ELO Awards

## 4.1 European Bee Award

**The European Bee Award is a contest initially created by ELO and CEMA (European Agricultural Machinery Association). Since 2014, the award has highlighted innovative projects from all across Europe aiming at the protection of pollinators, among others in farmed environment.**



On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, MEP Franc BOGOVIČ hosted the ceremony award in Brussels at the European Parliament. The ceremony gathered over 100 people to celebrate the winners of the 2019 edition which received 36 applications from 11 different countries.

Former European Commissioner for R&D and Environment Janez POTOČNIK opened the ceremony, stressing that “it is really hard to imagine a future without the bees, let’s respect and treat them in a responsible way, the way they deserve due to all the good things they are providing to us humans and the rest of nature.”

On behalf of ELO, Alain SCRIBAN awarded the first category prize to the Lake Constance Foundation in Germany for their project, Pro Planet Apples, from Lake Constance. They have developed a way to encourage apple growers in the region to implement sustainable pollinator protection. The project has seen a significant impact and positive results whilst demonstrating that it has tremendous capacity for scalability.



Gilles DRYANCOUR, honorary president of CEMA, handed the second category prize to the Italian team of Apisfero for their project, Bee Varroa Scanner: a high-resolution scan using artificial intelligence to count Varroa mite in the hive helping beekeepers in fighting this scourge widely affecting honey bees in Europe.

Dr. Michael GARRATT, president of the jury for the second year, gave the special mention of the jury to ‘Green-roofed bus shelters in Utrecht.’ They stood out for their innovative and original method of providing shelter for pollinators and feeding them in urban areas, where their natural habitats are usually scarce.

If you want to find out more about the winners of the 2019 European Bee Award, please refer to CountrySide Magazine n°184, available on the website of ELO/Media/Countryside Magazine. More information is available online: [www.elo.org/awards/bee-award](http://www.elo.org/awards/bee-award).



## 4.2 Land and Soil Management Award



**This award brings forward new concepts of land and soil protection and their implementation in land management; it also serves to improve knowledge and awareness about the importance of land and soil functions.**

Over the last 12 years, the *Land and Soil Management Award* has rewarded land use and soil management practices that mitigate soil threats such as degradation, erosion, reduction of organic matter content, diffuse contamination and compaction as well as the reduction of soil biodiversity, salinization, sealing, flooding and landslides. In doing so, the award sheds light on outstanding achievements, encourages new concepts of land and soil protection and their implementation in land management, as well as enhancing awareness of land and soil functions.

Under the auspices of the European Commission (DG Environment and the Joint Research Centre), in association with BOKU and Ljubljana Universities and Syngenta, the 2019 award went to 'GROW Observatory', a project submitted by the UK, but based on an EU project including the cooperation of 18 institutions in Austria, Italy, UK, Spain, Greece, Belgium and Hungary. An innovative concept of the citizen science approach, it also deals with soil moisture as being one of the most important production factors in agriculture. The data is collected by a large number of farmers, and so makes the project a highly innovative citizen science project and an educational project for the agricultural sector, demonstrating that a Citizens' Observatory can deliver widespread uptake, robust science, societal impact, and also be sustainable.



A special recognition was awarded for 'Breakthrough in Soil Technology' to *John Deere* company for the "Precision Nutrient Management by near-infrared spectroscopy" project as a completely new technology for managing the nutrient cycle more sustainably and to improve the efficiency of the use of manure fertilizer.

**For additional information on the Land and Soil Management Award please consult our website: [www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/soil-land-award](http://www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/soil-land-award)**



## 4.3 Belleuropa Award



**Each year, the Belleuropa Award honours a member of the Wildlife Estates Label for the exceptional work that they have undertaken in maintaining, protecting and improving the biodiversity of its land.**



The 2019 winning candidate was Valbelviso, which occupies a well conserved alpine territory, with forests, pastures, meadows and high altitude open areas with a dense water network, rocky areas and glaciers. The whole environment is represented by

natural habitats, without human settlements. No form of agriculture is practiced and the husbandry of domestic animals, such as free grazing cattle and sheep, typical of the local culture, is present in very low densities. A large area of the estate is protect-

ed by the Natura 2000 network. Many valuable and endangered species, both botanic and faunistic, are found in this estate, thanks to the valuable natural habitats. Hunting activities, concentrated over a few months each year, are conducted with a strong commitment to reducing disturbance and impact on all species present in the area. The management collaborates with parks and universities for conservation and scientific studies and management programs. The award was presented to the estate's owner Giampiero PESENTI by Piero MANZONI. The Belleuropa Ceremony took place at the European Parliament on December 10th as a grand finale for the European Biodiversity Conference, which discussed how the European Union environmental policies affect users.

