



ELO[✻]
European Landowners' Organization

Activity Report **2020**



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ACTIVITY REPORT 2020

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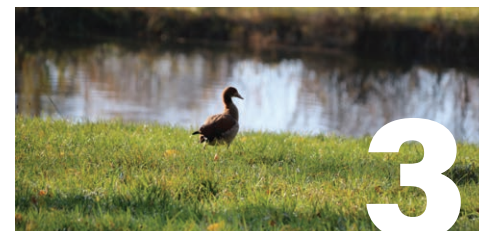
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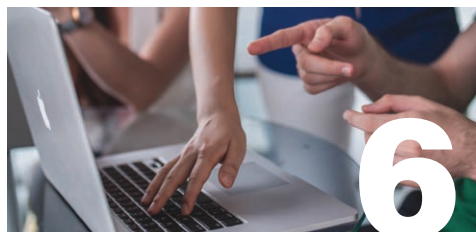
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Foreword

ACTIVITY REPORT 2020

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The past year has been tumultuous to say the least, the pandemic forced the entire globe to adapt to the growing risks that COVID-19 has created and exposed. While the aftermath of the pandemic will loom over the world for years to come, we can rest assured that now more than ever, people are thinking about our relationship with nature and how we can build a sustainable and resilient link with our planet.

The limitations from COVID-19 did not prevent farmers and foresters from providing food and raw material during lock-down, nor prevented us from representing the interests of landowners, farmers and foresters, securing the culture and heritage of the European countryside, while also promoting biodiversity and sustainable land management in an economically viable manner. The ELO team demonstrated versatility and fortitude as we seamlessly and swiftly adapted our plans, delivering upon many objectives this year launching and maintaining projects, planning events, hosting awards, working on new studies, creating new partnerships and expanding our network along the way. We have maintained our numerous subsidiaries providing a voice for the countryside, farmers, foresters and landowners; promoting biodiversity and lobbying for legislation that respects not only the environment but those who maintain it. For our land to be well-maintained, we need to acknowledge that without economic stability and prosperity, landowners will not be able to afford to manage their lands in a sustainable manner.

Biodiversity must be protected at all costs, we must actively work on a ground level alongside landowners to improve ecosystems around Europe and beyond. We are committed to protecting all forms of biodiversity with a special commitment to our endangered pollinators that we rely on most. We are involved in a plethora of projects that involve maintaining and promoting biodiversity across Europe. One of our most significant projects, the Wildlife Estates Label, continued to grow as we made our way through the year and pushed on towards the next. Providing a platform to support private conservation management and

creating a network that spans millions of hectares. Wildlife Estates demonstrates that private landowners have a vital role to play promoting biodiversity and the regeneration of our countryside and with the successful results achieved through our network.

With the EU Green Deal cementing a political narrative focusing on climate change, sustainability and biodiversity, we need policies to promote land based activities that have the ability to contribute to a circular bioeconomy and combat against greenhouse gas emissions. We continue to support the ideal that private-public partnerships play a central role in the maintenance and development of our rural areas. We welcome the ambitious objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy and biodiversity strategy are prepared alongside European landowners to commit towards a more resilient and sustainable food system.





This year the CAP saw further progress as we edge towards 2021. While there are still issues of concern, we welcomed the transitional arrangements that were agreed upon at the end of this year. We are striving for the CAP to be agreed during the year of 2021 that respects and supports farmers, enabling them to maximise their business potential, boosting their capacity to innovate and adapt to operate sustainably. We must avoid the distortion of competition, enable and encourage landowners to enhance their practices and have a consistent and fair definition and scope for who a farmer is and what their duties and expectations are.

With the devastating effects of climate change on our ecosystems we must be prepared to invest in long-term feasible and viable solutions to the ever increasing problem. Sustainable land and forest management will play an important role within the EU Green Deal and the CAP must support the economic and sustainable development of forestry and land management. Land management practices such as forestry offer an opportunity to promote biodiversity, combat the effects of climate change and support local economies. It is critical that sustainable land management is thought through for the long term providing support and security with new mechanisms and tools for those within the sector. Without capital there is no development and no new machinery, therefore we must invest in the keepers of the land to maintain the vitality of our countryside and wildlife.

Alongside supporting the countryside politically and economically, we aim to raise awareness on a scientific level with our commitment to scientific research to bolster our awareness and position on

given topics. By exploring our countryside under a scientific lens, we have worked on numerous issues this year including a study on large carnivores using the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores; an investigation into the declining levels of small fauna in our European countryside is set to be released early 2021 and another important topic to note is our position paper on Access to Land that raises awareness about the growing issues affecting the rural economy.

Due to the level of restrictions around Europe, this year was about transformation and digitalisation of our events and projects to ensure the safety of those taking part. The FFA2020 was unfortunately postponed due to lockdown restrictions, however these restrictions facilitated innovation allowing the FFA to launch two online events and prepare itself for the first ever all-digital FFA2021 conference on Food System Renewal that will take place in March, 2021.

Thierry de l'Escaille
Secretary General of the ELO



1

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 policymakers 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 therefore 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.



www.elo.org



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



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



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

1.2 RISE Foundation 2020



In 2020, the RISE Foundation finalised and released its latest report, “Crop Protection & the EU Food System. Where are they going?” and at the end of the year, embarked on a new study on soil, to be released in 2022.

Crop Protection study

Pesticides have become a totemic issue of our food production system today. As pressure mounts to remove plant protection products from the market, what is the alternative strategy, what should we be aiming for and how can policy support a transition? With no stakeholder group happy with the status quo of crop protection policy and strategy in Europe, RISE took on this report in an attempt 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?



delved into the possible alternative systems of plant protection. As with all the work of the Foundation, the research involved an intense process of consultation with experts across the stakeholder groups, as well as with the project advisory committee and NGO consultation group.

The report was launched online in May 2020 this year and is available on the website: www.risefoundation.eu

Soil

The Foundation will now turn its attention to soil. Soil is the underlying finite resource upon which all other environmental and climate indicators depend and is key to our long-term food security and yet, there is little progress on improving and protecting European soils. With this report, due to be released in 2022, RISE will pose the following questions: what is the way forward to reverse the continuing decline of our European soils? Do we need to better apply current regulations or as some have asked, is the launch of the New Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy time to reconsider a Soil Directive? Should further measures to protect soil be made mandatory and implemented into cross compliance? Would this even work? And how can we better engage the private sector

to invest in our soils and so by relieve the growing pressure on our public funds? How can this be better enabled?

We are, as always, very interested to hear about different projects and ideas, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you feel you have anything to contribute to this project: rise@risefoundation.eu

Horizon 2020 projects

In addition to its research projects, the RISE Foundation works as part of consortiums for three EC H2020 projects with a focus on policy, communication and dissemination. These include **SYSTEMIC**, which demonstrates new approaches to the valorisation of biowaste into green energy, mineral resources, fertilisers and organic soil improvers at five large-scale biogas plants; **Circular Agronomics** which is testing 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, and **BESTMAP project** which is developing tools for European policymakers to predict the impacts of future policies on rural areas.

 www.risefoundation.eu

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

1.3 Friends of the Countryside

The Friends of the Countryside (FCS) is a non-profit making organisation consisting of a network of over 700 like minded private landowners, rural managers and entrepreneurs from 27 countries stretching from the Rockies to the Urals. By means of innovative, regenerative and sustainable practices, this network promotes the long-term interests of their land. Through the platform of the European Landowners' Organization, the FCS are able to ensure that their voice is heard throughout the European Union and beyond.



Adding to the innumerable disappointments of not meeting in person over the last year, the FCS decided, with regret, to postpone the 2020 General Assembly in Córdoba by one year, to take place from **October 7 to October 10, 2021**. All was not lost however, as on June 24 the members turned to their screens to follow the GA online. FCS president Michael zu SALM-SALM gave everyone his customary warm welcome, wishing everyone safe during these tremendously strenuous times. 29 new members were approved as well as 2 new board members, Ginevra VISCONTI from Italy and Fabian WENDENBURG from Germany. The latter replaces Wolfgang DALLWITZ who, after more than 20 years with FCS, is retiring. The FCS wish him well.

Marketing Manager Natalya ZINYCH, from FCS new sponsor John Deere joined to state that John Deere sees digitalisation and technology as the way to the future. A special address from Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO, Director General for Environment at the EC noted that our dependence on agriculture has become all the more obvious with the crisis and that our relationship with nature must be urgently fixed.

FCS also announced that the Study Tour to Wales would also be postponed by one year to September 24-26, 2021. The response was very positive with many signing up to join.

FCS also launched a new look for its website as well as a revised logo to reflect the wider reaches of the organisation.

 www.friendsofthecountryside.org



With the support of **JOHN DEERE**



1.4 The Welcoming Estates

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

The WEW was started in 2015 under the initiative of FCS Vice President Seger van VOORST TOT VOORST. In 2020, the FCS took over the administration and the decision was made to change the structure of the organisation, simplify the website and make it easier for members of the FCS to add their estates. These changes will be completed in spring 2021.

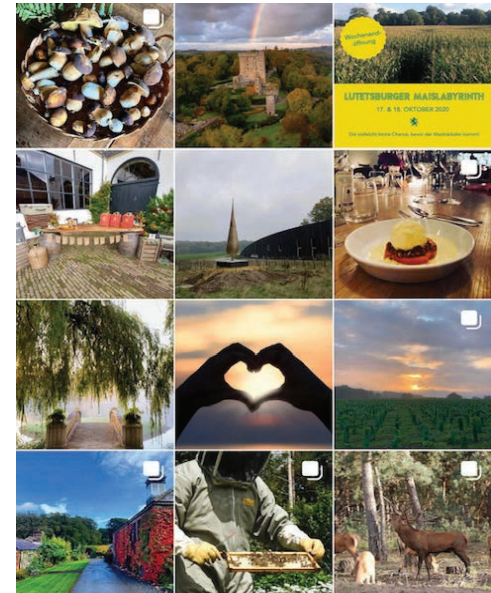


It was of course not an easy year for the Welcoming Estates as most estates had to close to the public during the first confinement and then cancel many activities during the second. Important revenue sources from weddings and receptions, estate shops, hotels and restaurants were lost. Fortunately, the Estates remained open to visitors to the gardens and parks and others looked for new opportunities.

For instance, Weingut Prinz Salm organised successful online wine tastings in both German and English, Chateau de Bousval offered guided visits to witness the wine making process, and the restaurant on the Schulenburg estate offered drive-in meals to eat in your car in the surroundings of the estate. Marienwaerd, Blarney and Tregothnan organised online competitions, while other Estate shops promoted their sales online for olive oils, wines, jams, honey, tea, bouquets and more! Courses were presented online and calls for grape pickers were made.

Following the successful WEW Instagram page (over 1000 followers) where all the latest developments and activities from the Welcoming Estates are posted, a Facebook has also been created to increase visibility even more.

*Welcoming
Estates
Website*



 www.welcomingestateswebsite.com

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

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

1.5 Young Friends of the Countryside

YFCS seizes the COVID-19 crisis to adapt to the digital age; strengthening ties with members old and new.



Whilst the arrival of COVID-19 posed a great challenge to us all; for the YFCS Board it was fortunate that an in-person meeting had already taken place the autumn before. The YFCS strategy development led by Anna ZAHEDI-LAMARCHE was able to simultaneously propel the organisation into the digital era and show pragmatic crisis management by the board. The ELO Activity Report takes a look at the changes and developments at the YFCS over the past year.

A physical meeting of the new board was held in October 2019 to discuss their strategy and ponder new ideas. Since then it has been full steam ahead. The organisation have now implemented several of these ideas and made considerable development especially on the digitalisation of the YFCS. During lockdown in 2020 they welcomed a fresh new logo created by Joana SOTTO-MAYOR as well as a brand-new website, full of new features helping to connect with members and designed by the Digital Lions (part of the Learning Lions, a Kenyan charity which teaches young people how to programme and code). The membership application form is now on the website, which will make the new membership process more efficient. The team have also created an official YFCS video presenting their vision on the website along with a section introducing the board members.



The new look is particularly aesthetic on the new Instagram account, yfcs.official. The communications team created various educational quizzes, the hashtag #iamyfcs and shared articles of interest. They also asked members to send in photos with a sentence on how they are making the most of being confined to the countryside. This had a great response, with members sending in photos of their activities which included tree planting, hiking, and pruning for example. The YFCS have made great headway with their social media presence attracting new followers and members regularly. LinkedIn is another site which has been used to release their newsletters and relevant articles on rural development and entrepreneurship, among others.

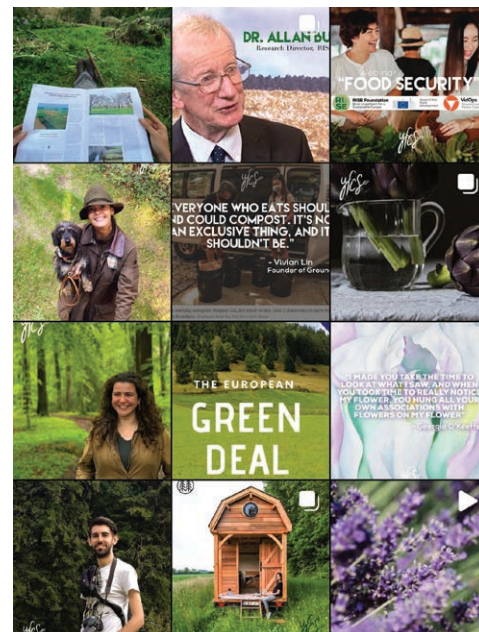
We have seen over the past year clear evidence of the next generation's impact on the agricultural and environmental sphere in Europe. We have witnessed their willingness to be heard. Their voice has grown louder and the YFCS has contributed to these important topics, notably climate change, helping to bring them into the limelight and with the help of ELO to the forefront of most political agendas. The YFCS is preparing to participate in the first virtual FFA in March 2021 where they will be focusing on 'Fostering Rural Entrepreneurship'. This will be an excellent opportunity for members to interact with the board in a less-formal online setting and to network in the wider FFA context.

This year's Famigro Award again proved the energy and ingenuity of Europe's young pioneers. It was an immensely competitive year seeing for the first time four diplomas being awarded alongside the winner, Coconat. They stood out to the jury as being particularly forward thinking, innovative,

and community driven. We expect that the new edition will bring even more excellent candidates. The deadline was open until 1 March, 2021.

The COVID-19 crisis has presented challenges and disappointments notably the postponement of the 2020 General Assembly in Córdoba (moved to October 7 to October 10, 2021). However, the Board came up with a series of monthly webinars to have open discussions in different relevant topics such as Food Security and Rural Entrepreneurship. This action was launched in November 2020, followed by a Virtual General Assembly in December and will be continuing throughout 2021.

In these times of unforeseen challenges and changes, this new team has showned a great representation of the new rural generations. The new board highlighted that it is integral to keep the YFCS open and united; and continues to actively engage with members, further enhancing the network. Interaction and input from anyone passionate about the countryside and rural entrepreneurship is always welcomed at info@yfcs.eu.



www.yfcs.eu



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



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



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

Issues and policies

2.1 Green Deal

The European Green Deal was the flagship strategy in 2020, introducing a political narrative of a growth strategy focused on climate, sustainability, and biodiversity across all policy areas. To this, throughout the year, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) has taken the opportunity to show how land-based activities contribute to the Deal.

Two of the major strategies following from the Green Deal announcement were the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity strategies to 2030. These addressed some of the primary challenges that face the food, farming, and land use sectors, namely climate change, biodiversity loss, and the impact of diet on human health. However, it ignored the problems with the current structure and functioning of our food system. ELO is concerned that the marginal economics of much primary production, alongside farmers' weak bargaining power in the food-chain, remain under-examined in the Green Deal, which is likely to undermine the aims of the strategies proposed.

