



Activity Report 2021



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JOHN DEERE



streaming media facilities



ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

Table of contents

ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

| | |
|-------|---|
| INDEX | 2 |
|-------|---|

| | |
|----------|---|
| FOREWORD | 4 |
|----------|---|



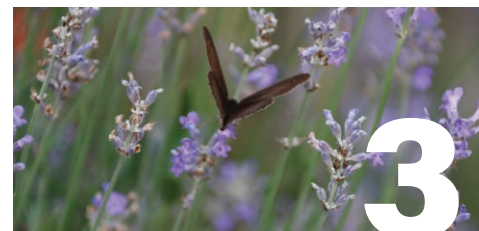
1 THE ELO FAMILY 6

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



2 ISSUES AND POLICIES 13

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 The European Green Deal | 14 |
| 2.2 Biodiversity Strategy | 15 |
| 2.3 Carbon Farming | 17 |
| 2.4 COP26 | 18 |
| 2.5 Digital Farming | 19 |
| 2.6 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) | 20 |
| 2.7 Natural resources – EU Soil Strategy | 21 |
| 2.8 Forestry | 22 |
| 2.9 Farm to Fork Strategy | 23 |
| 2.10 Fit for 55 | 24 |
| 2.11 Innovation | 25 |
| 2.12 Land Access and Property Rights | 26 |



3 PROJECTS AND NETWORKS 27

| | |
|---|----|
| 3.1 Life Land Is For Ever | 28 |
| 3.2 eNatura2000 | 29 |
| 3.3 European Networks for Private Land Conservation | 30 |
| 3.4 Wildlife Estates Label | 31 |
| 3.5 AgriLife | 32 |
| 3.6 AGRIWATER | 33 |
| 3.7 FARMID | 34 |
| 3.8 REWARD | 35 |
| 3.9 Land Mobility | 36 |
| 3.10 FARCURA | 37 |
| 3.11 HERIT | 38 |
| 3.12 SOILGUARD | 39 |
| 3.13 SAFEGUARD | 40 |
| 3.14 FERTIMANURE | 41 |
| 3.15 CONSOLE | 42 |
| 3.16 ALL-READY | 43 |
| 3.17 WATER2RETURN | 44 |
| 3.18 UNISECO | 45 |
| 3.19 BIOPLAT-EU | 46 |
| 3.20 COUPLED | 47 |
| 3.21 REFLOW ETN | 48 |
| 3.22 TerraNova | 49 |
| 3.23 MICROSERVICES | 50 |
| 3.24 CARBON CONNECTS | 51 |
| 3.25 BioWILL | 52 |



4 ELO AWARDS

53

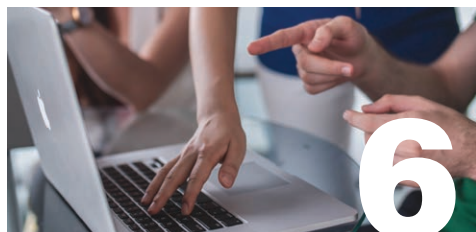
- | | |
|--|----|
| 4.1 European Bee Award | 54 |
| 4.2 Belleuropa Award | 55 |
| 4.3 The Land and Soil Management Award | 56 |
| 4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year 2021 | 57 |



5 EVENTS

58

- | | |
|--|----|
| 5.1 ForumforAg2021 Month of March | 59 |
| 5.2 ForumforAg2021 Regional Portugal Edition | 60 |
| 5.3 ForumforAg2021 France Regional Edition | 61 |
| 5.4 The ForumforAg's UNFSSID, Transatlantic Panel & EU Green Deal Debate | 62 |
| 5.5 ELO General Assemblies in 2021 | 63 |
| 5.6 European Biodiversity Conference 2021 | 64 |
| 5.7 Innovation conference | 65 |
| 5.8 1 st Farming Biodiversity Summit | 66 |
| 5.9 European Tree of the Year 2021 | 67 |
| 5.10 Insights from EU Projects | 68 |