**For more information on the Belleuropa Award or to become a member of Wildlife Estate Label, visit: <https://www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/belleuropa-award> and <http://www.wildlife-estates.eu>**





## 4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year

A beautiful tree with an inspiring story. The contest alternates every year between Flanders and Wallonia, trees from Brussels can participate every year. After a round of open nominations by the public, the jury selects one tree per province. Thereafter the public votes to select their winner.



More than 10,700 people voted this year for their favorite tree. With the passionate support of its followers, **L'Arbre de la liberté of Warêt-la-Chaussée**, Eghezée (Namur, Wallonia) won the contest and was crowned with the title "Belgian Tree of the Year 2019". This horse-chestnut tree was planted in 1796, by order of the executive board of Eghezée to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the "tyrant" Louis XVI and is known today as a beautiful symbol for freedom.

In 2019 the contest was organized in Wallonia and Brussels by the Walloon Foundation for Habitat Conservation and ELO, with the support of the Baillet-Latour Fund for the Environment. In 2020, the Belgian Tree of the Year contest will be organized again in Flanders and Brussels.

 [www.boomvanhetjaar.be](http://www.boomvanhetjaar.be),  
[www.arbrebelge.be](http://www.arbrebelge.be)  
 [BelgischeBoom](https://twitter.com/BelgischeBoom)

5  
Events





## 5.1 FFA Brussels “The Next Generation”



**“Let’s get serious”** was the bold opening to the 2019 Forum for the Future of Agriculture, where keynote speaker and 12<sup>th</sup> Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme Ertharin COUSIN kicked off the biggest annual agricultural and environmental conference in Brussels, focused this year on “the next generation”. During her remarks, she noted that for nearly a billion people around the world, food insecurity was still a daily challenge. Furthermore, she urged governments and the food chain to not just focus on yield, but on reducing the high levels of food waste instead.

Over 2,000 free registration and a top-level roster of speakers show that its now global scope reflects the changes in our society. In 2019, the FFA included sessions on the Green New Deal, the lack of sufficient climate change action, financing sustainability, and the CAP. Given its theme, the conference showcased a number of young men and women with new ideas and practices for a sustainable and profitable countryside. The event also featured a challenging afternoon keynote by Heather MILLS, vegan and founder of Vbites, who urged the audience to turn away from eating meat and showcased the health benefits of an all-plant diet.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Forum for the Future of Agriculture will take place on Tuesday March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020. It’s theme will be ‘accelerating change’ and will focus on issues such as the political shift towards sustainability, climate change, food trends and consumers as well as future European policies.



© David Plas



## 5.2 Forum for the Future of Agriculture – regional events



Each year, the *Forum for the Future of Agriculture* hosts two regional events in order to better understand local issues and share the concerns of landowners and managers in relation to food and environmental security matters.



### Romania: The next generation - meeting the food and environmental challenge

The first regional event was held in May in Bucharest under the auspices of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union with the active participation of Romanian authorities, scientists and politicians. With a focus on the host country, Gheorge ALBU, acting President of LAPAR, emphasised that one of the greatest problems of farmers in Romania is the acute shortage of labour and depopulation of villages. All participants agreed that after Brexit, the European Budget will be lower and farmers will find it ever more difficult to reach proposed targets, especially those in combating

climate change. However, in the long run, measures must be taken to encourage young people to remain in agriculture and the food industry in order to form a more viable and long-term solution; equipped with the right technological, educational and financial tools to do so in a sustainable way.

### Ireland: The importance of science and innovation in agriculture

The second regional event took place in September in Dublin, which attracted a range of academics, landowners, farmers and NGOs from Europe, the U.S. and Australia. With a focus on how climate change would influence the pattern of agriculture



in the EU over the coming decades, the importance of water and innovation to protect agro-biodiversity, based on case studies from Africa and Australia were also stressed. All participants highlighted the importance of the conclusions of the IPCC report on land use changes for the application of the *European Green Deal*, and agreed on the need for clear aims for innovation and science if we want them to have a balanced science with a holistic approach.





## 5.3 The Pre-FFA Stakeholder Debates



It has become a tradition on the eve of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture to organize events for the ELO and FCS members and high-level stakeholders to tackle some of the key topics for the future of the European agriculture.

The first event, organized by the RISE Foundation, was a workshop to initiate a debate with panel members and the audience on the new study on crop protection started in spring. Janez POTOČNIK, Chairman of the RISE Foundation, emphasized that an urgent transformation is needed, and that agriculture should be part of this transformation. The Director of the RISE report, Emeritus Professor Allan BUCKWELL, described the current picture of unhappiness concerning the actual system of crop protection by all the stakeholders involved. It was acknowledged that precision agriculture and digital farming could be part of the solution, as well as the importance of publicly funded advisory services to bring Integrated Pest Management knowledge to the farmers.