The success of the Green Deal will require the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders. As 39% of the EU land is dedicated to agriculture and 41% to forests and woodland, with most being in private hands, landowners should be considered prime partners in ensuring the success of any future actions. As an example of ELO's participation in the actions proposed, ELO had a joint paper with WWF called "growing trees on farmland",

proposing smart choices to plant the proposed 3 billion additional trees, as suggested in the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030.

ELO will continue to participate constructively in the coming proposals, being the ones presented in 2020 or the ones to come, such as the new forest strategy.



If we are serious about the urgency to push for systemic transformation to achieve goals set by the Green Deal, we need to be equally serious about the tools available to achieve it. Even if 30% of the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) is to be dedicated to climate objectives, there is still a lot of uncertainty about how much can be used in what. This uncertainty is not fully considered when designing the various new strategies that follow from the Green Deal. What is certain, however, is that more initiatives are to be funded from the same pot, with increased requirements. Therefore, it is now more important than ever to focus on win-win solutions.

2.2 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

2020 was the year that both the EU Parliament and Council agreed their positions on the 2018 Commission proposal for the CAP post-2020. These consolidated positions were needed to start trilogues to get to the final legislation that steers the agricultural sector. The Portuguese presidency of the EU Council plans to reach an agreement with the European Parliament's negotiators by April 2021.

The EU's next seven-year budget agreed in July was an essential step towards consolidating the positions on the CAP, as they are dependent on the financial means being made available for rural areas. The farming budget for 2021-2027 will amount to €366 billion, an amount lower than the previous CAP budget.

There are still some outstanding issues being discussed in the trilogues, namely how much flexibility member states will be given and how they will integrate the EU's new Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. Nonetheless, ELO welcomes the Commission initiative to send recommendations to each Member State as regards to their strategic plan for the CAP and a guiding list of potential agricultural practices that eco-schemes could support. It is an extensive list of practices that could be considered, including organic farming, carbon farming, agroforestry, and high nature value farming.

The eco-scheme is an example of how the CAP will deliver on the Green Deal targets for 2030, which include the expansion of organic farming to 25% of agricultural land, the earmarking 10% of farmland for nature-friendly landscapes, 20% reduction in fertilizer use and the 50% reduction on the use and risk of pesticides and antimicrobials.

Due to the delay of the agreement on the CAP post-2020, ELO welcomed the transitional arrangements agreed at the end of 2020, that ensure the continuity of support to landowners and land managers until the end of 2022.

During 2021, ELO will continue to use its well-established structures, take part in the relevant Civil Dialogue Groups and organise several meetings to cement a strong agriculture policy that allows for a modern sector ready for the coming challenges.



2.3 Farm to Fork Strategy

Since coming into office, the current European Commission (EC) has made the delivering of the Green Deal and its subsequent strategies its battle cry. As the food system is believed to be responsible for a range of impacts on human health as well as on biodiversity and climate, the Commission published in May 2020 an ambitious proposal for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system by 2030: the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F).

A series of measures proposed in this strategy targets primary food producers including a legally binding 50% reduction target in chemical pesticides' use, an aspirational target of 50% reduction in nutrient losses and 20% reduction in fertilizers' use as well as a target of increasing up to 25% of European agricultural land under organic farming, all by 2030. Parliament has been pushing to have these targets written into law as soon as possible. As a result, the EC quickly launched the process for the revision of the Sustainable Use Directive and the design of an Organic Farming Action Plan. By participating in consultations on both publications, ELO welcomed the Commission's ambition to strengthen the rules on hazardous chemical pesticides as well as its will to push for more organic farming based on a growing interest from consumers. However, ELO expressed its concerns regarding the lack of facts-based studies and methodology to explain the numbers behind those targets. The Commission's proposals lack clarity about the intended and unintended consequences of such targets.

On the issue of pesticides, ELO has emphasized the need for farmers to access efficient and affordable alternatives to chemicals falling under stricter regulation. Reasonable alternatives have to be available in due time, that is before chem-

ical pesticides are taken off the market. This is closely linked to the capacity of the EU to invest and develop innovative solutions for farming such as new genomic techniques which ELO strongly supports.

When consulted on the Organic Action Plan for promoting a better uptake of organic farming in the EU, ELO warned that such a dramatic shift from conventional to organic farming could have unintended consequences. An increased competition in organic food production will challenge the existing premium price on organic products, leading to an increased income instability for farmers. Furthermore, in order to equal our current food production under 25% of organic farming, a shift in land use will be necessary and untouched areas could be required to be used for farming. This will without a doubt affect the quality of the European biodiversity. ELO therefore advised that the EC conducts a feasibility study on the compatibility between the different targets and other objectives of the Green Deal ie. biodiversity conservation, fair income for farmers, food security etc.

ELO was pleased to hear that the Commission will conduct impact-assessments before proposing legally binding targets linked to the F2F, including the pesticides' reduction target. 2021 will be



the year during which ELO will voice the farmers' needs for plant protection products and ensure that the new SUD to be adopted in 2022 will be fit for purpose. As supported by Parliament, the EC will now conduct an impact-assessment of the EU food system as a whole, providing the basis for developing a comprehensive legislative proposal for a "European sustainable food system" with the ambition to be the first region with a climate neutral food system. This will be the opportunity for ELO to reaffirm landowners' and farmers' position in the food supply chain during 2021.

2.4 Innovation

It is the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) belief that without innovation, the European farmers will not be able to face increased climate-related stresses along with the decreasing amount of available plant protection products. New developments in seed breeding could be essential tools for facing both challenges.

Even before the European Court of Justice's decision to classify new genomic techniques (NGTs) as GMOs in 2018, the ELO has been stressing to policymakers the utmost importance of science- and fact-based assessments of innovative technologies for agriculture. The precautionary principle should not be invoked in the name of beliefs and fears but rather only when there exist established uncertainties regarding a technology. Instead of a consistent hazard-based approach to gene-editing, ELO has been arguing in favor of a risk-based approach.

Upon the request from EU ministers, health Commissioner Stella KYRIAKIDES instructed The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as well as the Joint Research Centre to conduct a study on NGTs, foreseen for spring 2021. The study mainly aims at clarifying the Court ruling of 2018. EFSA, in charge of assessing risks to health and environment of plants developed through these techniques, quickly concluded that NGTs do not pose any additional hazards compared to conventional breeding and GMOs. Therefore, the existing guidelines for the evaluation of their safety are adequate. This is in line with what ELO, as well as the vast majority of researchers and academics have been arguing. Once the full study will be published in 2021, ELO will continue to advocate

for a new distinct directive for NGTs so that these do not meet the same fate as GMOs.

ELO has also voiced its concerns regarding the lack of access to innovation in seeds in organic farming. The organic label and its requirements restrict considerably the use of innovative tools for farmers such as NGTs. It is important that if organic farming is to be chosen as the practice of predilection by the EC, the requirements for ob-

taining the organic label are made flexible enough to evolve along with the innovative methods and varieties developed by the EU.

The EC will publish in early 2021 the list of initiatives and proposals as part of the 2020 Horizon for innovation in agriculture. This will be the opportunity for ELO to flag what are the credible projects for farmers and to better define the type of innovations farmers need most urgently.



2.5 Digital Farming

From satellite technologies for precision farming to digital labels for improving transparency along the food supply chain, digitalisation offers great opportunities for making the European food system sustainable.

In its Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission (EC) flags that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must facilitate investment support to accelerate the digital transformation of farms. Indeed, investment will be necessary to overcome the barriers to the uptake of digital technologies on the farm.

As outlined during the EIP-AGRI seminars in which ELO took part, farmers are still lacking access to efficient and affordable broadband in rural areas, limiting the efficiency of what digital farming can offer. This is an issue that has been raised for many years. ELO is hoping that (the future CAP) the recently approved EU budget, including the Next Generation EU, will drive investment in the connectivity of rural areas. The seminars' group also identified that there is a digital knowledge and skill gap among farmers. The data provided by digital technologies so far require high-level digital literacy. European investment is needed for the monitoring and evaluation of digital tools in order to be adapted to real-life farming conditions. Innovators and farmers have to be able to exchange through coordinated impact assessments.

So far, the main available digital tools for farming aim at enhancing precision farming. These tools are developed to help the farmer make better use of their resources. In ELO's view, precision farming is so far the greatest tool to reduce the use of hazardous chemical pesticides. This is why ELO will in 2021 again push for a better implementation of precision farming and endorse projects contributing to the development of appropriate digital tools. However, ELO wants to flag that precision farming only remains a complementary tool for farming. European farmers still need access to efficient plant protection products to be able to grow food in a smarter way.



2.6 Biodiversity Strategy

Following the adoption of the EU Green Deal, 2020 marked the publication of many related strategies such as the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. It is the responsibility of ELO to be at the forefront of the discussions related to its implementation.

Right after its publication in May 2020, ELO produced its official position paper which was reviewed by the ELO Policy Group and then sent to relevant decision-makers (MEPs, EC officials, Members States representatives etc...)

We recognized that the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is the right path to move ahead. However, ELO felt it important to note that the EU nature conservation measures, and especially the EU Birds and Habitats Directives' obligations, still pose a challenge in implementation for many private land managers. The three pillars of sustainability: economic viability, environmental protection, and social equity, remain essential elements for a successful implementation of EU nature legislation. Considering that almost 95% of Europe's land is in private hands, landowners should be considered prime partners in ensuring the success of any biodiversity targets.

Based on a voluntary commitment, The Wildlife Estates Label shows the importance of private land managers actions towards biodiversity preservation (see the article on Wildlife Estates Label)

The strict 10% protection target is one of the first bottlenecks of the strategy. ELO is worried that this strict protection will prevent the adoption of any



genuine protection measure and therefore would mean the cessation of all human activities. In fact, for numerous sites, the species and habitats and their ecosystems may be entirely dependent on the continuation of such activities for their long-term survival. Furthermore, without sustainable management, forests and ecosystems are more likely to be at risk with regards to climate change

effects. It is our view that a blank restriction of uses in the designated areas will be counterproductive and reinforce the lack of understanding between decision-makers and land users.

The examination of the new binding target for restoration has also started with the European Commission. ELO is in favour of a robust and efficient action plan instead of a binding target. We

consider that by developing payments for ecosystem services in line with market practice; nature conservation could become a thriving part of our economy. ELO, therefore, strongly welcomes that this new binding target will be evaluated against an impact assessment. It will require the full involvement of land managers with a clear signal to put in place the necessary financial mechanisms to support their actions. The ELO proposes to focus on improving the use of existing funds but also making sure they are made available by public authorities in due time and without complex binding rules. The potential of market-based solutions such as tax credits and incentives must be part of the solution.

ELO, with the support of the Life programme under the project "Land Is For Ever", reviewed existing and innovative mechanisms, to present to the European Commission a list of tools that can be supported from the individual landowners' perspective. See article.

Forest issues through the protection of old-growth forests are also at the core of the strategy. The EC proposes to define, map, monitor and strictly protect all of the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests. European Commission will also develop guidelines on closer-to-nature-forestry practices and biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation. The Commission has set a goal to plant at least 3 billion additional trees in the EU by 2030. This will be carried out in parallel with the new EU Forest Strategy. ELO has recently published a joint paper on that issue with WWF. See *article page on forestry*.



2.7 Natural Resources Soil and Water

2020 was an active year of campaigning for the active protection, conservation, and rejuvenation of the natural resources which are essential to life; soil and water.

ELO has been closely following the developments surrounding the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which among its goals had included the update and reinvigoration of the Soil Thematic Strategy. The aim of this new soil strategy, as set out in the Biodiversity Strategy, is to step-up and rejuvenate efforts to protect soil fertility, reduce erosion, and increase soil organic matter; with monitoring and identification of contaminated sites and the delivering a definition of the “good” ecological status of soil. During the consultation process, ELO represented the intentions of its members in defending the principle of subsidiarity for Member States to decide their own laws and protection policies; especially due to the geographical differences inherent in the protection of soil from state to state. ELO also represented its members during the Evaluation of the EU Common Agricultural Policy Impact on Biodiversity, Soil and Water (Natural Resources). Here, ELO welcomed the new proposals of the CAP, which supports the process of monitoring the indicators associated with CAP; however, ELO noted that while the indicators are sufficient in number, reaction to them can be unhelpful in the management of natural resources, and extra monitoring will ensure a better service. ELO was also represented at the launch of the EU Soil Observatory in December.¹ This is a platform

which aims to provide the European Commission, as well as the wider soil management community, the diverse knowledge, needs, and data flows necessary to protect and safeguard our soils for the coming decades. They provide quality-assured information regarding status and trends on soil, which will be supported by active targeted research; likewise, it shall be working on greater citizen engagement and soil literacy to raise their awareness regarding the impact the care and protection soil can have for society.

2021 is likewise due to be an extremely busy year, with January and February already cranking up to be busy with the ELO being asked to return to represent its members in a workshop for the SoilCare Project, which builds scenarios based around policy outcomes and how these might affect our environment and our landscape.² Likewise, ELO is looking forward to representing its views in the feedback session for the EU Action Plan Towards a Zero Pollution Ambition for air, water and soil.³ This is just one aspect of ELO's focus for 2021 on the new Zero Pollution Action Plan. In line with

this, there shall be a further public consultation regarding the policy refit of the integrated water management system of the EU, including a list of pollutants affecting surface and groundwaters. This will take place in the third quarter of 2021, and ELO will invite information and advice, in due course, from its members in order to respond to this urgent issue.

Please find the relevant links below.



¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/eu-soil-observatory>

² <https://www.soilcare-project.eu/>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12588-EU-Action-Plan-Towards-a-Zero-Pollution-Ambition-for-air-water-and-soil>

2.8 Forestry

2020 was the year when we expected to have a new Forest Strategy ready to replace the current one. However, despite a good start, with the report from the European Parliament and having organised both an event on forest multifunctionality and a breakfast with key policymakers, this overarching strategy has been postponed to 2021. A delay that forced us to send a letter to the Commission president, together with other relevant stakeholders.



The Green Deal framed the discussions on forestry, particularly the biodiversity strategy to 2030, proposed in May and the 2030 climate target plan, proposed in September.

The biodiversity strategy included actions such as (1) defining, mapping, monitoring, and strictly protecting all the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests, (2) biodiversity-friendly forestry practices to continue and to be further developed, and to (3) plant at least 3 billion additional trees in the EU by 2030, in full respect of ecological principles. It also announced that the Commission will develop guidelines on biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation in parallel with the new EU Forest Strategy. Those proposals are a big task, which the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) is following both in the Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN) and the Working Group on Forest and Nature, led by Directorate General (DG) Environment.

- **Old-growth forests:** Currently there is no established clear definition of "old-growth" forests in any international forest reporting system, and confusion persists between various terms and data gaps. Another major issue ELO is looking into is how this zoning could affect property rights, local low impact traditions and activities,

and the forest managers capacity to deal with climate related threats.

- **Closer-To-Nature Forestry Management (CTNFM):** Historically, the CTNFM approach was born in temperate forest sites, where the growing conditions are relatively favourable, but its viability remains questionable in other biogeographical regions. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) remains the encompassing management option as it is adapted to the different climates and allows for management practices associated with CTNFM. It remains unclear how the discussions over CTNFM are to develop.
- **Afforestation and reforestation:** ELO believes that future guidelines on biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation should build on the existing “Pan-European Guidelines for Afforestation and Reforestation” and take into account the subsidiarity principle. It is also important to differentiate from planting in urban and peri-urban areas, in agricultural land, and in forests.

To show how important biodiversity is as part of SFM decisions, ELO, together with other stakeholders launched a campaign on #ForestBiodiversity, showcasing the actions on the ground that support biodiversity preservation in forests (for-estbiodiveristy.eu).

