

Key discussions and Board renewal at the ELO General Assembly in Dublin



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As per tradition, ELO members gathered in Dublin on 2 June for the General Assembly held every six months ahead of the incoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, this time in the run-up to the Irish Presidency beginning on 1 July. Discussions with public authorities and ELO's local network focused on geopolitics, fertiliser prices, CAP reform, biodiversity and forestry. The debate on financing the transition and addressing livestock-related challenges continued during the regional ForumforAg.

Tassos HANIOTIS, Adviser for Sustainable Productivity at ForumforAg, shared his perspective on the pressures facing EU agriculture. He noted that the global agri-trade landscape has shifted structurally, with Brazil and the EU emerging as trade winners while the U.S. has become an increasingly significant net loser, partly due to its reliance on bulk commodities.

At the same time, fertiliser and energy costs have risen sharply and become increasingly volatile. Europe's main challenge, he argued, is a widening cost squeeze, with energy and fertiliser prices remaining structurally higher than in the U.S. because of Europe's natural gas disadvantage.

According to HANIOTIS, improving sustainable productivity will require greater use of precision farming and more efficient, high-quality fertilisers. The technologies already exist, but their uptake remains limited by insufficient policy incentives and regulatory barriers.

Geopolitics, regulation and competitiveness

These issues were further discussed during the *tour de table* led by Secretary General Jurgen TACK. Members highlighted how the war in Ukraine, tensions in the Middle East, shifting U.S. policies and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are increasing supply risks and cost pressures for European farmers.

At the same time, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states are investing heavily in agricultural production and technology to reduce their dependence on external suppliers. Successive crises - from COVID-19 to war, trade tensions and energy insecurity - have created an increasingly uncertain environment for farmers and landowners.

Members also warned that excessive regulation can delay access to agricultural innovation, with technologies developed in Europe sometimes reaching the market faster elsewhere. They called for practical and proportionate implementation of



the EUDR and Nature Restoration Regulation, balancing environmental ambition with the economic viability of farms and rural businesses.

Discussions on the proposed CAP and MFF reforms also addressed capping, degressivity and the stronger focus on smaller farms. Members stressed that competitiveness and productivity must remain central alongside social and environmental objectives. ELO members were also encouraged to contribute to consultations on the stress test of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

Board renewal

The General Assembly re-elected Thierry de l'ESCAILLE as ELO President and renewed the Board. We warmly congratulate all those elected and thank the Irish Landowners Organisation and Historic Houses of Ireland for their invaluable support in organising the event.

The next ELO GA will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania from 23 to 25 November, 2026.