‘Economic models of sustainable management’ was the topic of the second event, organized by ELO, greatly enunciate by its keynote speaker Emmanuel de MERODE, Director of the Virunga National Park, a UNESCO site situated in the DRC. While sustainability has always been a combination of ecological, social and economic models, the participants debated whether any additional successful factors of a good sustainable business model could be added. It was also asked whether today's economic systems need a drastic re-think to solve the worldwide problems such as biodiversity loss and climate change. Pierre-Olivier DREGE, ELO President, focused on private land conservation in the EU, echoing the previous speakers by underlining that only if people are given the choice to engage, their involvement in nature conservation can be successful.



## 5.4 European Tree of the Year 2019



The European Tree of the Year contest is a very popular event which is thriving and enjoying its growing popularity. In 2019 we revealed the results of the contest's ninth edition.



The Award ceremony of the European Tree of the Year took place in the European Parliament on 19<sup>th</sup> of March. The UN International day of forests on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March which helped to increase participation of MEPs, EU officials and other stakeholders. This year the Ceremony took place under the patronage of EU ENVI Commissioner Karmenu VELLA. Fifteen countries participated with their candidates carefully chosen in national contests. The event was co-organized by ELO and EPA (Environmental Partnership Association) the organizer of the contest. ELO brings its experience in EU lobbying and influencing the environmental and agricultural policies, increasing the impact of the event on Brussels policy makers’.

Highlighting the significance of trees for Europe's natural and cultural heritage, the European Tree of the Year is an ideal vehicle to communicate our policy messages to the Brussels' audience and it helps maintain good relations between ELO and EU officials as well as MEPs.

The voting took place during February and everyone could choose their favourite trees and vote. This year the candidates received more than 300,000 votes from all over Europe. The Almond tree of the Snowy Hill in Pécs dominated the ETY2019 and became the overall winner receiving more than 45,000 votes. All the winners have been honoured at the Award Ceremony hosted by MEP Pavel POC, Vice-chair of the ENVI Committee.

Is your country not participating? Can you suggest a reliable organization to join our family of “tree lovers”, please do not hesitate to contact us.



## 5.6 ELO General Assembly in Finland

Twice a year, the ELO General Assembly takes place in the country that is about to take up the rotating Presidency. In June 2019, ELO members were warmly welcomed by the Finnish Landowners and the long days of Helsinki, Finland.

As expected, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy was high on the agenda for all ELO members, with the legal text under discussion, as well as its timing in light of the stalled negotiations of the European budget. During the General Assembly, ELO once again underlined its commitment to a strong future for the CAP that will take into account both the sensitivities of European agriculture and the environment, however, ELO expressed concern that a tight definition of a 'genuine farmer' could have a negative impact on the common market and equal policy treatment for land managers.

ELO policy advisers also gave specific presentations on forestry in Europe, updates from the national members and a discussion on wolf populations in Europe. With the European elections just completed, a long discussion was held on how to best move forward under the new Parliament, where so many of its members would be there for the first time.

The General Assembly also heard from the Director-General of the Finnish Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, who discussed the Finnish priorities for the next presidency, including finishing the CAP, access for new technologies, and the need for a well-managed forest sector. The following day, ELO members visited the Finnish countryside and discussed both classic and cutting-edge technologies for forest management.



## 5.5 ELO General Assembly in Croatia

For the first time, ELO members gathered for their General Assembly (GA) in Zagreb, and were welcomed by the Croatian private forest owners and land managers, our newest members. They received an overview of the countryside in the country, which includes a substantial rural population, usually small forest sizes as well as smaller farm sizes. One of the issues the country is still struggling with are its cadastral records, which still have not fully pieced together the private ownership of the land.



The General Assembly also had the chance to meet with Tugomir MAJDAK, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Igor KREITMEYER, Assistant Minister, and Ivana JELENIC, Head of Biodiversity and Strategic Affairs, Nature Protection Directorate, and Ministry of Environment and Energy. They presented the agricultural and environmental priorities for the Croatian Presidency of the EU, including the EU Green Deal and how Europe's land managers could best work together with all stakeholders to ensure the success of this vital policy.

The unfinished business of the CAP still loomed over the meeting, with a focus on the new National Strategic Plans and the need for countryside infrastructure – at the very least to allow farmers to take full advantage of the promise of precision farming. The Assembly also discussed sustainable forest management and its contribution to mitigating climate change.

**The next General Assembly will take place in Berlin, Germany from 15-17 June 2020.**



## 5.7 Biodiversity Conference 2019

### *Belowground life & biodiversity for a healthy soil- “It is a small world” (after all)*

**Sustainable land and soil management is central to improve our food systems, maintain a healthy environment and ensure European rural development. Indeed, soils, through their structure and the great variety of species they host, perform numerous functions including food production, nutrient cycling, etc. They also play a central role in the protection of water resources and in the natural exchange of gases with the atmosphere. Moreover, soils are biological habitats, gene pools, elements of landscapes and of cultural heritage as well as providers of raw materials. They are therefore crucial for agriculture as well as for nature itself and are the foundation of our health and our wealth.**

The European Landowners' Organisation with the 2019 European biodiversity conference addressed the specificities linked to soil management and biodiversity. Thanks to the support of MEPs, Franc BOGOVIĆ as well as Alvaro AMARO, the conference was a frank success with more than 120 participants.