The 2030 Climate target plan aims at setting the path towards carbon neutrality, which includes a revision of key legislation by June 2021. Therefore, ELO will follow the review exercise of the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation (LULUCF) and the Renewable Energy Directive,

which have major implications for the forestry sector. For the time being, the discussions have been light on the multiple benefits forests provide to society and the benefits which forest-based bio-industries could contribute to a more sustainable and climate-neutral society. Maximising synergies and minimising potential trade-offs between the diverse needs for forests from society requires a thorough analysis, forest sector know-how, and the involvement of experts and stakeholders, particularly considering the impacts from dynamic natural conditions, markets, and societal developments. This would also create more shared ownership for the policy, and therefore also more effective policy implementation.

Apart from the different positions published throughout the year, ELO remains an active member of the Civil Dialogue Group on Forest and Cork as well as participates at both the Forest Europe Process and the FAO Committee on Forestry.

In 2021, ELO will resume its work on these issues, particularly the proposal to replace the current Forest Strategy, the work under the Working Group on Forest and Nature and the review of the climate related legislation.

It is important that the EU Forest Strategy remains the main policy tool to integrate European forests and forestry into all other policy areas. It should provide a holistic and inclusive framework, with SFM principles at its core.



2.9 Climate Change

2020 was the year when the first European Climate Law was proposed, paving the way for a climate-neutral society by 2050. ELO supports the goal of modernizing all sectors of the economy to become more energy-efficient and resilient.

We welcomed the Commission's intention of supporting a "renovation wave", to boost renewables, for both the energy and transport sectors, and to consider options to boost carbon sequestration. While efforts are needed to increase the carbon sink in soils, forests and wetlands, there is also a need to boost the substitution effect, by using biomass to replace fossil-based products and energy. If we are serious about systemic change, more attention needs to be given to a circular bioeconomy.

In fact, the repercussions of climate change on our rural areas are obvious, recent years show, without any doubt, the hugely detrimental effects of heat-waves, with extended drought periods, pest and diseases outbreaks and a new trend of mega-fires. In fact, 2020 is now tied with 2016 as the hottest year in recorded history, with the Arctic crown of the planet heating up faster than anywhere else.

While policymakers are aware that economic losses from weather and climate-related extremes are on average already €12 billion per year in the EU, the current revision of the adaptation strategy is likely to be insufficient to tackle its consequences, which have a major implication on the capacity of land-based sectors to sequester carbon. A proposal is expected in early 2021.

2021 is expected to be a decisive year for Europe's climate ambitions, with the European Commission to enshrine the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in law, before the COP26 UN climate summit in Glasgow in December. Also, just about every major policy on energy and climate is going to be revised as part of the package for 2030, ranging from the Renewable Energy Di-

rective and the Energy Efficiency Directive to the Emissions Trading Directive and the Effort Sharing Regulation, as well as the infamous LULUCF directive dealing with land use change. New initiatives are also being considered like the carbon border adjustment mechanism. ELO will be following the review of these policy instruments envisaged in June 2021 closely.



2.10 Carbon Farming

Carbon farming encapsulates countless topics close to ELO including climate change, biodiversity, the circular economy, land management and forestry, making it a critical issue to cover. As the EU looks to reach their 2030 and 2050 target goals of reducing carbon emissions, carbon farming becomes an increasingly more relevant practice to support and promote. Turning carbon farming into a reliable, practical, sustainable and economically viable activity will require the alignment of various stakeholders including investors, farmers, scientists, NGO's and policymakers, creating an open dialogue to discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations to both carbon farming practices and policy.

Towards the end of 2020, ELO organised a virtual roundtable with various stakeholders from the public and private sector in partnership with Indigo Agriculture. ELO members had the opportunity to discuss this carbon certification scheme at great lengths with Artur RUNGE-METZGER, Director of Climate Strategy, Governance and Emissions from non-trading sectors of the European Commission. Working closely with the EU institutions, ELO attended the roundtable on 'Carbon Farming Schemes in Europe' hosted by the European Commission.

Moving forward into next year, ELO wishes to continue supporting and raising the profile of carbon farming and any initiatives that reward farmers for carbon sequestration. Factors that are of importance to ELO include a carbon credit certification system that fairly rewards farmers for their efforts sequestering carbon and allows for the cross-border trade of carbon credits. This means that policies such as the CAP and the ETS must take carbon farming into account and ELO is hopeful that progress will be made in the years to come. ELO welcomes the support of stakeholders across all sectors to work towards making carbon farming a mainstream initiative.



2.11 Land Access and Property Rights

The pandemic outbreak proved once again how important the connection with nature is for us humans. Numerous lockdowns across Europe combined with travel restrictions relaunched an interest in one's neighboring countryside and rediscovery of the local landscape. Many private estates kindly opened their parks and forests to the general public to allow all generations to enjoy the fresh air while still respecting social distancing. However, this did bring up again the question of property rights and responsibility. SOME Examples include the unauthorised use of private roads and pathways, the protection of nature and wildlife on private land from additional disturbances or the need to reinforce such basic gestures of keeping used masks instead of throwing them away in the wild.

The topic of property rights is at the cornerstone of the European Landowners' Organisation's (ELO) activities since its creation. ELO believes that the four freedoms of the EU - free movement of goods, persons, services and capital - should be applied across all the Member States as it is only then, and in accordance with the rule of law, that a well-functioning land and forestry market can be assured - so vital for a sustainable and profitable European countryside. Therefore, in relation to the ongoing discussions on the recovery plan, budget and final stage of the CAP reform, ELO published in February the paper on "Access to Land and the Politics of Scale" (for more information see the Publication section).

In addition, on a daily basis, ELO was advocating for the rights of our members to ensure a diverse and multifunctional rural economy and access to basic services as well as keeping jobs in the sector. 2020 also kept us busy dealing with themes such as taxation, inheritance, land tenure contracts, and

ownership and management of land. That allows us to guarantee that our members have the right information and tools to face the numerous challenges, while making certain that their basic rights are respected.



A photograph of a brown and white duck standing on a lush green grassy bank. In the background, there is a calm body of water reflecting the surrounding greenery and trees. The scene is captured in soft, natural light, suggesting a peaceful outdoor setting.

3

Projects

3.1 AGRIWATER

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



As climate change increases the likelihood of prolonged droughts throughout Europe, where areas will not see any precipitation for long periods of time, there will be shortages within the water supply. These shortages will result in the drying of crops, reduced soil quality, bring new pests, rodents and diseases as well as create a shortage of drinking water for farm animals such as cattle. Adaptations to droughts will need preparations, where farmers and landowners will need to consider their own possibilities such as close environment, soil characteristics, legal options and context.

Therefore, the AGRIWATER project will try to help farmers and landowners start, implement, and sustainably maintain new water systems and/or other adaptation methods to droughts. The project's main goal is to help farmers maintain their agricultural lands by implementing innovative adaptation measures to droughts, as well as raise awareness amongst landowners about why it is necessary to care for their lands in this way.

AGRIWATER held its kick-off meeting virtually on December 1, 2020, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The project will run for 2 years and operate across the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium. During the kick-off meeting a workshop was held on the current drought situation and its effects on agriculture in the participating project partner countries. It became evident that all participating countries suffer from droughts in one way or another.

The project will create an educational platform where farmers and landowners can gain knowledge on the practical implementation of different adaptation strategies and water management systems which they can then use on their own land to better cope with droughts. The materials will cover current situations and possibilities in partner countries and best practice examples of innovative adaptation tools to drought from each partner country.



 **@AGRIWATERERASMUS**

 **@AGRIWATER_**

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

3.2 FARMID

The FARMID project has created a training programme to equip farmers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences for the employment of Persons with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (PMID) on farms.



On-farm activities can benefit PMID's social inclusion and overall health, but their potential as a disability-friendly working environment is still very much underestimated. Farmers also lack the training necessary to set up a social enterprise on their farms.

Through the training programme, the FARMID project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, provides farmers, landowners, social entrepreneurs, students, and trainers the competences and knowledge relating to employing persons with mild intellectual disability on farms. The training programme contains various modules on the topics of basic knowledge about MID, the skills needed to communicate with PMID, the specific organisation of work processes for PMID, as well as social, entrepreneurship, and marketing skills.

This programme is available online in English, Slovenian, German, Spanish, Italian and French, and is available free of charge to all farmers and other interested stakeholders.

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 FARMID project has now ended but if you are interested in employing people with disabilities on your farm or, more broadly, in starting a social farming activity, do not hesitate to contact us.

 www.farmid.bc-naklo.si

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

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

Project No: 2017-SI01-KA202-035535



3.3 AGFOSY

AGFOSY is an Erasmus+ project that seeks to create innovative study materials and other content to help farmers, landowners, political leaders, and general enthusiasts to learn more about agroforestry in an informative and educational way.



Although the project was slightly delayed by the COVID-19 crisis, it successfully completed all its objectives by November 2020. This year, the final objectives for each of the intellectual outputs were completed. These included the successful completion of methodological sheets, study materials, YouTube videos, and pilot testing. Particularly exciting are the study materials with interactive content, PowerPoint presentations, and quizzes that can be shared! We've even published our final conference on Twitter so you can experience it again or for the first time, and see experts discuss how AGFOSY has helped them in their countries and on their farms.

edgeable than ever and can direct ELO members to the appropriate information that will help transition their farms, land, pastures, and riverbeds to increase productivity and profit while protecting the environment and decreasing erosion at the same time.

Though the project has reached its conclusion, we will still remain active on Twitter and Facebook. Send us a message and we can chat about all the great innovations in agroforestry or download any of the outputs you'd like, to spread agroforestry and help the environment while remaining profitable and sustainable for landowners and farmers.



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All of these great outputs can be viewed on the website: <https://www.agroforestrysystems.eu/en/> and are available in multiple languages. The outputs are open to all, and ELO members will have access to each of the materials from the project. For those landowners who want to transition to agroforestry, this project has developed resources in French, English, Spanish, Czech, Slovakian, and Hungarian. Likewise, ELO staff are more knowl-

 www.agroforestrysystems.eu

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

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

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



3.4 REWARD

The project REWARD has created an online training programme for rural women to set up their own businesses based on multifunctional activities related to cultural heritage.



This project was based on the recognition that, in order to promote the employment of rural women, entrepreneurship is a new opportunity for them to provide alternative services to diversify the scope of their activities and their role in society. In turn, this would have a positive effect on social inclusion, poverty, and economic development in rural areas.

In the first stage of the project, the REWARD partners developed a summary report titled *"The Situation of Women in rural areas: employment and opportunities linked to multifunctionality and cultural heritage"* and gathered case studies of women entrepreneurs in European rural areas that develop activities fostering rural development linked to cultural heritage.

Based on these findings and best practice examples, the project partners formed the training modules aimed at equipping women in rural areas with the entrepreneurial skills necessary for integrated and new business activities.

The five training modules cover the following topics:

- Rural development through multifunctional agriculture and cultural heritage
- Entrepreneurship with multifunctional agriculture
- Management of multifunctional agriculture
- Communication and marketing in rural areas
- Professional-Family balance

The training modules will be available soon and free of charge on the REWARD training platform in English, Czech, French, Polish, Slovenian, and Spanish.

The REWARD project is coming to an end. The final conference, where all our results will be presented, is scheduled to take place in Brussels in spring 2021.



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

 [@Reward Project](#)

 [@REWARD_ERASMUS](#)

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

3.5 LAND MOBILITY

Land Mobility is an Erasmus+ project that seeks to develop the concept of “land mobility” by creating training materials as well as guidelines for landowners as well as authorities and advisors.

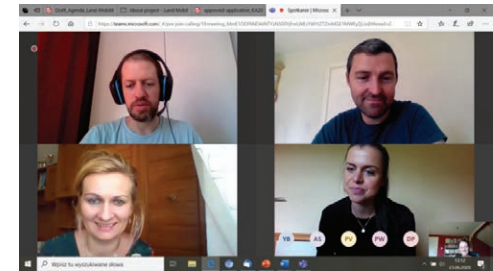


The project will help these parties develop land management partnerships and farm take-over brokerage. Building on the successes of the project in Ireland, Land Mobility seeks to expand the program to several additional countries of the EU and eventually all across Europe and perhaps the globe.

As with many projects, 2020 was a year of unique challenges as both project meetings were held virtually and all communication with partners was held through email and Zoom. Fortunately, the project had its kickoff meeting in 2019 and was able to develop a strong working arrangement before the lockdowns. Each partner worked on their various intellectual outputs (IO) and shared them with the other partners, to ensure that the content was of the highest quality and suitable for the EU. In addition to contributing to the IOs, ELO was responsible for the social media and newsletters, with hundreds of followers already.

2021 will see the second half of the project and the completion and dissemination of all the outputs that have been developed, including interactive videos developed with the latest software. We're hopeful that parliament and other in-person meetings will open up, furthering the collaboration of this project with lawmakers and European leaders.

This project is great for ELO landowners and farmers seeking to someday retire and live a life of relaxation. If you'd like to learn more about the project or even become involved in the development of the project, follow us on Twitter or Facebook and send us a message or reach out to us at the next event, whether virtual or in person.



 **@Land Mobility**
 **@LandMobility**

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



3.6 FARCURA

The FARCURA project created a training course to equip farmers and farming representative bodies with the necessary knowledge, skill-sets and competencies to develop and enhance social farming.



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 marginalised groups within rural society.

The FARCURA project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme, aims to promote inclusion through social farming. The partners have developed a training course based on the compilation of a state-of-the-art report on innovative models of social farming. This report, available on the project website, reflects the diversity of social farming in four European countries (Slovenia, Germany, Portugal and Ireland). Social farming has developed differently in EU countries, where different forms of agriculture, different support policies, and different ways of involving target group participants in the work and life of social farms and rural communities have evolved.

The training course provides information about the diverse social farming models, the factors that support and hinder social farming (cultural, legal, financial, administrative, attitudinal) and the steps to creating a successful partnership/relationship with social farming target groups - including working with participants' needs and abilities and communicating effectively with participants.

Engagement with policymakers, rural development organizations and health/care providers with regard to replicating the innovative programme will complete the project. The project's results should be presented in Spring 2021.

For more information, visit our website.

 <https://farcura.eu/>
 [@Farcura](#)
 [@FARCURA_ERASMUS](#)

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



3.7 SOILGUARD

SOILGUARD is a 4-year Horizon 2020 project aimed at boosting sustainable soil management to release soil biodiversity potential and increase environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Unsustainable soil management practices (e.g. inappropriate application of fertilisers and deforestation) and climate change stressors (e.g. drought and heat waves) are the main drivers of land degradation and the main challenges for soil biodiversity. Land degradation affected 3.2 billion people in 2020. Urgent action is needed to integrate sustainable soil management practices and the perception of soil biodiversity as a key nature-based solution (NBS) to land degradation and climate change stressors. This concept is closely linked to sustainable soil management (SSM) practices. SSM practices are the means to stimulate soil biodiversity and maximise its role as an NBS. However, our capacity to carry out reliable and comprehensive assessments of soil biodiversity is insufficient and represents a new challenge to increase the impact of SSM practices.

The objective of SOILGUARD is to stimulate the sustainable use of soil biodiversity in order to protect the multifunctionality of soils and to increase economic, social, and environmental well-being. This will be achieved by collecting strong evidence of the links between soil management, soil biodiversity, soil multifunctionality, and human well-being in bio-geographical regions. This evidence will be obtained through an innovative holistic framework on wellbeing and soil biodiversity.

SOILGUARD will assess the status of soil biodiversity and its contribution to the provision and value of soil-mediated ecosystem services (ES) in relation to the threats of land degradation, unsustainable soil management, and climate change.

In this project, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) will be responsible for project communication and dissemination and be involved in the co-design of the strategic plan, including the Soil Biodiversity and Soil Environmental Assessment framework, and will participate in the engagement activities (mapping of key stakeholders) and policy-related activities at the European level.