6 COMMUNICATION AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

69

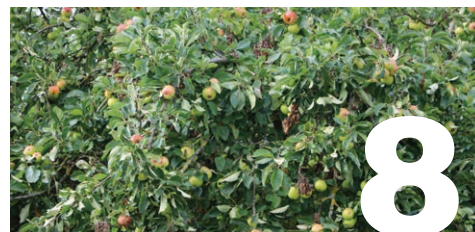
- | | |
|--|----|
| 6.1 CountrySide Magazine | 70 |
| 6.2 ELO Online | 71 |
| 6.3 Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe | 72 |



7 COOPERATION WITH THE EU INSTITUTIONS

73

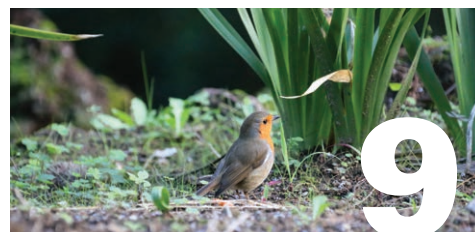
- | | |
|--|----|
| 7.1 Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" | 74 |
| 7.2 The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores | 75 |



8 PARTNERS

77

- | | |
|---|----|
| 8.1 The European Historic Houses Association | 78 |
| 8.2 EUROPA NOSTRA: For a New European Renaissance | 79 |
| 8.3 Future for Religious Heritage | 80 |
| 8.4 EFFORTS EUROPE | 81 |
| 8.5 EPA – European Partnership Association | 82 |
| 8.6 EUROPEAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE | 83 |
| 8.7 European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform | 84 |
| 8.8 Rural Coalition | 85 |



9 PERSPECTIVES

86



Foreword

ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

4

This year was a testament to humankind's resilience and adaptability, much like nature's. The past year has been turbulent to say the least, with wave after wave of COVID-19 sweeping the globe. While the end of the pandemic seems within reach, it is not the first time either. We have somewhat grown accustomed to these bouts of restrictions, to the extraordinary becoming ordinary.

The economic recovery of 2021 came along with severe supply chain issues and an unprecedented surge in energy prices, affecting all sectors. All the while, farmers and foresters planted, harvested, and the ELO team continued to defend their interest, sometimes online, more often in person, as much as possible.

The team had to battle on many fronts to preserve the livelihood of landowners, while allowing them to play their part in mitigating climate change and biodiversity loss. 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.

The debate about the European Green Deal is ongoing, and for rural entrepreneurs, there is no business outside the environment. Whether they are farmers, foresters or hunters or those creating value through agri-tourism, the countryside entrepreneur is wholly reliant on ecosystem services. It is therefore strange that public authorities have neglected private actors and prefer to rely on rules, regulations, and coercion to deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity. As expected, this has not secured the trust and cooperation of land managers and more should be done to work with them through public-private partnerships.

As an organisation, we strive for a society where confidence can be given to our rural actors rather than targets and standards that are often made incredibly challenging to meet without concrete supportive tools. This should amount to creating a marketplace for ecosystem services wherein

voluntary cooperation prevails over government regulation. Such goals for achieving green growth, however, can only be met if private owners obtain the right support. The risk is that imposed obligations for rural actors do not provide them with the opportunity to evolve in a marketplace. Activities can only be sustainable if they strike a balance between all three pillars therefore the social and economic perspective must be accounted for as well or our countryside could face further economic challenges.





This ecosystem services approach lies at the heart of our philosophy. We are incredibly proud of what we have done to support rural actors with initiatives such as our Wildlife Estates label that covers over two million hectares across Europe. To complement the WE we have created its farming counterpart, Agrilife, which is currently in development and aims to reward farmers for protecting biodiversity. Because we need to put the rural actors back at the center of policy-making, and move away from dogma, towards result-oriented indicators of sustainability.

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.



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

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

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



activities through countless projects and initiatives.

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



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

Soil was at the heart of the RISE Foundation's work in 2021.