Alain SCRIBAN, ELO Special Advisor explained that land managers are highly dependent on the good quality and health of their land. An increased understanding of the role played by (soil) biodiversity in European and global ecosystems is needed. All the more so that we know now that climate change will impact the performance of multiple ecosystem functions and services. A statement made on behalf of Joanna DRAKE, Deputy-Director General, DG Environment referred to the need to act now and in partnership to ensure we have a healthy biodiversity above the ground as well as below in order to achieve a sustainable future. She explained that the European Green Deal will aim to protect and restore nature, better integrate biodiversity objectives across sectoral policies and enable a transformative change by improving governance.

The Keynote speaker, Professor Gerard GOVERS from the University of Leuven made the point that below ground life is not getting enough attention compared to above ground. He was then able to enlighten us

on how interconnected biodiversity is above and below the ground as activities on the surface have direct consequences to what goes on beneath. Whilst he acknowledged organic farming methods to be better for biodiversity compared to intensive and monoculture techniques, he argued that the question should also be discussed on a landscape scale.

In the following panels, discussions revolved around the European political agenda linked to the new Biodiversity Strategy and possible new ambitious targets

with the Green Deal. The role of the CAP and farmers to increase soil carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change was also debated.

Finally, the conference promoted sustainable innovative agricultural techniques that also protect the environment and promote sustainable economic development. New practices and technologies, such as biostimulants were presented to highlight their increasing role in the “toolbox” of agricultural techniques available for farmers, landowners and land managers.



# 6

## Communication



## 6.1 CountrySide Magazine

Our magazine remains, for almost 25 years, the voice of land managers and rural entrepreneurs, providing a platform for the exchange of opinions and best practices.



ELO believes that the viewpoints of land managers and rural entrepreneurs should be taken into account in every process of decision making. The *CountrySide Magazine* exists not only to provide such a platform, but also to connect various aspects of agriculture, environment and rural businesses. It gives the stage to policy developments and the presentation new ideas. Such a tool helps to build bridges, promote events, and helps its broad readership understand issues affecting agriculture and the environment at local, national, European and global level. This is possible as readership includes more than 15,000 readers, from policy makers, academics, ELO members and all others with an interest in the European and worldwide rural areas.

The *CountrySide Magazine* is edited every two months in English and French, with a 4-page abstract in Spanish, the paper version is composed of 16 pages.

For more information please contact:

✉ [countryside@elo.org](mailto:countryside@elo.org)

Find all the past issues at the ELO website

## 6.2 ELO Online

**The ELO website:** is our digital window to the world and acts as one of the main communication tools for our members and supporters. It is updated with information on relevant policies, conference invitations, ELO projects and other worthwhile material. For ELO members, the website also serves as the access point to its secure **intranet**, where a wide range of documentation, photos, videos and information about our policies and events are available.

**The ELO Newsletter:** is sent out to all ELO members through our members-only intranet on weekly basis. It contains all the latest developments in the European Union, upcoming events in Brussels as well as new projects and policy developments. The ELO newsletter is part of the comprehensive news and information services to our membership.

**ELO on Social Media:** Social media communication is the quickest tool to get in touch with our office, ask questions and receive direct event updates. We link news, post photographs, discuss our policies and keep you informed. Don't forget to follow us and share your point of view!

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!

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

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

🏠 [www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)



## 6.3 Wolves in Europe

In September 2019 the European Commission published the report “Assessment of current knowledge on wolves in Europe with a view to their effective conservation and management, A partial review of the scientific literature on the wolf in Europe”. The study was commissioned to the European Landowners’ Organization within a strict framework described by the tender specifications.



The study updates the conservation status of European large carnivores for each wolf population in Europe. In 2016, continental Europe (excluding Russia and Belarus) was home to approximately 17,000 wolves of which 13,000 to 14,000 were present in the EU. Recently, wolves have naturally re-established breeding populations in Finland, Sweden, Norway, France and Germany. The wolf is also present in Luxemburg, Denmark and Belgium. The species is now covering all EU Member States with the exception of the island states. The study expects a further expansion of the existing populations.

While the wolf is well protected in the European Union by two international legislation systems, the Bern Convention and the Habitats Directive, Member States may grant ad-hoc derogations from the strict protection provisions in certain situations and under specific conditions, as described by the Directive. Derogations may not be the only or the main tool to address conflicts. This issue is dealt with by the update of the Commission guidance document on species protection.

As the **wolf populations are recovering and expanding to new areas** the likelihood of humans encountering wolves also increases rapidly and **more social conflicts can be expected**. Economically, especially high losses of livestock are seen in countries where the presence of wolves is linked to their husbandry systems, e.g. sheep or cattle grazing freely in mountain habitats and forests without the use of fences, shepherds or dogs.

