

COCO PROJECT

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PRESS RELEASE

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN–WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

Voices from Across Europe’s Rural Landscapes

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Across Europe, people are finding new ways to share land with wildlife, from open pastures to forest edges and mountain valleys. The CoCo project is examining how coexistence plays out in practice by collecting and analysing insights from those directly involved: pastoralists, hunters, landowners and environmental actors. Together, these perspectives paint a fuller picture of how coexistence can be fair, sustainable and locally grounded.

The initiative is coordinated by the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), which is leading research with hunters, landowners and environmental professionals. The initiative is supported by the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE), who are helping to ensure that diverse voices are represented across participating countries. The work complements field interviews being carried out with pastoralists in several CoCo case study regions.

Listening to All Stakeholders

The 30-40 minute questionnaire explores how different groups experience and manage coexistence between livestock and wildlife. It looks at values and perceptions of nature, interactions among local actors and approaches to balancing conservation with land use. Responses have begun to highlight common challenges and shared priorities, from the need for dialogue between communities and conservation bodies, to growing interest in practical, fair solutions that respect both livelihoods and ecosystems.

“Every actor experiences coexistence differently,” says Juliette Young, Senior Researcher at INRAE. “By listening to farmers, hunters, landowners and environmental professionals together, we can understand their concerns and find common ground. These insights will help shape effective coexistence strategies that work for both people and wildlife.”

Shared Knowledge for Fairer Solutions

The information collected will remain fully anonymous and will form the basis for scientific analyses and reports to the European Commission, as well as open-access publications available on the CoCo project website. Data will be handled according to French and European data protection laws, ensuring full transparency and ethical oversight.

The insights generated will guide forthcoming recommendations for coexistence measures and contribute to public discussions across Europe. Through this research, CoCo continues its mission to bridge science, policy and practice, supporting dialogue, understanding and tangible action for coexistence across Europe's diverse landscapes.

Follow the project's progress and stay informed about new findings at <https://cocoproject.eu/>.

For online questionnaire related questions please write to coco-questionnaire@inrae.fr.