The RISE Foundation officially launched its work on soil in 2021. The idea for the project comes out of a recognition that soil is at the heart of every subject that RISE tackles – on nutrient recovery, livestock, crop protection and so on. It is evident that no amount of new regulations or innovations can be truly effective in reducing the impact of agriculture on the environment or climate unless the degradation and loss of European soils is reversed.

This is not a new discovery or idea for policy makers either. It was over a decade ago that RISE Chairman Janez POTOČNIK tried to push through a Soil Directive during his term as European Commissioner for the Environment. Since then the matter of our soils has only increased in urgency as evidence grows concerning the linkages between climate change, resilience and food security.

It is precisely because it is not a new idea that RISE saw the need to try and take a fresh look at soil. If we are well aware of the urgency to address soil health, and solutions are already there, why are the indicators showing an ongoing decline?

Through the work carried out in 2021 which will continue into 2022, RISE is trying to understand what is holding farmers back from investing in their soils and better understand what will be

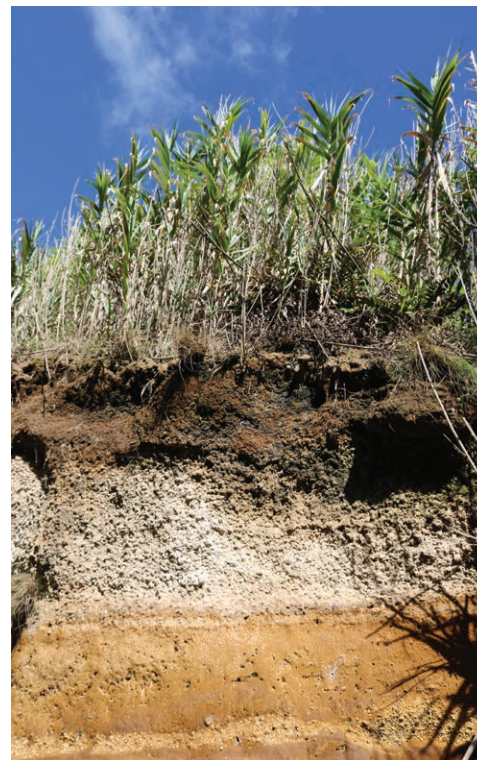
the key drivers to make change going forward. Through research, interviews with soil initiatives across Europe and a series of stakeholder workshops, RISE hopes to bring greater clarity to this issue in order to help policy makers create the change needed to finally jump start a Europe wide transition.

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 policy-makers 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 organisation consisting of over 700 like-minded private landowners, rural managers, and entrepreneurs from 27 countries stretching from the Rockies to the Urals. Through innovative, regenerative and sustainable practices, this network promotes the long-term interests of their land. The FCS can ensure that their voice is heard throughout the European Union and beyond through the European Landowners' Organization platform.



The annual General Assembly is the year's highlight for members to gather in a beautiful and historic city and share agricultural innovations and practices. In the words of FCS president, Michael SALM ZU SALM, *'What a Joy!'* it was to finally gather, after a 2½ year absence, for a most successful FCS 24th General Assembly in Córdoba, Spain in October. At the GA 19 new members and 3 new board members were approved. Representing members in Sweden is Caroline NORDENFALK BIELKE; for Hungary is Ilonka JANKOVICH, and; for Bulgaria is Galina PEYCHEVA MITEVA. Thanks were given to FCS Board members Jack TENISON HANBURY and Ross MURRAY for hosting the first small scale Study Tour in Abergavenny, Wales, in September.

The theme of the Conference **Biodiversity and the Culture of Water** opened with an introduction by FCS Board member Emilio NAVARRO-MARTINEZ. Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO, EU Director-General of Legal Services, made a video presentation to stress the importance of biodiversity and the role of water. The special guest at the conference was Luis PLANAS, the Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. He insisted

that three elements are needed: "Time, Money, Engagement" and "Sustainability does not exist without profitability". He addressed members, saying, "You are the key to our future".