**Most of the wolf management plans are in reality wolf recovery plans.** With increasing wolf populations throughout Europe, management actions should become a more important aspect of those plans.

The complete study can be found on the following web address:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b11a6cd5-bd90-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/prodSystem-cellar/language-en/format-PDF>.



Cooperation with the EU institutions



## 7.1 Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”



The European Parliament of 2014-2019 was particularly successful for the Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”, thanks to the hard work of its President, Karl-Heinz FLORENZ and its board members. With more than 20 conferences and workshops organised in the last five years, the Intergroup debated important issues such as the circular economy, wolf management, land management practices to fight climate change, etc... It contributed to the introduction of European decision-makers to the necessary political impulse to take action on landowner issues.

To conclude his Presidency Karl-Heinz FLORENZ and ELO organised on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2019 a final event dedicated to private land conservation under the title “Private landowners, what role for Europe’s nature”. The “Land is For Ever” Life+ project (page 42), an ELO led project, was at the core of this event to raise awareness on private land conservation methods and approaches in the EU. Through dialogue with landowners and field tests in different EU member states, this project intends to develop recommendations for new and more effective private land conservation policies and show how those policies can be rolled out effectively at a larger scale.

The Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” will continue its activities from 2019 to 2024 as it was successfully renewed following an important ELO campaign to convince relevant MEPs to secure its presence on the list of suggested intergroups. Following the formal approval of the Bureau of the Intergroup, the ELO will propose a work plan for 2020 addressing several important issues. The new political ambition for the EU which coincides with the “Green Deal” will be at the heart of future discussions, and ELO will make sure that the Intergroup addresses the loss of biodiversity and climate change mitigation in the countryside.



## 7.2 EU Large Carnivores Platform

The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores is a grouping of organisations, including ELO, representing different interests groups which have agreed a joint mission:

*“To promote ways and means to minimize, and wherever possible find solutions to, conflicts between human interests and the presence of large carnivore species, by exchanging knowledge and by working together in an open-ended, constructive and mutually respectful way”*



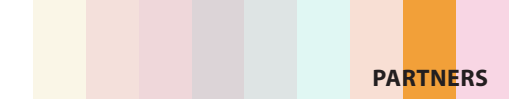
The Plenary meeting of the EU Large Carnivores Platform took place in Brussels on Monday, 13 May 2019. Jorgen TACK (ELO) and Humberto DELGADO ROSA (European Commission) co-chaired the meeting. It focused on (1) the CAP reform and its ability to support national actions supporting the coexistence with large carnivores, and (2) existing fear of humans towards large carnivores.

In 2019, the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores organised its regional meetings in cooperation with some of the regional platforms active in promoting dialogue between the various stakeholders involved in the management of large carnivores.

- On May 8<sup>th</sup>, a regional meeting was organised in co-operation with the Grosseto local platform. It was hosted by the Tuscan Regional Council in Florence.
- On November 19<sup>th</sup>, a regional meeting was organised in Harghita, Romania discussing the approach of stakeholder platforms as a local instrument, the involvement of hunting organisations in bear management, damage prevention systems and the control of recreational and tourism activities related to bears.

All reports and information are available on the official website: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence\\_platform](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform)





## 8.1 The European Historic Houses Association 2019 activities

### Advocacy

In 2019, we have seen a renewed European Parliament and Commission, which will shape the future European policies until 2024. Within the actual political context in Europe, we need to remind ourselves that culture and cultural heritage are what unite us. During this election year, EHH made sure to remind policy makers that private historic houses are a valuable asset for Europe. With that aim, EHH produced a Manifesto which was distributed to newly-elected MEPs as well as Cabinet members within the European Commission.

The new Commissioner for Innovation and Youth, Mariya GABRIEL, was appointed with the portfolio relating to culture and education. The Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage which build on the legacy of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage with 60 concrete actions to be implemented will be at the heart of her mandate. Both EHH projects: the Heritage Houses for Europe (page ) and the European Private Heritage Week were mentioned as key initiatives.

The EHH participated also in the first expert group on cultural heritage in Brussels on October 15-16, 2019 - which main aim is to build the legacy of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage by implementing the Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage.



### European Private Heritage Week

The second edition of the European Private Heritage Week, was held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019, with a real success with more than 244.785 visitors in 468 houses in sixteen countries!

For this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, children were once more at the centre stage, with numerous dedicated activities aimed at promoting the pupils' in-depth interest in cultural heritage. Food as common intangible heritage was also highlighted in several countries, proof that culinary traditions of Europe are a strong bonding factor.