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number SEP-210673565, SOILGUARD project under the topic Sustainable Food Security.



3.8 SAFEGUARD

The SAFEGUARD project is a Horizon 2020 project set to begin in 2021 that will provide a comprehensive re-assessment of the status and trends of European wild pollinators.

This includes their diversity, abundance, plant-pollinator network structures, habitats, and conservation status. The end-goal is that this work will fill major knowledge gaps around the conservation status of species, which for the most part are lacking important data, as well as characterise recent trends of these pollinators in light of global change.

SAFEGUARD also seeks to predict the impacts of drivers and pressures in the long-term as well as their cumulative impacts, with a special focus on multiple interacting pressures at the population, community, and interaction levels, and across spatial scales. In turn, this significantly enhances the ecosystem understanding, from a mechanistic point of view, of the cumulative and interactive effects of environmental pressures on pollinators and plant-pollinator interactions. Furthermore, this will also serve as a foundation to generate model scenarios of global change.

The project will also quantify the multiple values, co-benefits, and contributions to natural capital associated with shifts in pollinator communities. These include the economic, social, cultural, and wider biodiversity and ecosystem service values. This will provide key information for an integrative socio-ecological impact assessment of ongoing

pollinator declines, and more importantly future potential benefits of restored pollinator diversity.

The loss of wild pollinators across Europe is a significant global challenge with prospective consequences potentially being felt across humanity. Without pollinators, entire ecosystems, crops, and eventually life on Earth would collapse. This project will hopefully "SAFEGUARD" the future from catastrophe. The project is just beginning, and will run through until 2025. If you would like to get involved in the project and help us save the world, please let us know.



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number 101003476, SAFEGUARD project under the topic Research and Innovation Action

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3.9 FERTIMANURE

FERTIMANURE is a Horizon 2020 project dedicated to the “innovative nutrient recovery from secondary sources - Production of high-added value FERTilisers from animal MANURE”



The FERTIMANURE project comprises 20 partners from 7 EU countries, Argentina, and Chile, which include universities, research centres, cluster organisations, public bodies, SMEs, and NGOs. They are all involved in the manure research sector and cover all aspects of the value chain. The project will run for 48 months.

FERTIMANURE will develop, integrate, test, and validate novel Nutrient Management Strategies to efficiently recover mineral nutrients and other relevant products with agronomic value from animal manure. The project aims to achieve a zero-waste manure management approach and obtain reliable and safe fertilisers able to compete in the European fertiliser market. The EU livestock sector is the largest in the world, and manure is by far the largest nutrient-rich residual biomass flow generated by the sector. The biomass stream needs to be upgraded into tailor-made fertilisers that comply with the requirements of different crops to minimise loss to the environment. Five innovative and integrated nutrient recovery on-farm experimental pilot plants will be set up in Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Germany.

The kick-off meeting took place on January 9 and 10, 2020 at the Chamber of Commerce of Vic, in Barcelona, Spain. The Catalan Minister of Agri-

culture, Teresa Jordà spoke about the importance of the project, specifically for regional agricultural competitiveness, sustainability, and improved governance.

During the first months of the project the consortium gathered data on animal densities and rates of nutrient and manure generation within the 5 pilot regions. The information gathered will be used for later analysis on scenarios for nutrient management and life cycle analysis for the formulation of appropriate business plans. The European Landowners' Organization is the leader on the social impact assessment as well as the assessment of the current legislation framework of bio-based fertilisers.



 www.fertimanure.eu/en
 [@fertimanure](https://www.facebook.com/fertimanure)
 [@fertimanure](https://twitter.com/fertimanure)
 [@FERTIMANURE](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fertimanure)
 [@FERTIMANURE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFERTIMANURE)



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



3.10 CONSOLE

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



The CONSOLE consortium comprises 24 partners in 13 countries. They represent various types of organisations from farmer organisations, regional administrations, consultancy companies, research institutions to water and forest management bodies. ELO's role in the project is to participate in the co-design of research and is the Work Package Leader in dissemination and outreach as private landowners are vital in the delivery of public goods on the ground and therefore are key stakeholders.

The case studies which were collected from all participating project partner countries and put together this year are examples of existing, innovative, and effective contract solutions aimed at improving the provision of AECPGs. Altogether, over 60 were collected and categorised into 4 contractual solution types: result-based, collective, value chain, and environmental tenure-based. One of the major outcomes of the project will be the framework which will be designed to use the different contractual solutions and made available to practitioners.

In October, a workshop was held virtually, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, discussing the lessons learned from the case studies. There were a total of 110 participants in attendance. It was made interactive by engaging the audience with a poll, where they were asked for their choice of contract types. The results of the questions were later used to direct the discussion between participants.

The research results of the CONSOLE project are intended to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially through environmental policies and the CAP.



 <https://console-project.eu/>
 @Console.project
 @ProjectConsole
 @CONSOLE Project
 @Console-project



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



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3.11 ALL-Ready

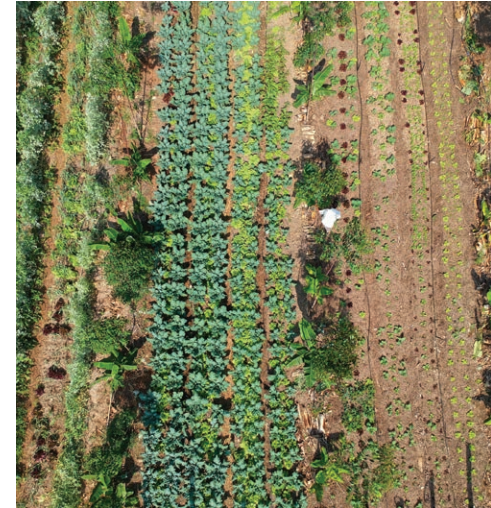
The project ALL-Ready: the European Agroecology Living Lab and Research Infrastructure Network funded by the Horizon 2020 programme aims to strengthen the European agro-ecological research and innovation ecosystem.

Today, agricultural systems are facing multiple challenges, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, dwindling resources, and degradation of soil and water quality. Agroecology can strengthen the sustainability and resilience of farming systems and thus contribute to addressing these challenges.

Based on the premise that Open Innovation Arrangements (OIAs) and in particular Living Labs (LL) and Research Infrastructures (RIs) are instruments that have large potential to contribute to amplifying agroecology in Europe, the main aim of this project is to prepare a framework for a future European network of LLs and RIs (to be called "AgroEcoLLNet") that will enable the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe. It will rely on a highly participatory and inclusive approach and on experimentation in real life situations and thus itself uses a living lab approach. An underpinning principle of the project is strong stakeholder engagement, which has begun in the preparation of this proposal.

The project has 3 phases: an initial preparatory phase in which the vision, scope, and mission for the Network are defined and the criteria for inclusion in the Network of LLs and RIs as well as other forms of OIAs are defined. This will enable

the mapping of current and emerging LLs, RIs and OIAs across Europe and their characteristics, highlighting best cases. In a second phase, different prerequisites/ activities for the future Network will be prepared (sustainability, including funding, governance, capacity building, data and knowledge management). Plans for each of these will be constructed with stakeholders and then tested in a small-scale pilot network and then refined to match needs. Finally, the outcomes of the work will be communicated widely throughout Europe by a variety of mechanisms. One of the final outcomes of the project will be a pilot-tested Implementation Plan for implementing the validated framework of AgroEcoLLNet, within Horizon Europe.



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



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Agroalimentaire Canada

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3.12 WATER2RETURN

Water2REturn is a Horizon 2020 project which evaluates the twin issues of water scarcity and resource recovery. To solve these global concerns, the project seeks to convert wastewater treatment facilities in slaughterhouses into bio-refineries, following the principles of circular economy.

It seeks to address water scarcity while simultaneously recovering valuable resources using a real-life case study: “Matadero del Sur”, a slaughterhouse in Salteras, Seville province, Andalusia region, Spain.

This year, the project’s two annual meetings were held virtually, but progress on the ground has continued. In addition to introducing the project to EU institutions and policymakers, ELO completed development of Deliverable 9.1: Policy brief and roadmap to foster EU implementation of nutrient recovery from industrial wastewater stream. This document, which includes a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analysis serves as an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project, as well as providing a path forward to help accelerate the project across the European Union. Recently, the project was granted a 15-month extension. In addition to providing more time to work on the project, it will also give a greater chance to disseminate the project (as many dissemination efforts were cancelled and modified during 2020 due to COVID-19).

Although the outputs are available to everyone, they are of particular interest to ELO members and landowners. This project will help ELO members who want clean water as well as those who want

low-cost fertilizer and energy, all of which are key to running a successful farm or agricultural business. In addition, the project will help ensure safe and secure nutrients, energy and water all across Europe in this time of increasing uncertainty. If you’d like to learn more about the project, visit the Water2REturn Youtube channel or the Water2REturn website and see all the project has to offer.

 www.water2return.eu

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

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



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



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UECBV
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union



3.13 InnoForEST

Europe's forests offer a large range of forest ecosystem services (FES) including water, climate regulation, soil protection, health, spiritual enrichment, recreation, timber, and timber-based products.



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Forest owners generally have difficulty generating revenue from these broad range of ecosystem services, thus incentivising timber-orientated management decisions. This is the issue that the InnoForEST project seeks to address.

InnoForEST, a European 'Innovation Action' project funded by Horizon 2020, seeks to foster the sustainable provision of the wide range of FES through innovative governance mechanisms, particularly through network approaches and new actor alliances, payment schemes for ecosystem services, and hierarchy systems. To achieve this objective, empirical research was conducted in 6 Innovation Regions across Europe: (i) Forest pas-

ture system management in Italy, (ii) Value chains for forest and wood in Austria, (iii) Collective governance and ecosystem services in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, (iv) the Waldaktie project in Germany, (v) "Love the Forest" project in Sweden and (vi) the Habitat Banking initiative in Finland.





Our research answered a few important questions:

Who needs to act? NGOs and associations, entrepreneurs, local-level policymakers at community or county-level, national and EU-level policymakers, and scientists and research funding entities, have all been determined to be key actors to foster sustainable FES provision.

What needs to be done to boost governance innovations for FES provision? Diverse stakeholders need to be brought together to build a structured, facilitated stakeholder network, develop facilitated innovation, maintain a direct link to FES provision, and actively promote payment schemes for FES provision.

What products have been produced? InnoForEST has produced a range of products that offer solutions, such as Methodological Manuals and Factsheets, integrated maps on European biophysical and institutional context conditions, targeted policy and business recommendations, among many others.

Through innovative and coordinated governance mechanisms, InnoForEST shows ways that can lead to a more sustainable future for European forests.

 innoforest.eu
 [@InnoForESTProject](https://www.facebook.com/InnoForESTProject)
 [@InnoForEST](https://twitter.com/InnoForEST)
 [@InnoForEST](https://www.youtube.com/InnoForEST)



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number 763899, InnoForEST project, within the Innovation Action.



3.14 UNISECO

UNISECO is an H2020 project that aims to educate stakeholders (farmers, policymakers, etc) to increase implementation of various agro-ecological practices in the EU while simultaneously reducing barriers, and improving understanding.



The project recognizes that the world is facing many global environmental challenges, and taking an agro-ecological approach to farming is one of the key methods to reduce the harm being done.

This project has seen many great advancements throughout the year, becoming one of the largest projects ELO is involved in with 18 partners to date. Of particular note, the numerous case studies have reached completion, and are now available for download and review on the UNISECO website. In addition, seven videos have been published and eighteen deliverables have been completed. Recently, ELO has been leading a working group on the intersection between Farm-to-Fork and the UNISECO project as well as sitting on several other working groups.

Next year, the project will conclude, and there will be a final conference, currently set for Spring 2021. This event will likely be online, as the logistics of

creating an event with several hundred people in person is not feasible. Other excitement in 2021 will be the conclusion of all remaining deliverables and the publication of the Farm-To-Fork paper and potential publication in EU magazines.

For ELO members, this project is important because it recognizes the need for responsible government policies and farming strategies that are suitable for landowners, farmers, retailers, and political leaders. By working closely with this project, ELO is able to help develop a suitable agro-ecological policy from the present until 2050, and help mold future Green deals.

To learn more about the project, visit our website or LinkedIn and follow us as we help develop the future and ensure that the world remains green and living for our children and grandchildren and generations to come.

 <https://uniseco-project.eu/>

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

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 [@UNISECO Project](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773901.



3.15 BIOPLAT-EU

The overall objective of the BIOPLAT-EU project is to promote the market uptake of sustainable bioenergy in Europe using marginal, underutilised, and contaminated (MUC) lands for non-food biomass production through the provision of a web-based platform that serves as a decision support tool.



These lands cannot be used for food production or for recreational and conservation purposes, but in some cases, they still retain the potential to produce biomass, thus they can be used for non-food purposes.

BIOPLAT-EU mobilises and involves the different stakeholders to remove financial, market and legal barriers for a broader use of MUC lands for bioenergy by coordinating the provision of technical and financial advice by experts in these fields and by communicating with local and regional authorities to expedite the implementation of future projects.

The intended impact of BIOPLAT-EU is to (i) facilitate the introduction of these technologies and increase the share of renewable energy in the final energy consumption, (ii) lead to substantial and measurable reductions for project developments, (iii) develop more informed policy, market support and financial frameworks, notably at national, regional and local level, leading to more cost-effective support schemes and lower financing costs for renewable energy source (RES) facilities and (iv) contribute to EU policies such as the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and the Biodiversity Strategy.



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In each case study country (DE, IT, ES, UA, HU, RO) a minimum of two sites were selected to test the accuracy of the maps and tools developed respectively and calibrate their results. The case study sites have been selected on the basis of the partner's knowledge of the country and the local stakeholders and guided by fundamental features such as select crops (e.g., Black locust, Camelina, etc.) and bioenergy pathways (e.g., ethanol, biogas, etc.), their consequent crop – bioenergy pathway combinations and the presence of variable location sizes and existing vs. hypothetical biomass processing plants.



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement number 818083.



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3.16 COUPLED

COUPLED is a European research and training network, coordinated by Humboldt University Berlin. By 2022, fifteen doctoral students will be trained for a more just and sustainable world.



These students are supported by an experienced network of universities, companies, public institutions, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO). Activities include PhD projects, various internships, and training courses. Together we try to understand land use processes that link distant places (telecouplings) and how to govern these processes towards sustainability in an interconnected world.

COUPLED trains fifteen young researchers and establishes a strong network in the field of land use and sustainability to contribute to the development of land system science, for example with vivid case studies on land-use systems in the Global South and Europe and their interrelations.

In the last two years, COUPLED gained scientific expertise on how to implement and promote sustainable land use in a globalised world. The last months of 2020 were focused on starting to develop the synthesis between the different research projects. This work will be continued in the upcoming final year of the project and the scientific results will be transferred for business, policy, and practice.

In 2020, due to the global COVID-19 crisis, the 4th Network Assembly in May was carried out

but had to take place online. However, the First Synthesis Workshop has been postponed to early February 2021, hosted by the University of Copenhagen. The content of this workshop includes both the First and Second synthesis workshops due to multiple Early Stage Researchers having had to cancel/postpone fieldwork, thus allowing them more time for more in-depth insights into synthesis work. On top of this, the external PhD course on network science has been postponed also until early February 2021, in close connection with the Synthesis Workshops.



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement number 765408.

<http://coupled-itn.eu/>
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 @CoupledITN



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3.17 REFLOW

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

REFLOW aims to achieve significant societal impact through closing the phosphorous loop for the dairy industry by delivering cost effective phosphorus (P) recycling processes which minimise leakage, producing safe, effective high value fertiliser products. The work carried out thus far has targeted the following objectives:

1. To develop and demonstrate processes for the recovery and reuse of P products from Dairy Processing Waste (DPW).
2. To establish their fertiliser value and optimum application rates through laboratory protocols and field trials.
3. To address the environmental, social, food safety and economical challenges, ultimately finding market-driven solutions for the new processes and fertiliser products.