FCS announced that the 25th Jubilee General Assembly will be held in Évora, Portugal, from June 9 to 12, 2022. Thanks to FCS Board member Jack TENISON HANBURY, a small scale Study Tour will take place in Ireland next September.

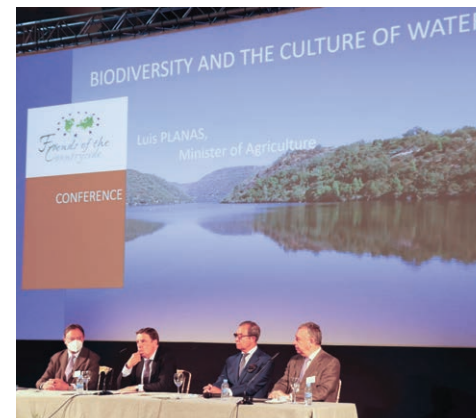
🌐 www.friendsofthecountryside.org

Contact:

✉ coordination@elo.org

✉ events@elo.org

With the support of



FCS Conference.

From L to R : Antonio MELGAREJO, Marquès de Melgarejo;
Luis PLANAS PUCHADES, Nicolás DE BARI MILLÁN CRUZ,
Thierry de l'ESCAILLE.

1.4 The Welcoming Estates

The Welcoming Estates Website (WEW) is a unique hospitality platform that showcases private country estates located throughout Europe 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 Friends of the Countryside (FCS) Vice President, Seger VAN VOORST TOT VOORST. In 2020 the FCS took over the administration which led to a simplified user-friendly website and an easier joining procedure for FCS members to add their estates. As a result, nine new estates were added

in 2021. We encourage members of the Friends to join, as this increases the visibility of their estate and so attracts visitors to experience the activities on offer.

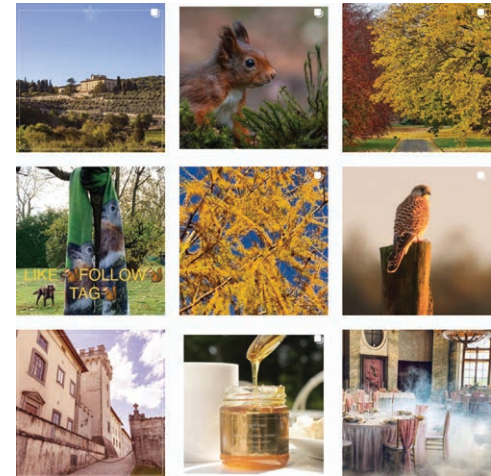
Activities on member estates took off this year as estates opened their gates once more for a wide range of activities including weddings, concerts, overnight stays, fine dining, hunting or just a lovely day out in the countryside for a walk, bike ride or picnic! Estates also offer natural burial sites, online purchase of wine, olive oil and estate produce, various courses to follow, museums to visit or mazes, tree houses, spas and riding - the list is endless!

The best way to follow recent developments is on our successful social media platforms on Instagram and Facebook, while the Welcoming Estates Website gives an overview of all that is on offer at each estate. If you are interested in including your activity that is open to the public.

Contact:

✉ events@elo.org

*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

For the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS), 2021 proved to be a very busy and successful year, driven by the General Assembly with 50 Young Friends attending, two online webinars with a large audience, a fantastic winner of our entrepreneurship prize, the FAMIGRO Award, participation at the Forum for the Future of Agriculture and supporting a hackathon at Rabobank.



At the start of 2021, adjusting to the pandemic conditions, YFCS hosted the webinar "Brexit Briefing", which attracted great interest from both YFCS and FCS members. This was followed by

YFCS board members supporting the hackathon "Food4Future" at Rabobank, where teenagers were helped to develop new business ideas in the field of food.

Then the Young Friends joined the virtual FFA, representing their members and giving their members a platform to discuss with other decision makers.