Numerous historic houses would not be complete without their garden and surroundings, that is why numerous places have organised special garden tours, sport sessions in their gardens, or even 'architecture tours' linking the historical nuclei of the houses and villages, making the visit a more inclusive experience. This edition saw a special tribute to the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris after the frame burnt to ashes last April. Owners of some historic monuments in Carinthia (AT) decided to organise guided tours through the historic attics of the region with the aim of raising people's awareness of the dangers and the protection of historic roofs. The proceeds from the ticket sales were donated to the restoration of the Notre Dame cathedral.

**Next year the European Private Heritage Week will take place from the 21st to 24th May 2020.**



## 8.2 Europa Nostra

Closing a fruitful decade for cultural heritage!



2019 was a fruitful and exciting year for Europa Nostra. The European Heritage Summit 2019 successfully took place on 27-31 October 2019 in Paris, under the high patronage of Emmanuel MACRON, President of the French Republic, in cooperation and with the support of the European Commission and the French Government, and in partnership with the Fondation du Patrimoine. Around 10 different events were organised and circa 1 000 delegates from 35 different countries participated, including represent-

atives of all EU institutions, governmental authorities, civil society organisations, volunteers and heritage enthusiasts from all across the world.

The Paris Summit culminated with the launch of the "Paris Manifesto: Relançons l'Europe par la culture et le patrimoine culturel!". This Manifesto conveys a strong message on the strategic role of cultural heritage for tackling some of the most urgent challenges which Europe and its citizens are facing, as well as on its significant contribution for the future of Europe. The Manifesto has received the endorsement and support of hundreds of key culture and cultural heritage stakeholders and has been sent individually to EU leaders.

During the Summit, the winners of the 2019 European Heritage Awards/ Europa Nostra Awards were

celebrated at a high-profile ceremony with the participation of Europa Nostra's President Maestro Plácido DOMINGO and Commissioner NAVRACSICS. 28 laureates from 16 countries - including a special award for the Paris Fire Brigade, 7 Grand Prix winners and a Public Choice Award - were rewarded.

2019 also marked an important milestone for the 7 Most Endangered programme. Europa Nostra secured an increased annual financial support from the European Investment Bank Institute, which will allow for issuing an annual list of 7 Most Endangered sites as of 2020 and to give a welcome boost to this important programme.

Group photo of the 27 winners of the 2019 European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards; European Commissioner for Culture Tibor NAVRACSICS; Europa Nostra's President Maestro Plácido DOMINGO; and the Chairs of the Heritage Awards Juries.



[www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org)  
[www.europeanheritageawards.eu](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu)  
[www.7mostendangered.eu](http://www.7mostendangered.eu)



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



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



## 8.3 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 has 70 full members and 100 associate members from over 35 countries.



### Legacy of the EYCH

FRH builds on the legacy of the EYCH by joining the European Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage. With the view of maintaining the spirit of cooperation and policy dialogue achieved during the European Year of Cultural Heritage, FRH carries on its legacy by organising runs for heritage in several European cities, to raise awareness on the importance of safeguarding our religious heritage.

### Religiana

Religiana set out to become the online reference guide for anyone looking for information on indi-

vidual European religious heritage sites. Religiana is working towards the opening of places of worship to visitors from all backgrounds. It aims to give visibility to religious sites, throughout Europe, to be a benchmark platform for the safeguarding of religious heritage sites. As well as being the base for European cultural projects. There are currently more than two thousand churches on the platform, from all around Europe, where the visitor can find information about the history of the building and its opening hours.

### FRH Inform

FRH Inform is a project that researches the state of religious heritage sites on a Europe-wide scale. We

base this study on concrete data gathered in profiles of each European country. We wish to make this syllabus a reference database for all those concerned with religious heritage.

### SKIVRE

SKIVRE - 'Skills development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage', is a European project launched in September 2018 and has a duration of 24 months. The main goal is to produce training modules that will provide capacity-building for European monasteries, in the development, manufacture, and marketing of high-quality monastic products.

## 8.4 European Heritage Alliance 3.3

The European Heritage Alliance 3.3 is an informal platform of 49 European and international networks active in the wider field of cultural heritage. Launched in 2011, it is today the most important and representative advocacy platform of heritage organisations.



Throughout 2018, the Alliance made a major contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage, and its members deployed all their available resources to further its impact and achieve its objectives. In 2019 and beyond, the Alliance is fully committed to sustain the legacy of this historic European Year.

The European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, published by the European Commission in December 2018 as a key policy legacy of the European Year, explicitly mentions the crucial contribution of the Alliance to this thematic year-long celebration. The Commission expert group on cultural heritage,

established to support the implementation of the European Framework for Action at EU level, includes 14 organisations that are members of the Alliance. The Expert Group met for the first time on 15-16 October 2019 in Brussels.