ELO in collaboration with Ghent University is working to develop models for nutrient management strategies. These strategies are looking for

financial viability of recovered fertilisers, while simultaneously analysing control over physical, legislative and value chain constraints. Through a doctoral dissertation, the research outcomes will serve as a basis for decisions towards market accessibility, potential business cases and the distribution of social benefits of REFLOW products plus recommendations over financial configurations which give certainty to potential investors.

Project partners from the Wroclaw University of Science and Technology have had their research paper published in the Journal of the Taiwan Institute of Chemical Engineers. The paper presents successful experiments that showcase highly efficient phosphorus recovery and struvite precipitation in DPW (essential for P recovery, usually hindered through excess phosphorus, calcium, and potassium).

To learn more about the collaborative research with Ghent University, you can contact our PhD researcher, Sergio Garmendia Lemus at ELO.



 **@ETNReflow**
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 **@etnreflow**
 **@reflow-etn**
 **@REFLOW Project**



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



3.18 TerraNova

TerraNova, "The European Landscape Learning Initiative: Past and Future Environments and Energy Regimes shaping Policy Tools," aims to inform policymakers and the general public on how to deal with the current transition to a low-carbon society.

TerraNova is an EU Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie project which started in April 2019. It is a consortium of high-profile universities, institutions with acknowledged heritage, landscape and planning expertise, civil society organisations, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), located in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

The project aims to train Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) working with policymakers and society at large, with an in-depth appreciation of a wide range of sectors affecting landscapes, and to train a new generation able to co-produce responses to interdisciplinary land management challenges where ecosystem services, cultural heritage, and economic qualities are balanced and preserved, taking into account ongoing climate, environmental, and social changes. To date, three TerraNova Academy Field Schools (TAFS) have already been organised, offering ESRs the opportunity to ac-

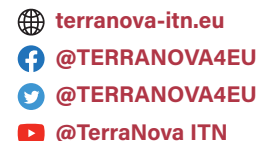
quire interdisciplinary knowledge on the balance between nature and culture at different phases of the energy regime or in transition.

Over the past year, TerraNova released its first White Paper Policy recommendations for sustainable landscape management strategies which presents TerraNova's project design, expected outcomes and vision on sustainable landscapes initiatives. TerraNova encourages the development of future European landscapes that would give more space for nature, notably by relying on rewilding as a central component of the restoration of ecosystem dynamics and providing more information to land managers and policymakers on the relevance of interdisciplinarity and understanding of landscape history to approach land management supporting both environmental and social benefits.

The European Landowners' Organization's (ELO) role is 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 is highly involved in communication and dissemination activities.



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



3.19 MICROSERVICES

MICROSERVICES, “predicting climate change impacts on the crop microbiome and cascading effects on ecosystem services delivery in agroecosystems” is a Horizon 2020 project which will start in April 2021.

Climate projections show that most of Europe will experience higher levels of warming than the global average. This is particularly worrisome in agroecosystems, where the accelerated pace of climate change and interactions with other direct drivers such as unsustainable land management, directly threatens food production in the context of a growing population.

Below ground soil biodiversity is crucial to maintaining ecosystem function as biodiversity shifts can affect ecosystem multifunctionality. There is great potential in harnessing microbial functions for improving sustainable agricultural production. Microorganisms can also modulate the resistance and resilience of crops to climate change.

Natural climate gradients and in-situ field manipulation experiments are two innovative ways to study the effects of climate change and on the crop-soil-microbiome system, and MICROSERVICES will adopt both approaches in a dual framework. Based on this dual framework, MICROSERVICES' main goal is to improve the

forecasting capacity of the cascading effects of climate change on crop-associated microbial diversity, crop-microbiome interactions, and the agricultural ecosystem services delivered by the microbiome, thereby contributing to a sustainable agriculture, impacting conservation and policy agendas, and raising public awareness of the importance of soil biodiversity for the planet. This goal will be achieved by using Earth Observation based on regional climate models, surveying wheat rhizosphere microbial diversity, crop-microbiome interactions, and ecosystem multifunctionality, establishing an in-situ field experiment to simulate drought condition, employing machine learning algorithms to find correlations and develop a predictive regression model, and promoting strong collaboration between research entities, agriculture stakeholders and policymakers.

MICROSERVICES will mainly focus on wheat cropping systems. Europe is the largest wheat producer accounting for nearly one third of the global wheat production and wheat cultivation is spread across most European biogeoclimatic re-



gions. Wheat cultivation will face various challenges under future climatic conditions and climate resilience of many current wheat cultivars are reportedly declining. MICROSERVICES sees the need to assess region specific effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem multifunctionality across Europe, since different biogeoclimatic regions will be affected differently.

3.20 CARBON CONNECTS

The Carbon Connects (CConnects) project aims to facilitate the greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies for peatlands across N.W. Europe by introducing new bio-based business models developed for sustainable land management practices.

They promote a market for sustainable bio-based (innovative) construction materials, fuel sources and food products cultivated on peatland in N.W. Europe as well as a carbon and blue-credit scheme system for wet agriculture.

Ten pilot sites were implemented in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, UK and Ireland to carry out an in-depth assessment of the environmental and economic situation of each area and to identify new business opportunities. A Farmer-2-Farmer programme was developed to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing on new technologies between local farmers, supported by a toolbox which will be available online for farmers and landowners.

The CConnects activities clearly reveal the potential and facilitate the uptake of peatland farming. However, farmers are often still hesitant to commit to alternative sustainable land use practices due to a lack of financial opportunities or market se-

curity. In parallel, it has been unearthed that there are many stakeholders, across the value chain, seeking to invest in local peatlands, wanting to contribute to climate change mitigation and to the enhancement of ecosystem services. Bridging this gap between farmers/landowners and potential investors/customers therefore became an additional mission of this project.

The Carbon Connects project received funding from the North-West Europe Interreg programme.

 www.nweurope.eu/cconnects
 [@CarbonConnects](https://twitter.com/CarbonConnects)



3.21 BioWILL

BioWILL is an Interreg NWE-funded project aiming to deliver a zero waste biorefinery model for Northwest Europe using Willow.

The most diverse varieties from the European Willow Breeding Programme (EWBP) and Rothamsted willow breeding programme have been chosen. These willow plant species have been selected for several reasons such as (i) they are fast growing and produce a lot of biomass in just two to three years, (ii) they can be planted and harvested mechanically, (iii) some have already been screened and show elevated levels of compounds that are interesting from a medicinal perspective and (iv) they have a good growth habit with limited side branching, making it easier to strip the bark which is where most of the interesting medicinal compounds are found.

Naturally grown willow short rotation crops have been planted at AFBI Loughgall (UK), Claremorris, Co Mayo (Ireland), Noreuil and Gouy-Sous-Bellonne and Gouy-Sous-Bellone (FR). These trials sites each consist of randomised plots containing approximately 30 different clones within 3 replicated blocks.

Once the willow plants are ready, salicin will be extracted from the willow bark for medical applications and the residual pulp will be used to manufacture safe food quality packaging products to replace fossil-derived plastics. Any remaining substrate and packing residuals will then be anaerobically digested to produce biogas for renewable electricity heating and transportation. Finally, the digestate is tested as a nutrient rich fertiliser, reducing CO₂ emissions.

Technology demonstrations will be available to validate how technology integration can increase efficiency, serving as a best available practice. A "toolkit" will be available for all market actors.



During the latter end of 2020, case study partners have been monitoring the success of crop establishment, managing competitions from weeds and animals and planning for the first materials harvest to facilitate the work of the other BioWILL work packages.

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

 @BioWILLNWE

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3.22 European Networks for Private Land Conservation

To this end, the European Commission has funded two LIFE Preparatory Projects (ELCN and LIFE) that explore the potential of new private land conservation approaches in the EU and develop networks of conservation NGOs and private landowners interested in biodiversity conservation on their land. Although they are still ongoing, these projects have already successfully raised the profile of private land conservation in the EU and have resulted in an increased interest of members and external parties in the related tools and strategies. Moreover, they have managed to significantly improve networking and relationships between the various stakeholders involved.

The project will focus on the most promising PLC tools, with emphasis on conservation easements, test their wider uptake, engage in the reform of fiscal and other systems incentivising PLC, continue the development of PLC standards, help with the development of organisations and their networks dealing with PLC (following the US “land trust” model) and establish durable governance structures for PLC in Europe. It will specifically aim at further streamlining the efforts regarding PLC of the existing networks by creating a joint PLC secretariat of the two networks: the “Conservation Landowners Coalition”.

By bringing together the two most important communities in private land conservation within a common structure the project will contribute directly to developing the framework for recognising and increasing the contribution of PLC to the EU Biodiversity Strategy's 30% protected land target and will enable the transfer of knowledge between nature NGO and private landowners in both directions.



3.23 Land Is For Ever - LIFE

To realise the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 objectives, it will be vital to convince private landowners to fully cooperate in land conservation efforts, complementing investments from the public sector.



The use of innovative tools (e.g. fiscal benefits, legal protection, 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 along with the expansion and development of innovative tools.

Input from land managers and experts across Europe contributed to a good understanding of the barriers and benefits they are facing today in implementing conservation activities on private land. Seven innovative examples of private initiatives for land conservation were selected in BE, FR, ES, NL and SW to learn from and inspire land managers elsewhere. During workshops and field visits the managers shared experiences of the tools they have been using to durably manage the private estates. Key actions to survive and adapt were defined for each case. An overview of available tools in EU Member States was developed with the support of national agencies. This gave the opportunity to identify both gaps of awareness and effective tools in the Member States as well as a set of requirements to take into account for upscaling.

The outcomes contribute to a reliable basis on which recommendations for more effective private land conservation policies in Europe are now developed, while also strengthening the network to expand and facilitate their use.

A series of four online webinars were run in September 2020 to present successful examples in the US' Mid-Atlantic region comparing them with innovative cases in Europe. A round table discussion gathered diverse stakeholders and European Commission representatives to discuss the current situation and future of private land conservation tools. The webinars are available in replay here: <http://landisforever.eu/webinars-2020/replay/>



 www.landisforever.eu
 [@LIFEprojectLIFE](https://twitter.com/LIFEprojectLIFE)

**A study tour was arranged combining both classroom seminars and 'in the field' experiences to increase understanding and commitment of successful private land conservation initiatives. Following the escalation of COVID-19, the study tour scheduled to take place in Washington, in September 2020 had to be postponed (TBD).*



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



3.24 LIFE e-Natura2000.edu

LIFE e-Natura2000.edu is a three-year project that seeks to create new learning methods and build bridges to help increase the knowledge and abilities of Natura2000 managers.

This year saw many exciting developments in the project. While most of the project was intended for in-person meetings, the project had to make a quick 180 degree turn and change everything to virtual to adapt to the realities of COVID-19. Project partners held virtual meetings in three countries as there was no way to host meetings in person as was originally intended. Still, the events were quite successful, with extremely positive responses from all attendees. Likewise, a "summer school" training set for Italy was delayed as it was clear that this summer it would not be feasible to send 20 people on a physical trip to Italy.

Our most exciting development was the creation of the digital application eNatura2000. This app, developed by Symantra, with the assistance of European Landowners' Organization (ELO) staff and incredible ideas from all project partners, especially EUROPARC. Although there were a few other Natura2000 apps on the market, this was the first hybrid app. While previous apps were simply linking to a webpage, this app models the functionality of LinkedIn and Facebook, allowing users

to connect with each other and learn more about issues that face Natura2000 landowners. The app, available on both Google Play and the App Store, reached over 500 downloads in the first 3 months. Next year, eNatura2000 will be presented at the Forum for the Future of Agriculture and should grow even more.

Many ELO landowners have already used the app, but like any network, the functionality grows with the user base. ELO members are encouraged to download the app so they can receive weekly updates on issues faced by landowners as well as information that will help create a safer, healthier environment.

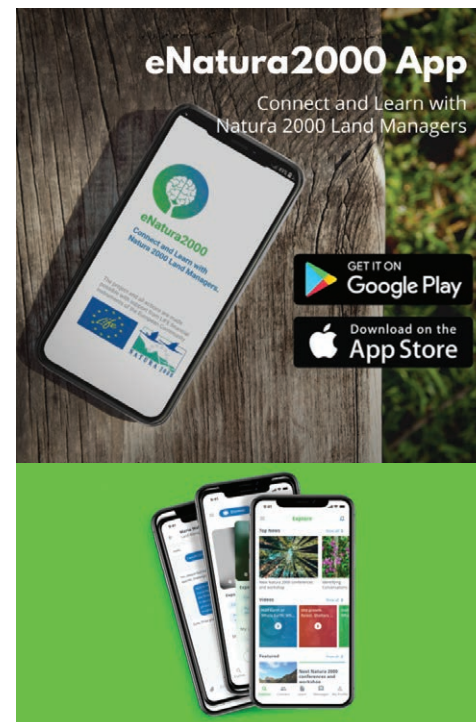
 www.europeanlandowners.org/projects/e-natura2000



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



Supporting e-learning and capacity building for Natura 2000 Managers



3.25 Service contract

Regional Platforms on coexistence between people and large carnivores.

During the last decade, four large carnivores are taking a prominent place in the EU's species conservation and management: the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), the wolf (*Canis lupus*), the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), and the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). All of them need large natural territories and their populations extend across several EU Member States. While those animals rarely pose danger to humans, they certainly create a lot of conflicts with farmers, foresters and hunters.



Those living in the countryside are well aware of the problems related to the return of large carnivores across the EU. The recent recovery is seen as a success for nature conservation but often those animals are the basis of conflict among various stakeholders. In some European regions, the populations are growing and cause conflicts depending on the socio-economic activities in the respective regions.

By setting up regional platforms, the European Parliament's Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside Intergroup wanted to give stakeholders the opportunity to discuss potential solutions for conflicts. The project does not aim to find solutions but to mediate between different stakeholders to enable them to find locally applicable solutions with the help of facilitators, social scientists and communicators. This project is the first of two the European Parliament has decided to finance as pilot projects commissioned by the European Commission.

ELO, as co-chair of the European Large Carnivores Platform, links this project to the European Large Carnivores Platform. Platforms were installed in Castilla y León (Spain), Harghita county (Romania), and Trentino (Italy).

The project ended in 2020.



3.26 Wildlife Estates Label

ELO and the national delegations of the Wildlife Estates (WE) project continued their efforts in 2020 to raise the awareness of society for the importance of private conservation management.

The Wildlife Estates Label has been developed as a means to acknowledge the exemplary management of landowners and managers of territories in Europe and to make them more visible to society as strong guardians of nature. This initiative is based on a voluntary approach in order to highlight the key role of land managers in protecting biodiversity. It also makes the link between biodiversity and sustainable hunting to facilitate better communication between land managers, hunters and local authorities. The project is managed by 19 national delegations who are responsible for spreading the initiative at the national level.

Today, the Wildlife Estates network consists of 450 estates. Over the 15 years of operation of the programme, labelled hectares passed from a mere 23.000 to more than 2.100.000 hectares, and the project is steadily growing.

On 2-3 September, international experts for wildlife management and the national delegations gathered in Wolfsburg, Germany for the 15th Plenary Session of the WE Label Steering Committee to discuss the progress of the project, exchange experiences and validate the new WE in various countries. The seminar "Rewarding ecological system performance as an exceptional chance for the Wildlife Estates" provided the floor for fruitful

discussions between various stakeholders of wildlife and nature conservation management.

ELO and the national delegations of the Wildlife Estates project will continue with their efforts to maintain the growth rate in the number of adherents to the WE label experienced in recent years with the expectation to achieve 3-5 million hectares under the WE Label in the next 3-5 years.

In 2021, the Scottish National delegation will host the WE Plenary Session.