Furthermore, the Young Friends received many and very exciting applications for the FAMIGRO Award, which gives a prize of € 5,000 to the most promising rural start-up. The prize is sponsored by Karl GROTFELT and we are very privileged to have FCS Board Member Karl GROTFELT's support! The prize for 2021 was awarded to Alfonso CHICO DE GUZMÁN and his project "La Junquera Regenerative Farm and Entrepreneurship HUB". Alfonso has already managed the family farm alone for 4 years and has implemented regenerative farming practices. In addition, La Junquera is a hub for young agricultural entrepreneurs, beekeepers and also for natural wine producers.

In the summer, the Young Friends hosted their next webinar "Solving Problems with Tech in the Countryside". This webinar hosted some very interesting discussions with already very successful founders in the large field of agritech.

Last, but certainly not least, the General Assembly of the Young Friends took place in Córdoba, southern Spain, together with the Friends of the Countryside. 50 Young Friends joined, making the General Assembly a very memorable weekend. During the weekend, the Young Friends visited the Castillo Almodóvar del Río. While Eva MOREJÓN introduced the Young Friends to the history of the castle, Jose María HERRERO FERNÁNDEZ DE MESA gave an insight into the world of hounds. Juan Antonia PARRILLA GONZÁLEZ, Marketing Director at Picualia, explained the benefits of top-quality extra virgin olive oil and the great benefits of high-quality Spanish EVO oil. Finally, the Young Friends were invited to El Paralejo Estate by Claudia NAVARRO LÓPEZ and her family, who

very generously opened their home for the Young Friends. The Young Friends were introduced to Spanish culture, of which a traditional bullfight capea and a typical Andalusian lunch under Spanish Oak trees proved to be the absolute highlight!

At this point, the Young Friends would like to thank everyone who has supported us in 2021 – we are extremely grateful to every single person, thank you for joining us, speaking at our webinars and for supporting us in every possible way! We are very excited about 2022 and a few dates and events are already set – please spread the word about the FAMIGRO Award and save the date for the Assembly in Evora 2022! From January 2022, the YFCS will become part of FCS.



www.yfcs.eu



info@yfcs.eu



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



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



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

A wide-angle photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path with visible tire tracks leads from the bottom left towards the middle ground. To the left of the path stands a large, mature, leafy green tree. To the right of the path is a vast field of golden wheat, ready for harvest. In the background, there is a line of trees and a few small buildings, possibly a farm or a village, under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and idyllic.

Issues and policies

2.1 The European Green Deal

The European Green Deal frames the EU's programme, not only with the publication of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, but with the Fit for 55 and the new Forest Strategy presented in July and the EU Soil Strategy to 2030 presented in November. The Green Deal continues to focus the policy agenda on climate, sustainability and biodiversity, and on the legislation affecting rural areas, often forgetting the initial objective of it being a "Growth Strategy".

Land-based activities can make a difference in the Green Deal plan for Europe, mostly by contributing to its bio and circular economies and in achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. However, the revision of the LULUCF and Renewable Legislation have a conservationist approach rather than focusing on the sector's importance in a carbon neutral economy. In the Fit for 55 package, the proposal for a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) was the initiative that showed some fresh thinking towards promoting those who are making more efforts to be sustainable. The ELO will follow closely the discussion in 2022, particularly as it will take centre stage in the French Presidency.

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 but with little regard to their viability and cumulative impacts. Therefore, it is now more

important than ever to focus on win-win solutions, generally anchored in knowledge and innovation.

The ELO will continue to participate constructively in the legislative proposals resulting from these strategies.



If we are serious about the urgency to push for systemic transformation to achieve goals set by the Paris Climate Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact, Sustainable Development Goals, and the Convention of Biological Diversity, we need to be equally serious about its scale and the tools available to achieve it. The scale of the challenges we face are global and therefore need to be considered within the global context, in a way that prevents leakages and ensures the transition to a sustainable producing system. Even if 30% of the 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

2.2 Biodiversity Strategy

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 was published in May 2020. In the meantime the European Commission together with the European Environment Agency developed a guidance note to Member States on how to select and prioritise species/habitats for the 30% conservation improvement target under the strategy (June 2021).