In 2019, the Alliance held two meetings in May and September. Common advocacy campaigns included, among others, lobbying newly-elected leaders of European institutions to raise their awareness on the strategic importance of cultural heritage for the future of Europe, as well as jointly pledging for an increased budget of the Creative Europe programme ahead of the EU Council negotiations. Throughout 2019, the added value of the Alliance in terms of networking, sharing knowledge and information, joint lobbying and bottom-up heritage advocacy were once more confirmed.

The Alliance is coordinated by Europa Nostra as part of its network project 'Sharing Heritage - Sharing Values' (2017-2021) which is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.



## 8.5 EPA – Environmental Partnership Association



Cooperation between ELO and EPA was established in 2012 and continues now. New opportunities are appearing and should evolve into concrete measures during 2020.

ELO is hosting in its premises a representative of **EPA** and a consortium of six foundations from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. EPA's main goal is to protect the environment and support local communities and society.

Members of the consortium are administrators of financial mechanisms for NGOs in CEE EU countries for Norway and the Swiss Confederation. EPA is also implementing its own projects and is a partner of European projects supported by the EC– like LIFE, INTERREG, Europa Aid, Grundtwig, EEA grants and national structural funds.

EPA is a main organizer of a joint project, the **European Tree of the Year (ETY)** a contest of the most lovable tree, a tree with a story that can bring the community together. ELO became an official partner for the Award Ceremony in 2013.

ELO has enhanced its involvement in ETY when SBNL Vlaanderen (SBNL-V), ELO, ANB, Landelijk Vlaanderen, de Bosgroepen, Société Royale de Forêt and BOS+ started to organize the **Belgian Tree of the Year** with the financial support of Fonds Baillet Latour.

There are also new opportunities for cooperation



related to the mitigation and adaptation projects dealing with the impacts of climate change. Tree planting projects are organized with the help of US donors in member countries of EPA and might possibly start in other countries of the EU. Opportunities for involvement for local stakeholders, farmers and landowners might arise. Campaigns such as “Planting our future” in Czech Republic where they are trying to plant 10 million new trees outside

forests (one per inhabitant) could be replicated in other countries and bring opportunities for active participation of ELO members.

 [www.environmentalpartnership.org/Home.aspx](http://www.environmentalpartnership.org/Home.aspx)

## 8.6 Rural Coalition

In 2019, the Rural Coalition of Europe welcomed an additional member, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).

ELO, together with six other organisations involved in rural activities, continue to work towards strengthening the voice of Europe's rural population and to increase the competitiveness of the rural economy.

With that in mind, the Rural Coalition published a statement on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2020: “Empowering rural areas in the CAP post-2020”, stressing the importance of adequate funding for Rural Development, at a time when rural communities require more support in the face of urban sprawl and urban migration. The announced cuts to the CAP budget and thus to the Rural Development budget do not only send out the wrong message but could also threaten the existence of rural areas as viable and attractive places in which to live, work and visit.

The Coalition remains active on the ENRD (European Network for Rural Development), as part of the “producers cluster”, using this platform to follow the implementation of the rural development policy, and make proposals for the EIP focus groups (AGRI), particularly the subgroup on innovation.

The coalition also supports the work on the Natura 2000 Users Forum.

For 2020, a new member is expected to join the Coalition and the year will start with a joint event on

“Amplifying the local voices”, with the support of the Coalition of European AGRI Regions.

Members of the Coalition:



**CEJA**  
European Council of Young Farmers



**CEPF**  
Confederation of European Forest Owners



**CIC**  
The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation



**COPA-CEGECA**  
European farmers and European agri-cooperatives



**ELO**  
European Landowners' Organization



**FACE**  
The Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU



**UECBV**  
The European Livestock and Meat Trades Union





## 8.7 EFFORTS

**EFFORTS is a European network organisation established in 2017 to share knowledge and practical expertise on military heritage, such as walled towns, forts and defence lines.**



European cooperation and keeping military fortified heritage on the European policy agenda. EFFORTS believes that European cooperation is the key to achieving its goals. Any local or regional authority and any person actively engaged in the protection and re-use of military heritage at European, national, regional or local level is welcome to join the association. The aim of EFFORTS 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. These elements were the subjects of its two workshops in 2019, trying to make a sustainable contribution to Europe's economic, energy, spatial development and social challenges. This will be published in the 2019 EFFORTS Statement of Antwerp, the result of its last annual congress. EFFORTS is also the organiser of the annual European Fortress Day.



The basis for EFFORTS was laid during the final conference of the At Fort Interreg IVC project in Suomenlinna, Helsinki (Finland 2014) and international conferences on military heritage in 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands 2016), Berlin-Spandau Zitadelle (Germany 2017) and Forte Marghera (Italy 2018).