For more information visit
www.wildlife-estates.eu

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



3.27 Pollinator Network Initiative

In 2010, ELO and FCS decided to create the Pollinator Network Initiative (PNI) project in order to preserve and improve biodiversity in the field.



The PNI consists of a network of farmers and land managers committed to improving biodiversity and the environment.

The tools available are as simple as they are effective, field margins, for example, allow for an infinite

number of combinations that are beneficial for the farm business as well as the environment. Grass strips, beetle banks, wildflower sowing, are practices that by themselves or in combination give us a double benefit, improving biodiversity and the environment. The use of all these tools leads to an

improvement in the soil, improving its water retention capacity thanks to the roots. Soil washing is prevented and, thanks to all the microfauna found in the soil, soil quality is improved. In some cases, harvests can be increased by 24%.

ELO, together with Wildlife Estates, continues to promulgate the benefits of these practices and continues to work closely with its members. More and more managers are putting these methods into practice. Since 2017, targeted questions on biodiversity-friendly farming measures, and specifically the use of pollinator-friendly field margins and beetle banks, have been included in the WE questionnaire in order to evaluate each candidate estates' contribution to farm biodiversity. Wildlife Estates is working with its National Delegations to adapt the assessment methodologies of the project in order to be able to gather more robust quantitative data on prevalence of these types of biodiversity measures.

For more information visit
**[http://www.europeanlandowners.org/
projects/pollinators-network-initiative-pni](http://www.europeanlandowners.org/projects/pollinators-network-initiative-pni)**



A close-up photograph of a white butterfly with a single black spot on its hindwing, perched on a cluster of small purple flowers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. In the top right corner, there is a dark purple square containing the number 4. In the bottom right corner, the text 'ELO Awards' is written in white, with a dark purple square below it.

4

ELO Awards

4.1 European Bee Award

The *European Bee Award* was established by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA) in 2014 as a way to acknowledge innovative, efficient, and scalable projects that protect bees and pollinators in Europe.



The VII edition of the *European Bee Award*, hosted by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Franc BOGOVIĆ, recognized the work and commitment put in place through innovative ideas and practices to protect bees and pollinators in European farmed landscapes.

In 2020, 21 applications from 12 different countries were received. The online awarding ceremony was followed by over 250 participants, connected to exchange ideas, celebrate pollinators' wellbeing, and support bee-friendly farming practices.

The winners of the 2020 *European Bee Award* are:

- Land management practices prize: 'Let it Bee' by The National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS), who put in place a com-

prehensive project to promote sustainable farming practices that lead to improved water quality at sources, increased biodiversity, and enhancement of climate awareness. The project includes a pilot programme providing farmers with honey bees, hives, suits, necessary equipment and training & mentoring, and encouraging them to act as ambassadors for biodiversity enhancement.

- Application of innovative technological solutions prize: 'StopVespa' by Università degli Studi di Torino. The Life StopVespa project developed an innovative harmonic radar technology for tracking the flying Asian yellow-legged hornet (*Vespa velutina*), an invasive species that threatens the honeybees and wild pollinators of Europe.

In addition, the 'Copenhagen City Bee Association (Bybi)' was awarded the Jury Special mention prize for their impressive work of promotion of apiaries and honey making in an urban collaborative environment.

You can learn more about the winners on the ELO website.



4.2 The Land and Soil Management Award

Launched in 2008, the Land and Soil Management Award rewards 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.



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.

In 2020, the unanimous winner was 'ORTO 2.0', a project submitted by a cooperative in Italy. It is an innovative and fascinating initiative, which has high potential to foster soil awareness in big cities. It provides a cultivation service through an application for mobile devices.

In addition, the Jury attributed the 'Diploma of Recognition' to the project "A research and demonstration agroforestry experimental site in Ramecourt (Northern France)", submitted by Antoine DEQUIDT.

The announcement of the award winner took place on March 31 via social media, as the FFA March conference and awarding ceremony taking place in person were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The year 2020 also saw a change in the members of the Jury as Dr. Jeremy DYSON, FI Soil Sci; Fellow of Institute of Professional Soil Scientists, joined on behalf of Syngenta, taking over from Marie-Cecile LEBAS; which we would like to warmly thank for her commitment and expertise during all these years.

For additional information on the Land and Soil Management Award please consult the ELO web-site.

Members of the Jury:

- Univ.Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult. Martin H. GERZABEK - President of the Jury
- Thierry de L'ESCAILLE, ELO Secretary General
- Dr. Jeremy DYSON, FI Soil Sci; Fellow of Institute of Professional Soil Scientists
- Emeritus Prof., Dr. Franc LOBNIK
- Luca MONTANARELLA, Senior Expert, European Commission, Joint Research Centre,
- Claudia OLAZABAL, European Commission, DG ENVI, Head of Unit, Natural Capital, Land Use and Management

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4.3 European Biodiversity Conference and Belleuropa Award at the European Parliament

Belleuropa was created by Giuseppe NATTA, a noted environmental figure and son of Nobel laureate Giulio NATTA. The idea was spearheaded by Gruppo Ecodeco, a leading Italian firm in the environmental sector.



The Belleuropa Award recognizes the exceptional initiatives undertaken by private land-managers and public-private partnerships in the protecting and conserving local landscapes and wildlife.

It promotes sustainable business models based on responsible agriculture, rural tourism, and the promotion of low-impact products or activities.

ELO presents the Belleuropa Award to the winning candidate as part of the European Biodiversity Conference, hosted by the European Parliament through the patronage of Members of the European Parliament.

The conference gathers land-managers, policy makers, NGOs and industry representatives to discuss the participation and role of land users and land-managers, as well as agro-industries, in the protection of biodiversity.

For more information or to register for the conference please visit:

 www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference



4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year

The Belgian Tree of the Year contest represents a search for the most notable trees in Belgium with a remarkable story. The contest alternates every year between Flanders and Wallonia, while trees from Brussels can participate each year. In 2020 it was the turn of Flanders' organizations to coordinate the competition: "Boom van het Jaar".



After a round of open nominations by the public, the jury announced six provincial winners. Voting then took place to vote for the winner. The **Four-Trunked Survivor of Ypres** was, after a successful voting round and with a lead of 700 votes, crowned the Belgian Tree of the Year 2020.

The Four-Trunked Survivor is a survivor of two World Wars. This imposing chestnut tree was planted in Ypres around 1860. Along with the rest of Ypres, the chestnut suffered heavily during the First World War, but amazingly the stump remained alive and four new trunks spontaneously rose from it. The tree was allowed to remain in its place when the Menin Gate was inaugurated next to it in 1927. The four side trunks were also spared during the Second World War, when Ypres residents were forced to cut down many trees for firewood. With a trunk of 9.1 metres in circumference, this chestnut tree perfectly symbolizes the survival of Ypres, flanking its famous war monument.

As part of the prize, the Four-Trunked Survivor will be representing Belgium in the European tree of the Year contest. On top of this, and with the financial support of the Fonds Baillet Latour, the winning tree received a prize of €2500 to invest in the maintenance of the tree and improve its green environment.



In 2020 the Belgian Tree of the Year award was organised by SBNL-VL (Stichting Behoud Natuur en Leefmilieu Vlaanderen) with the support of European Landowners' Organization, ANB, BOS+, Landelijk Vlaanderen and de Bosgroepen.

 www.boomvanhetjaar.be



5

Events





5.1 FFA2020: Accelerating Change

The annual Forum was founded by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta; they were joined by Cargill, WWF Europe, Rabobank, The Nature Conservancy, Thought for Food and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs as strategic partners. It brings together a wide and diverse range of stakeholders to inspire new thinking on how European and global agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges of delivering both food and environmental security.

Due to the escalation of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe and around the world, the 2020 Forum for the Future of Agriculture that was due to take place on March 31 in Brussels, was cancelled. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference would have examined the global and European political response to increased citizen demands for climate action, increasing the biodiversity outputs on farmland, the role of consumers, as well as major European initiatives such as the EU Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the reform of the CAP.

The FFA2020 partners and secretariat worked hard to reshape the Forum in order not just to answer the urgent questions regarding the food system that the pandemic has identified, but also to keep you informed in various new ways. The FFA2020 launched their own podcast called Food Systems. The first episode was released on July 16, interviewing FFA2020 Chairman, Janez Potočnik. Since then, the FFA2020 Team has released 13 episodes covering issues such as COVID-19's impact on the food system, adapting diets to climate challenges, economic resilience of farms with and without subsidy systems and many more topics. Find the Food Systems podcast on the Forum website at www.forumforagriculture.com

We look forward to meeting you in 2021 online for a renewed dialogue and, when safe and possible, to see you again in the near future.



www.forumforagriculture.com
 @ForumForAg
 @forumforagriculture
 @forum-for-the-future-of-agriculture-ffa



5.2 FFA2020 Berlin

The Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) returned on June 15 in a new virtual format, which linked more than 700 stakeholders from Berlin, Brussels, and beyond to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European food system. The meeting came following the publication of the EU Farm to Fork & Biodiversity Strategies, and just before Germany assumed the Presidency of the European Council.

In his opening remarks, FFA2020 Chairman Jan-
ez POTOČNIK, said that whilst everything has
changed since the onset of the crisis, it is also
true that nothing has changed, and that the crisis
had served to highlight the fragility of the world
in general, but especially our food and agriculture
systems. Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE, Deputy
Head of Cabinet for EU Commissioner for Agricul-
ture, praised the “extraordinary” responsiveness of
the EU’s food system, and the people working in it,
during the crisis, keeping food on “everyone’s plate”.

In the Berlin studio, moderator Heike ZELLER
was joined by a number of guests. Dr. Gero HOCKER
MdB, the Agriculture Spokesperson for the Lib-
eral Group in the Bundestag highlighted the vital
role played by all those in the agri-food industry
during the crisis. Dr. Julia KÖHN, Chief Executive
and Founder of PIELERS, argued for greater price
transparency to help consumers understand the
true cost of the food they pay for and where the
money goes. For Felix Prinz zu LÖWENSTEIN,

Chairman of Bund Ökologische Lebensmittel-
wirtschaft, the need to drive this transition came
at exactly the right time as what is at stake is noth-
ing less than our collective ability to produce food.

FFA2020 continued to explore the impact of COV-
ID-19 on the food system to build on the ideas and
thinking shared by panel guests and participants
over the following months, and will share the con-
clusions at the FFA2021 annual conference.

To watch the replay:

- 🌐 www.forumforagriculture.com
- 📘 [@forumforagriculture](https://www.facebook.com/ffafuture)
- 🐦 [@ForumForAg](https://twitter.com/ForumForAg)
- 📺 [@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqWz8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8)
- 📺 [@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqWz8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8)
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- ✉ info@forumforagriculture.com



5.3 FFA2020 returned to Brussels with an open debate on rewarding food system sustainability



The Forum for the Future of Agriculture returned to Brussels at the end of October with the second of its Online Live events. Participants from across the global FFA network joined the event which was focused on *Rewarding sustainability in the food system*.

In particular, the meeting explored the premise that the future of the food system is likely to rely on two interdependent drivers: the adaptation and reinvention of food system business models; and the development of practices that can generate agri-solutions to climate change which create value for the providers and society at large.

In his opening address, FFA Chairman, Janez POTOČNIK, made clear that "Farmers deserve a decent life where they are rewarded for the food they produce and the public goods that they provide", retiring the urgency of planning for a sustainable future.

The opening panel session on sustainable agri-food business models underlined the need to reflect 'true pricing' (the real cost of the goods and services produced) in the price we pay for food. It tackled the importance of creating policy that aids in the development of the market, the environmental impacts that our current food system



has inflicted on the world, the need for public intervention to support science and technology to deliver the necessary changes, as well as the collective challenge, involving a coalition of all actors, to drive the changes to produce a more resilient and sustainable food system.

The second panel session took a deeper dive into the extent to which agri-solutions to climate change could emerge and how they could create and share additional value, particularly with growers. These solutions range from carbon farming to regenerative and precision agriculture, whilst further down in the food chain concerns were made for improvements in processing, transportation, storage and shelf life.

To watch the replay:

www.forumforagriculture.com

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

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

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

[@forum-for-the-future-of-agriculture-ffa/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/forum-for-the-future-of-agriculture-ffa/)

info@forumforagriculture.com

5.4 ELO General Assemblies

Twice a year, the European Landowner's Organization (ELO) General Assembly (GA) takes place in the country that is about to take up the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU).

The meetings in 2020 were foreseen to take place in June in Berlin and in December in Lisbon. Nevertheless, in view of the continuing difficulties and restrictions in travelling between the countries of the European Union, both General Assemblies were held in a hybrid form, giving the possibility to join the meeting in person or "online", respecting COVID rules and social distancing in place. More than 50 people took part each time, representing more than 26 ELO member organizations from 18 European countries.

The quorum gathered in June, unanimously elected for a second three-year term Pierre-Olivier DRÈGE as ELO President. The December quorum allowed by unanimous vote that any relevant organization based in Europe can become an ELO "active member".

The GA's gave the opportunity to listen to the priorities of the German and Portuguese Presidencies from representatives of respective ministries and national agencies. ELO's main messages for agricultural and environmental priorities were handed over to the "virtual hands" of the speakers from both countries. During both events the ELO team presented the latest position papers and forthcoming strategies. The discussion focused also on the EU Green Deal, Farm to Fork,

and Biodiversity strategies, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Brexit, and last but not least COVID impacts on various sectors and activities. It was underlined that the European Commission still needs to provide economic, social, and environmental impact assessments for the above strategies. During the "tour de table" all agreed that farming and forestry are key to achieve the success of the presented strategies.

ELO would like to warmly thank the German *Familienbetriebe Land und Forst*, as well as the Portuguese *Confederation of Portuguese Farmers (CAP)*, *Mediterranean Forest Union (UNAC)*, and *National Association of Rural Owners (ANPC)* for their support to organize these meetings which enabled fruitful discussions and planning for 2021 actions.

 www.elo.org



5.5 Biodiversity Conference

Agriculture is polarizing the current discussions on environmental protection. The recently agreed CAP reform is the subject of virulent criticism with two camps that seem more distant than ever. The 2020 *State of Nature in the EU report* and the latest Court of auditors' study *Biodiversity on Farmland* proves that EU policy instruments to stop biodiversity losses in agricultural areas are not sufficient and/or not effective enough. The diagnosis is not questionable; however, the remedies are.

The 2020 European Biodiversity Conference was titled *"Farming for Biodiversity: scaling up good management practices, what's missing?"* With an audience of more than 200 participants, a variety of experts discussed the major issues related to biodiversity loss in Europe.

Pierre BASCOU Director from DG Agriculture and Alberto ARROYO SCHNELL, IUCN Senior Policy Adviser explained that the challenges are dependent on a variety of factors. There are already many farming systems in the EU which provide ecosystem services that both ensure food security and positive environmental impact. Hence, a comprehensive approach that responds to both needs and that involves all stages of the food supply chain is required. Businesses are also engaged in exploring new frontiers of sustainable development while developing a long-term vision.

Carole ZAKINE, Director of Public Affairs InVivo and Florence JEANTET, Managing Director, OP2B Platform emphasized that innovative solutions are deeply needed to enhance biodiversity in agricultural systems. In that sense, companies are key players to trigger investments and accompanied consumer behaviors. Despite the growing scientific literature addressing Ecosystem Services, enhancing the integration of mapping and

assessment of ecosystems and their services in real-life policy- and decision-making still remains a challenge.