Today, EFFORTS unites more than 50 European fortified sites and its growing network. Since 2018, EFFORTS has been a European professional representation of fortified sites. It is a member of the Europa Nostra managed European Heritage Alliance 3.3. EFFORTS main mission is the structuring of Eu-





# Perspectives for 2020

**The first and most vital job for 2020 will be to conclude the EU budget negotiations and finalise the CAP reform. Without the money and political guidance in place, farmers and national governments cannot start the process of transition from one regime into the next. We therefore urge all Member States to do their utmost to come together and deliver for the countryside.**

In the coming year, we will carefully monitor the CAP and its implementation. We still have doubts over the efficacy of re-nationalising much of its policy, as well as the capacity for Member States to carry out their strategic plans. Furthermore, we remain opposed to the institution of capping in this reform, especially if more money is dedicated to environment and climate change; those performing best there should be rewarded without limit. We also remain concerned about the definition of ‘genuine farmer’, especially as this could lead to political games being played at the national level.

On the more positive side, we look forward to continuing our work on the LIFE report on private land conservation together with our partners. It is vital that we demonstrate that drawing in private efforts for biodiversity is vital if we are to achieve the EU’s environmental goals. For example, we need look no further than our Wildlife Estates; with over 1.800.000 hectares of extraordinary European countryside under management, it is testament to the strong values and wishes of our land managers.

Sadly, early 2020 will also see the formal goodbye of the United Kingdom from the European Union. We shall miss not just their company, but also the enlightened attitude they often brought to the debates in Brussels. Still, we look forward to a new beginning of our ongoing relationship; UK land managers remain among our members, closest friends, and biggest trading partners. Our door will always be open to them – the spirit of private ownership, sustainability, and land management transcends far beyond political boundaries.

Finally, ELO is very proud to present the 13 th anniversary edition of our Forum for the Future of Agriculture. In ten years, it has clearly established itself as the premier event on the Brussels’ calendar for food and environment with 2,000 guests and global speakers. This year, we will focus on ‘accelerating change’ – in an age of climate crisis and environmental breakdown, we all need to have much more urgency in shaping a sustainable world.



# Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACE	: Architects' Council of Europe	EIP	: European Innovation Partnership
AECPG	: Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods	ENRD	: European Network for Rural Development
AGRI	: Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development	ENVI	: European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
ANB	: Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos	ELO	: European Landowners’ Organization
BAALO	: Bulgarian Association of Agricultural Landowners	EP	: European Parliament
BCE	: Butterfly Conservation Europe	EPA	: Environmental Partnership Association
CAP	: Common Agricultural Policy	EPBD	: Energy Performance of Buildings Directive
CEMA	: European Agricultural Machinery Association	EPF	: European Property Federation
CGBN	: Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature	EPP	: European People's Party
CO2	: Carbon Dioxide	ETC	: European Travel Commission
COP25	: Twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties	EU	: European Union
DG EAC	: Directorate General - Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	EYCH	: European Year of Cultural Heritage
DNK	: German Cultural Heritage Committee	FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
DPW	: Dairy Processing Waste	FCS	: Friends of the Countryside
DRC	: Democratic Republic of the Congo	FFA	: Forum for the Future of Agriculture
EAL	: European Agricultural Landscapes	FISMA	: Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union
EBRD	: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	FRH	: Future for Religious Heritage
EC	: European Commission	GHG	: Greenhouse Gas
ECJ	: European Court of Justice	GIS	: Geographic Information System
ECTN	: European Cultural Tourism Network	GMO	: Genetically Modified Organism
ED	: Endocrine Disruption	H2020	: Horizon 2020
EEA	: European Economic Area	IAS	: Invasive Alien Species
EFFORTS	: European Federation of Fortified Sites		
EHHA	: European Historic Houses Association		



IEA	: Institutio di Ecologia Applicata	SRFB	: Société Royale Forestière de Belgique
INTERREG	: European Regional Development Fund	SRI	: Smart Readiness Indicator
IT	: Information Technology	STEN	: Sustainability Tool for Europe and Neighbouring countries
IUCN	: International Union for Conservation of Nature	SWOT	: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
LIFE	: LIFE Programme	UIPI	: International Union of Property Owners
LUC	: Land Use Change	UN	: United Nations
MAES	: Mapping and Assessing Ecosystems and their Services	UNAC	: União da Floresta Mediterrânica
MEP	: Member of the European Parliament	UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MFF	: Multi-annual Financial Framework	USA	: United States of America
MID	: Mild Intellectual Disability	VAT	: Value-Added Tax
MUC	: Marginal, Underutilized and Contaminated	WE	: Wildlife Estates (Label)
NECsTouR	: Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism	WFP	: World Food Programme
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation	WWF	: World Wildlife Fund
PLAID	: Peer-to-Peer learning - Accessing Innovation through Demonstration	YFCS	: Young Friends of the Countryside
PNi	: Pollinator Network initiative		
R&D	: Research & Development		
RISE	: Rural Investment Support for Europe		
SBNL	: Stichting Natuur Behoud en Leefmilieu		
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals		
SME	: Small to Medium Enterprise		
SOS	: Safe Operating Space		
SPK	: German Cultural Heritage Committee		