Markus ERHARD, Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Expert, European Environment Agency and Nils GERBER, Executive Board, BEESharing ad-

ressed the current existing gaps and the need for solutions at the crossroad between research and innovation and good practices in agriculture. Further information can be accessed from the ELO website: <https://www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference>



5.6 Dialogue on Sustainable Food and Agriculture: Leading the transition

Sharing experiences on carbon farming & precision agriculture. Monday 23, November 2020, 2:00-3:45 PM

Food and Agriculture are in a necessary transition. In 2020, there is an increasing awareness of the profound impacts of our agricultural activities on this planet. But how can we proceed? What has already been done and what needs more visibility? **How can policymakers help in Europe and in Brazil?** This webinar focused on **carbon farming** and **precision agriculture** and there were **more than 450 participants!** The **European Landowners' Organization** and **Apex-Brasil** warmly thanked the speakers, both those who joined on site as well as remotely, for their vision and insights.

You can watch in replay the webinar here: <https://elo.telemak.media/apex/stage.php>

Meet the Speakers: Sustainable transition, carbon farming & precision agriculture



H.E. Marcos Galvão
Brazilian Ambassador



Thierry de l'Escaille
Secretary General of European Landowners' Organization



Jonathan Brooks
Head of Division, Agricultural and Resources Policies OCDE



Nicola Di Virgilio
Seconded National Expert, DG AGRI



Anke Kwast
VP Climate Neutrality Roadmap at Yara International



Fabio Nehme
Senior Advisor to Indigo Agriculture on carbon markets



João Adrien
Farmer & special advisor to Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture



Marcio Albuquerque
President of the Brazilian Commission on Precision Agriculture and CEO of Falker



Eduardo Bastos
Head of the Sustainability Committee at Brazilian Agribusiness Association



Nicola Di VIRGILIO, Seconded National Expert, EU Commission DG Agriculture
Jurgen TACK, Scientific Director, European Landowner's Organization (center)
Thierry DE L'ESCAILLE, Secretary General, European Landowners' Organization (right)
Renata MARON, Tv Presenter and Reporter, Terraviva (bottom)



5.7 European Tree of the Year 2020

In 2020 the European Tree of the Year (EYT) contest celebrated its 10th anniversary. Since 2010, from Ireland to the Russian Federation, more than 3.3 million people have engaged in the search for the European Tree of the Year. Moreover, no less than 1.100 trees and the communities around them have been involved with the national competitions.



This year sixteen countries participated with their candidate tree in national contests. A total of 285,174 votes were cast during the voting period in February. Most of them, 47,226 to be precise, went to the pine tree called the Guardian of the Flooded Village from the Czech Republic thus dominating the ETY2020. The Silver medal went to Croatia, where Ginkgo from Daruvar obtained 28,060 votes, followed by the Russian Lonely Poplar from Kalmykia with 27,411 votes.

However, like all the events gathering people together, the ETY2020 suffered from COVID-19 related restrictions. The traditional Award Ceremony, normally organised around March 21 in the European Parliament, was one of the first that had to be cancelled. Going online was the only possible solution. Almost 800 live viewers joined the event moderated by Ladislav Miko, the head of EU representation in Slovakia and more than 17,000 views later on our YouTube channel made for a successful event.

Traditionally the contest receives patronage from the EU ENVI Commissioner. This year we were grateful for the patronage of Virginijus Sinkevičius, the new EU ENVI Commissioner. Highlighting the significance of trees for Europe's natural and cultural heritage for its biodiversity and recently most

communicated capacity for carbon stocking, the European Tree of the Year is an ideal vehicle to communicate our policy messages to the Brussels' audience and helps maintain good relations of ELO with EU officials as well as MEPs. Even

though this year it was indirect, it was however more vigorous.

 www.treeoftheyear.org



5.8 Innovation Conference 2020

In January 2020, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) held its annual Innovation Conference hosted by MEP Martin HLAVACEK at the European Parliament. This time, the theme was "Climate Positive Farming".

During the event, the speakers explored several ways of how technology as well as innovative farm practices could contribute to making European agriculture more sustainable. One of the key messages of the conference was that in order for farmers to break free from practices that negatively affect the environment, their toolbox has to be expanded with appropriate alternatives.

Michael Prinz ZU SALM-SALM, former President of Familienbetriebe Land und Forst, opened the conference by addressing the four main objectives in European agriculture: producing enough food, giving farmers a sustainable income and limiting global temperature increases whilst also stopping the loss of biodiversity. During the first panel, Andres HUBER from Corteva Agriscience highlighted that rather than being the ones to blame, farmers are part of the solution. However, he noted that farmers lack access to appropriate tools to do so. He spoke about the pioneering work they are carrying out at Corteva, including developments in the latest technologies for gene editing, digital platforms and innovative crop protection methods. During the second panel on innovative farming practices, Saskia VISSER, professor at the Wageningen University, mentioned the importance of reducing the dependency of farmers on current systems. Phasing out old systems without

increasing food producers' awareness of alternatives will necessarily lead to a chaotic situation. Finally, Jurgen VANGEYTE from the research institute for agriculture ILVO mentioned that promising new agri-technologies are understood and talked about by everyone except farmers who seem to have been left out of the conversation. He therefore called for end user involvement and training.

The conference highlighted that more investment is needed in research and innovation before farmers are asked to shift away from conventional methods of farming. In 2021, the Innovation Conference will explore what role Agri-technology will play for delivering the Commission's Farm to Fork strategy.





Communication and Scientific Publications

6.1 CountrySide Magazine

Our magazine remains, for almost 26 years, the voice of land managers and rural entrepreneurs, providing a platform for the exchange of opinions and best practices. It exists not only to provide such a platform, but also to connect various aspects of agriculture, environment and rural businesses. It is also the perfect place to present the numerous projects that ELO is involved in.



It gives a stage to present policy developments and new ideas. Such a tool helps to build bridges, promote events, and help its broad readership understand issues affecting agriculture and the environment at local, national, European and global level. This is possible as the readership includes more than 15,000 readers, from policymakers, academics, ELO members to all others with an interest in European and worldwide rural areas.

The *CountrySide Magazine* is the perfect place for land managers and rural entrepreneurs voices to be heard and disseminated, and to ensure that they are taken into account at every step of the decision-making process.

It 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

All the past issues are available on the ELO website.

6.2 ELO Online

This year more than ever proved how important online communication is. From early spring, it allowed our team to not only secure a smooth functioning of the ELO office, but just as important, it allowed us to stay connected on a daily basis with our colleagues and collaborators, based in Brussels and elsewhere, ensuring that in case of any emergency no one would be left alone.

The ELO team has fine-tuned the use of various communication platforms and developed new procedures to smoothly and efficiently exchange information internally, as well as with ELO members and partners. As with many events, this also included the organisation and implementation of the two general assemblies organised for the first time in a hybrid format. Improvements have been made to the ELO weekly newsletter and secure intranet, tools specifically dedicated to our membership, as it remains critical to inform our members, as well as obtain their feedback to ensure that their (online) voice is heard in Brussels.

The ELO website remained the 'digital' window to the world, and is continuously one of the main communication tools for our members and supporters. We are posting here all information on relevant policies, conference invitations, ELO projects and other worthwhile material.

A special attention was attributed to ELO's presence on social media as being the quickest tool to inform our members as well as get in touch with our office, ask questions and receive direct event updates. Don't forget to follow us and to 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!

 www.elo.org

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

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

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

6.3 Wolf

During the last years the European Landowners' Organization has been confronted with an increasing number of complaints on wolf conflicts in the majority of European countries where the wolf is present. Furthermore, outside ELO's membership we hear an increasing demand from people working and living in Europe's countryside to limit the population growth in certain regions, as social and economic conflicts are increasing with growing wolf populations. In a number of EU Member States those conflicts start to influence the political agenda, sometimes to a level where the European nature directives are questioned.



Based on a limited selection of 177 research papers, we brought together relevant information on wolves in Europe with a view of their effective conservation and management. While the methodology guaranteed a bias-free selection of scientific publications, it raised a number of concerns described in the report.

Based on the review and the documents of the EC's EU Large Carnivore Platform combined with the feedback from its membership, ELO made a number of recommendations in order to tackle some of the concerns of Europe's rural inhabitants towards the increasing growth of wolf population in Europe's rural areas.

ELO published in 2020 a fully illustrated version of the report it prepared for the European Commission in 2019. The report supports ELO and its member organisations when advocating for measures in areas where socio-economic problems due to the presence of the wolf are rising.

This report was made as with the financial support of DG Environment - European Commission (negotiated procedure ENV/D3/ETU/2018/5458098)



© Rudi Debruyn

6.4 Small wildlife in fields and meadows

For several decades now, the agricultural plains have seen a dramatic decline in the number of small wildlife in fields and meadows.

In 2020, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) prepared a report describing the declining biodiversity levels of fields and meadows in Europe and how the European Union (EU) has acted on this by adopting nature legislation and by developing biodiversity strategies, even if they have not always been successful.

The decline of small wildlife populations is mainly caused by crop intensification, agricultural land consolidation, and urbanisation. The study also looks closer at agricultural production techniques, studies the effect of grazing, the use of fertilisers and pesticides, discusses the role of hunting, and studies the increasing populations of predators and their effects on small game in fields and meadows.

Once the causes of the decline of small game species in fields and meadows were known, we took a look at the most important management practices to protect small wildlife in fields and meadows, which include habitat related management. Next to habitat management, the report describes management practices at the species level, including the regulation of predators and artificial feeding. But we also looked at more innovative practices such as nature-based agriculture.

The report looks forward to the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) under development and the role it could play in the protection of small wildlife. Also, the LIFE-programme can play a role in supporting small wildlife in Natura2000 areas. The

report will be published in English and in French in the beginning of 2021 and can be used by ELO's Member organisations in support of CAP plans in their EU Member States.



6.5 Access to Land and Politics of Scale in Land Ownership and Management

Potential Implications for Property Rights and Free Markets, Agricultural Policy and the Rural Economy in Europe.

Following 1989, a period of change unprecedented in eastern Europe since 1945 has combined with globalisation and a major shift in the economies of scale in farming. Not only has this proved challenging to manage, but it has often acted as a catalyst for latent insecurities in the countryside, where the problems of small farms and new entrants to farming are on a significantly different scale to those of the past.

At the same time, restitution and privatisation policies, themselves often implemented only on a restricted scale, have left large areas of land under state control or management. In reaction, a public debate, often conducted in emotive terms, has begun on a politics of scale, typically using ill-defined umbrella phrases such as 'land grabbing', which calls into question both the shape of future Agricultural Policy and the functioning of markets (and particularly the European Union Internal Market).

This debate, which is loudest in the new Member States, has nevertheless sought to develop arguments based on discrete situations in western Europe and, in some cases (notably France), intervention policies based on the introduction of pre-emption rights.

Yet there is a serious danger that the problems of today are being addressed in the context of the world of yesterday, whereas the need is to develop a vibrant, sustainable and resilient rural economy in which the actors of the past have a valid and validating role in the future.

To address and reflect on these issues ELO published its position paper in February 2020. The full version, as well as the Executive summary are accessible on the ELO website.



Cooperation with the EU Institutions

7.1 Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside"

The "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" Intergroup constitutes an essential part of the dialogue between the European Parliament and rural stakeholders. It is instrumental in bringing together the perspectives of key rural actors in shaping major policy discussions of the EU Green Deal, namely the next EU Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategy and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.



In 2020, the Intergroup was renewed with a new Board. Álvaro AMARO (Portugal, EPP) was elected President of the Intergroup, with Simone SCHMIEDTBAUER (Austria, EPP), Alex AGIUS SALIBA (Malta, S&D), Elsi KATAINEN (Finland, Renew Europe), Marco DREOSTO (Italy, ID), Andżelika MOŹDŻANOWSKA (Poland, ECR), Carmen Avram (Romania, S&D), Jeremy DECERLE (France, Renew Europe), Juan Ignacio ZOIDO ÁLVAREZ (Spain, EPP) and Annie SCHREIJER-PIERIK (Netherlands, EPP) as Vice-Presidents. Consisting of ten members in total, from ten different Member States and five different political groups comprising of five men and five women, the Intergroup provides a wide geographical and ideological scope as well as a perfect gender balance! This is precisely why the Intergroup creates opportunities to listen and share different opinions. Under the Intergroup Board members' initiative, ELO & FACE organised the first high-level conference for the new 2019-2023 term to discuss the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and its impact on the rural community. It was the first edition of a long series of webinars which allows the intergroup to enlarge its audience with an average of 300 participants. The various debates were dedicated to major issues related to

the EU Green Deal implementation such as the Farm to Fork strategy, the next EU Forest Strategies and last but not least the management of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. The Work

Plan 2021-2022 will be aligned with the European Parliament's more pressing issues, all connected with the Green Deal's objectives and its impacts on the management of European land.



7.2 The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores

The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores (LC) has now been in operation for 6 years and was officially renewed in February 2020. Thanks to its position as Co-chair of the Platform, the European Landowners' Organization (through its Scientific Director, Jurgen TACK) was particularly active and helped to maintain a regular flow of exchanges and activities during a difficult year.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the EU Platform managed to continue its work during the first half of 2020, most of that time remotely. Fortunately an early regional workshop in January 2020 in Salzburg, Austria allowed several days of face-to-face exchanges on measures to protect livestock. It brought an international perspective and examples of protection financing from different countries.

The second "regional workshop" of 2020 hosted by FACE, CIC and LCIE was an online event and it explored the different activities carried out while surveying and monitoring LC populations: For instance it showed how stakeholders (especially hunters) are involved in surveying and inputting data to monitoring schemes and it discussed the desirability and potential for expanding the role of stakeholders in data collection¹.

The annual meeting of the EU Platform on Coexistence took place in June 2020 exceptionally online and still managed to gather a large spectrum of officials and stakeholders of the EU Platform. A range of policy initiatives, relevant to the work of the platform were discussed. This included the new EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and the

changes to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Platform's work plan was updated including a discussion of forthcoming events and the work of the regional and local platforms. The discussion focused specifically on tourism and the synergies and conflicts that arise in connection with tourism activities related to large carnivores and other land uses in a specific region. The Platform agreed to

look into the topic further through a collection of further best practices and potentially organising a workshop in the first half of 2021.

¹ The presentations and the webinar video are available on the Platform website https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform.htm



8

Partners



8.1 The European Historic Houses Association

**2020 has been a tough year and has affected most sectors, including ours.
However, EHH proved to be successful, creative and very responsive to the digital environment.**



Therefore, throughout the year, people all over the globe not only got the chance to virtually travel, but also got familiar with EU funded projects with the help of the “Webinar on the Successful EU Funded Projects” and shared best practices within the network.






Considering the tough times and all the restrictions, European Heritage Weeks could not equal the charm of last year. Nonetheless, EHH made it easier for historic house lovers by organising “European Heritage Weeks – Facebook Live Visits”, thus allowing people to visit the houses from the comfort of their own home. Following the same successful pattern, people's huge interest was rewarded with another virtual project called “Houses of the Month” which is still ongoing and will keep the doors open for many more historic houses even at the start of next year. Statistically, our marvelous historic gems – witnessed by the lenses of cameras – were visited up to 90,000 times.

The extraordinary General Assembly gathered most governors together via Zoom and focussed on internal decisions such as changes/renewals in EXCOM, as well as lobbying, EXCOM expansion and Next Generation Group – a vibrant and active membership organisation bringing together the young and future owners of Europe's historic houses.

During 2020, EHH submitted—HERIT Project – and winning – CHARTER Project – EU funded projects, very enriching for the cultural sector.

EHH is preparing some attractive activities for 2021, namely the NextGen Conference in April and hopefully the Congress, depending on the evolution of the virus and the effectiveness of the vaccine. The launch of the CHARTER project will also be a captivating chapter of next year. Considering the favourable outcome of the webinar organised in November 2020, our objective is to put together similar events designed in accordance to our members' interests.

Find out more info at:

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



8.2 Europa Nostra

A year to cherish and embrace the values of togetherness and connectedness which are at the core of Europa Nostra's mission.

In 2020, Europa Nostra deployed its mission with more enthusiasm than ever, to support, safeguard and promote cultural heritage all over Europe. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated how important culture and heritage are for people and their communities, as a vital source of hope, well-being and solidarity.

As Europe is preparing its recovery from this unprecedented crisis, we need to rediscover, rethink and reclaim our common ground and purpose. In the visionary **essay "Togetherness – A New Heritage Deal for Europe"**, our Executive President, Prof. Dr. **Hermann PARZINGER**, advocates for an imaginative and comprehensive heritage-led transformation of Europe's society, economy and the environment. This essay, published by the European Investment Bank (EIB) in December, can be read on the websites of the EIB and Europa Nostra.

Among our many actions in 2020, we launched a wide **consultation about the impact of COVID-19 on the world of heritage**, which provides unequivocal evidence of how deeply the pandemic has affected the sector and makes concrete proposals to support it; we devoted our **advocacy efforts** to make sure that cultural heritage is duly included within the EU recovery plans in the aftermath of the pandemic; and we stood in **solidarity** with many European partners in the wider fields of culture, tourism and philanthropy. We also developed a new initiative, the **Europa Nostra Digital Agora**, which shared and promoted best practices and news related to culture and heritage; and we launched a collaboration with ICOMOS to develop a **European Cultural Heritage Green Paper** on the timely topic of climate action and heritage.

In partnership with the EIB Institute, Europa Nostra published the **list of 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe for 2020** in March. In cooperation with the European Commission, we celebrated the **winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2020**, together

with the winners of the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes 2020, in November, at the first ever virtual Awards Ceremony, which gathered over 1.000 people and had the participation of the European Commissioner **Mariya GABRIEL**.

Europa Nostra also actively contributed to the EU-funded projects IMPACTOUR and Cultural Heritage in Action, and published a joint EU Policy Brief on Food & Cultural Heritage in the frame of the "Food is Culture" cooperation project.

 europanostra.org

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

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

*Peeter Põllu
monument
"wearing" a mask
during COVID-19
pandemic in Tartu.*



Credits photo © Mana Kaasik (CC), Wikimedia Commons

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.



This year saw the election of a new president, Pilar Bahamonde, and three new Council members.

The Legacy of the European Year for Cultural Heritage

With a view to maintaining the spirit of cooperation and public engagement achieved during the European Year of Cultural Heritage, FRH carries on its legacy by organising the "Jump for heritage" across Europe, to raise awareness on the importance of safeguarding our religious heritage.

Religiana

Religiana is a project that brings places of worship to visitors, by giving them Europe-wide visibility. The output of the project is the Religiana website, hosting more than 5,000 religious heritage sites from 46 countries, and constantly expanding. The website provides visitors with accurate information on opening hours and key characteristics of sites.

FRH Inform

FRH Inform is a project that researches the state of religious heritage on a Europe-wide scale. A team of European academic partners assists in the identification of best sources and the review of our country factsheets. We aim to share the complete European study with the public in May 2021. It will include a fact-sheet and infographic for each European country.

SKIVRE

SKIVRE - 'Skills development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage,' is a European project concluding in 2020. Its output is training modules that provide capacity-building for European monasteries, in the development, manufacture, and marketing of high-quality monastic products.

Events

In October, FRH organised a webinar on the Challenges and Opportunities of COVID-19 for Cultural Heritage, held its annual general meeting with members and launched the four pre-conference

working groups that reflect and work on the conference subthemes, producing a paper for each that will be shared during the Biennial Conference "Europe's Living Religious Heritage" that will be held on 27-28 May 2021.



www.frh-europe.org



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



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



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



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



8.4 EFFORTS EUROPE

On 19 November 2020, the European Federation of FORTified Sites (EFFORTS) organised its 4th Annual Congress with the city of Oudenaarde (Belgium) and was entirely digital. At its congress, EFFORTS announced its survey on the socio-economic impact of fortified heritage. It constitutes the start of a future study about what the European fortification heritage sector is worth in employment and GDP %. The survey was online until 1 February 2021.



of 2020! We are very happy to have as partners cities, regions, universities, and European organisations **from 23 countries**.

All info on www.efforts-europe.eu.

Frank Petter
Mayor of Bergen op Zoom
President of EFFORTS

 www.efforts-europe.eu

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

 [@effortseurope](https://facebook.com/Effortseurope)

 [@efforts_europe](https://instagram.com/efforts_europe)

At the congress, we showed that EFFORTS did not slow down in 2020. Thanks to the continuous work of our members, EFFORTS cancelled two annual in-person workshops in Sibenik (Croatia) and in Brussels, co-organised by the European Week of Cities and Regions, following the framework of our European Funding Professionals Network, and switched them to virtual formats. Instead of feeding from the output of the workshops, we brought the protagonists of the cancelled workshops to our congress.

At the 2020 Congress, as we do each year, we presented our third **EFFORTS AWARD** for most innovative **EFFORTS European Fortress Day** participants. The Board was of the opinion that in the situation of COVID-19 and therefore with fewer participants, that the 10 sites who opened their doors and sent out their event report, all should be awarded the prize.

Finally, EFFORTS membership touched the 100 member marker in the autumn months



8.5 European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform

ESPP www.phosphorusplatform.eu promotes sustainable phosphorus management, in particular nutrient recycling. ESPP is 100% membership-fees funded since establishment in 2014.



Phosphorus (P) is on the EU Critical Raw Materials List, and a non-renewable raw material for which Europe is 90% dependent on imports. Without phosphorus in fertilisers and animal feed we could feed maybe 1/5th of the world population¹. But phosphorus losses to the environment are also the biggest (non-morphological) cause of water quality failure in Europe's rivers and lakes.

ESPP has today nearly 50 members from industries such as chemicals, mineral and organic fertilisers, water and waste management, recycling technologies, as well as R&D projects, knowledge institutes and public organisations. ESPP is a not-for-profit association, funded 100% by membership fees, so ensuring answerability and legitimate representation of our members, with no public subsidies.

In 2020, ESPP participated in a range of nutrient-related expert groups, policy and regulatory developments, e.g. on fertilisers, chemicals, raw materials, circular economy, health, water policy, waste regulation, aquaculture, R&D and Horizon Europe, the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. We work with, communicate, and welcome input from, a wide and active network of

organisations, companies and experts interested in nutrient stewardship and recycling.

Over 95% of phosphorus use is in agriculture, and ESPP moved our legal address and administration to ELO in 2019 because of this coherence.

ESPP's 2020 actions included:

- Summaries of current scientific knowledge linking nutrients to **climate change** and **methane emissions** (with US **Sustainable Phosphorus Alliance**).
- Catalogue of operational phosphorus recovery technologies, with **Netherlands Nutrient Platform** and **German Phosphorus Platform**.
- Ongoing **input** to the EU Fertilising Products Regulation 2019/1009, in particular criteria for recycled nutrient materials such as recovered phosphate salts, ashes, biochars, algae, ammonium salts ...
- Phosphate rock and 'Phosphorus' (P₄) renewed on **4th version** of EU Critical Raw Materials List. Co-organisation with JRC of **industry dialogue** on strategic chemical industry uses of P₄.

- Update on **iron-phosphorus chemistry** in wastewater treatment, P-removal and recycling.
- Opening of **dialogue** on the Farm to Fork Strategy target to reduce nutrient losses by 50% by 2030 and **preparation** of input to the future EU Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan.

 www.phosphorusplatform.eu

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

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



¹ Adapted from Dawson & Hilton, Food Policy 2011 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.11.012> - better updated input would be welcome!

8.6 European Heritage Alliance

Together we are stronger, together we are better!

In 2020 the European Heritage Alliance grew to **51 members** with the arrival of the European Fashion Heritage Association and the EUscreen, a consortium of European broadcasters and audio-visual archives.

On 9 May, the Alliance launched its **European Heritage Alliance Manifesto "Cultural Heritage: a Powerful Catalyst for the Future of Europe"**, conveying a strong message of solidarity, hope and unity to Europe's leaders and citizens at a time when Europe and the entire planet were struggling to overcome an unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus. Through this Manifesto, representatives of major European and international heritage networks, which form part of the European Heritage Alliance, expressed the readiness of the wider heritage world to contribute to Europe's immediate social and economic recovery, as well as to the longer-term advancement of the European project. The Manifesto also puts forward **the 7 most important ways in which cultural heritage can act as a catalyst for positive change**.

On 18 November, Europa Nostra –also in its capacity as coordinator of the European Heritage Alliance–, Culture Action Europe and the European Cultural Foundation held the online de-

bate "A Cultural Deal for Europe" and launched the **Joint Statement "A Cultural Deal for Europe: A central place for culture in the EU's post-pandemic future"** one week later. The statement puts forward an overarching and transversal Cultural Deal for Europe, including a series of concrete proposals for realising the potential of culture and heritage as major forces in the EU's socio-economic recovery and its long-term future. The statement has been widely disseminated and conveyed to policy-makers at all levels.

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.

 <https://europeanheritagealliance.eu/>

Credits: European Heritage Alliance / Europa Nostra

Description: Collage of photos from Europa Nostra's two flagship programmes; the 'European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards' and 'The 7 Most Endangered'.



8.7 EPA – European Partnership Association

This long lasting cooperation between the European Landowner's Organization (ELO) and the EPA was established already 8 years ago, in 2012. Since then, ELO has hosted a representative of the EPA on its premises. The EPA is a consortium of six foundations from the Visegrad countries (CZ, SVK, HU, PL) as well as Bulgaria and Romania. Its main goal is to protect the environment and support local communities and society.



Every year the ELO and EPA organise a joint project, the **European Tree of the Year (ETY)** contest. ELO is traditionally an official partner for the Award Ceremony (AC) in the European Parliament in Brussels using its wide range of contacts within the European institutions and Brussels stakeholders to communicate about the ETY contest. This changed last March at the last moment as no public events were allowed in the Parliament. ELO continued its support of the ETY and presented itself during the on-line version of the AC. ELO and EPA proved its strong link and will to continue its cooperation.

ELO is also responsible for the participation of Belgium in the ETY when coordinating the participation of SBNL Vlaanderen (SBNL-V), ELO, ANB, Landelijk Vlaanderen, de Bosgroepen, Société Royale de Forestière and BOS+. The **Belgian Tree of the Year** is organised with financial support from Fonds Baillet Latour.

Following the success of the ETY contest, EPA members started a new campaign relating to the Commission's tree planting initiative (3 billion new trees by 2030). **"Planting for the future"** aims to encourage the planting of one new tree beyond its forests per inhabitant of its country. There is a high-level conference planned as a joint event

with the ETY AC. Organised by EPA and ELO, targeting the European Commission, the European Parliament, Brussels NGOs and stakeholders as well as other ongoing tree planting initiatives. Participants will discuss their views on how they can

contribute to reach the goal of 3 billion trees. ELO will play a leading part in this discussion.

 www.environmentalpartnership.org



8.8 Rural Coalition

2020 started with an event on “Amplifying the local voices”, co-organized by The Rural Coalition.

This event was another opportunity to highlight the importance of a strong rural development and CAP budget at a time when rural communities face existential threats due to rural exodus and an increasing urban-rural divide.

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. The new policies being developed, such as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the post-2020 European Biodiversity Strategy or the long-term vision for rural areas, also need to consider their voices in building a more sustainable future.



For that purpose, the Rural Coalition publish an open letter to EU decision-makers, calling for the EU to value the diversity of its rural areas and set up an ambitious strategy for their development starting with providing adequate public support.

In 2021, the Coalition will remain 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.

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-COGECA - 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





9

Perspectives

Perspectives

We look forward to next year and as we will have more room to organise events and network with our members as the COVID-19 vaccine brings normality back to society. We welcome our way of life resuming, maximising our potential to have a positive impact on the countryside, promoting biodiversity and sustainability in an economically sound manner.

With our sights set on working with more universities in the coming year to strengthen our knowledge and promote awareness on topics related to biodiversity, agriculture and the rural economy. We will continue to push to develop our network and support our members with their worries and needs and create an impact for them.

Among the key issues, as the CAP reform goes on, agricultural policy will remain critical for ELO to work on. We intend to support our members regarding their own respective national strategic plans and provide guidance wherever necessary.

We will continue to strive for an appropriate forestry strategy, on both a policy level and ground level, that benefits the environment and increases biodiversity while also providing for our society in a sustainable manner. For this reason, we will actively work representing the interests of landowners and foresters that are committed to protecting our countryside.

Land Access continues to be a central topic and area of concern as property and land rights can lead to market distortions and discriminatory policies. To promote legal stability we will continue to advocate for fair access to land suitable for agricultural and forestry practices.

Despite the limitations of this year, our Wildlife Estates Label was able to grow, and we will carry on expanding the network across the countryside promoting sustainable land management that strengthens the biodiversity of our landscapes. Inspired by the success of Wildlife Estates, we are looking into developing an agricultural counterpart called Agrilife. With Agrilife we aim to create a network of landowners and farmers that are committed to sustainable farming practices with a focus on enhancing the biodiversity and quality of land within and around the farm.

As the Forum for the Future of Agriculture reshapes itself into a digital event, we look forward to the opportunities that come with digitalization as we will be able to reach a broader audience than before. With this broader audience, the forum will explore a more global outlook on our food system, while still remaining a central platform for dialogue on European agriculture, food and rural development policy.



Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACE	: Architects' Council of Europe	EFFORTS	: European Federation of Fortified Sites
AECPG	: Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods	EHHA	: European Historic Houses Association
ANB	: Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos	EIP	: European Innovation Partnership
BAALO	: Bulgarian Association of Agricultural Landowners	ENRD	: European Network for Rural Development
BCE	: Butterfly Conservation Europe	EP	: European Parliament
CAP	: Common Agricultural Policy	EPA	: Environmental Partnership Association
CEMA	: European Agricultural Machinery Association	EPF	: European Property Federation
CGBN	: Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature	EPBD	: Energy Performance of Buildings Directive
CIC	: International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation	ELO	: European Landowners' Organization
CO2	: Carbon Dioxide	ENVI	: European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
DG EAC	: Directorate General - Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	ETC	: European Travel Commission
DNK	: German Cultural Heritage Committee	EU	: European Union
DPW	: Dairy Processing Waste	EWBP	: European Willow Breeding Programme
EAL	: European Agricultural Landscapes	FACE	: European Federation for Hunting and Conservation & Conservation
EBRD	: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
EC	: European Commission	FCS	: Friends of the Countryside
ECTN	: European Cultural Tourism Network	FFA	: Forum for the Future of Agriculture
ECJ	: European Court of Justice	FRH	: Future for Religious Heritage
ED	: Endocrine Disruption		

GHG	: Greenhouse Gas	PNi	: Pollinator Network initiative
GIS	: Geographic Information System	RI	: Research Infrastructure
GMO	: Genetically Modified Organism	RISE	: Rural Investment Support for Europe
H2020	: Horizon 2020	SBNL	: Stichting Natuur Behoud en Leefmilieu
IAS	: Invasive Alien Species	SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
IEA	: Institutio di Ecologia Applicata	SME	: Small to Medium Enterprise
INTERREG	: European Regional Development Fund	SOS	: Safe Operating Space
IT	: Information Technology	SPK	: German Cultural Heritage Committee
IUCN	: International Union for Conservation of Nature	SRFB	: Société Royale Forestière de Belgique
LCIE	: Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe	SRI	: Smart Readiness Indicator
LIFE	: LIFE Programme	STEN	: Sustainability Tool for Europe and Neighbouring countries
LL	: Living Labs	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	WEW	: Welcoming Estates Website
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation	WFP	: World Food Programme
OIA	: Open Innovation Arrangement	WWF	: World Wildlife Fund
PLAID	: Peer-to-Peer learning - Accessing Innovation through Demonstration	YFCS	: Young Friends of the Countryside
PMID	: Persons with Mild Intellectual Disabilities		

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