The ELO believes the target of 30% status improvement will not be reached without the improvement and promotion of voluntary measures for conservation initiatives on private land. For that reason, ELO recommended to opt for a broad set of voluntary private land conservation tools at EU level to effectively safeguard biodiversity in protected areas.

With the support of the Life programme under the project “Land Is For Ever”, the ELO reviewed existing and innovative voluntary instruments and agreement types and presented to the European Commission a list of instruments supported from the individual landowners’ perspective. These instruments come with necessary financial mechanisms and funding sources which are crucial to improve the effectiveness of European funding for biodiversity. The ELO proposed to focus on existing funds, while making sure they are made available by public authorities in due time, without complex binding rules and in sufficient amounts to make them interesting enough to have an impact. ELO recommends the use of product and ecosystem based solutions, including tax benefits, credit schemes and annual payments. The development of additional markets might be required to reconcile the need for long-term annual compensations with the current system of the 7-years terms budget, in particular the CAP. Developing and providing payments for ecosystem services in line with market practice can make nature conservation an economically feasible and sustainable land use.

A second guidance note was finalized October 2021 by the Commission on the criteria for protected areas designation. ELO welcomed the acknowledgement that “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs) have an important role to play in reaching the targets of the protected network. OECMs are defined by some form of legal protection not related to the protection of habitats and species (e.g. areas designated for water protection,



flood prevention areas, military areas with restricted access, fisheries restriction measures, offshore wind farms, underwater cables sites), but indirectly promoting the conservation of biodiversity. Therefore an OECD can offer a private landowner the possibility to contribute voluntarily to the conservation targets without additional requirements.

To strengthen this potential the ELO submitted a draft technical note to the Commission to not only recognize areas covered by a national or international legal or administrative act as a potential OECD, but also areas which are covered by voluntary contractual agreements aiming long-term conservation outcomes. This addition was accepted and added to the definition of the OECD in the guidance note.



The guidance note however confirms that many strictly protected areas under the 10% strict protection target will be nonintervention areas, where only limited and well-controlled activities will be allowed including scientific research, natural disaster prevention, invasive alien species control, non-intrusive activities and installations, non-intrusive and strictly controlled recreational activities, when such activities are compatible with the conservation objectives of the areas on the basis of a case by case assessment. Active management will only be allowed where this is necessary to sustain, enhance or restore natural processes and values. Site-specific management plans or equivalent management tools will need to identify which activities are compatible with the strict protection of the site and under which conditions. ELO expressed its concerns that this could lead to effective bans of needed management measures or could push the owners towards a burdensome system of exceptions. On top of that all such activities need to be regulated, controlled and enforced.

2.3 Carbon Farming

As the soil is at the core of landowners' activities, the European Landowners' Organization believes that carbon farming offers its members a new opportunity to grow food even more sustainably and play an important role in mitigating the climate crisis.

Carbon farming refers to the management of carbon sinks, streams and greenhouse gas flows, with the aim of mitigating climate change. This includes the management of both land and livestock, all carbon pools in soils, materials and vegetation, plus the fluxes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄), as well as nitrous oxide (N₂O).

On 26 January 2021, ELO, under coordination of KULeuven, submitted **the FarmCarbon project** (H2020-LC-GD-6-1-2020) that aims to increase agriculture-based carbon sequestration and storage in soils to achieve healthy soils and climate-neutral agriculture by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. FarmCarbon aims to support this effort through pilot projects and demonstrations of the underlying practices and the scaling up of an innovative, results-oriented soil management scheme. The project received a score of 14/15 with congratulations from the jury, but was ultimately not retained. But not to worry. The project has put ELO on the map as a professional and credible partner in the discussion on carbon farming.

On 14 July 2021, the Commission set ambitious targets under the 2030 Climate Target Plan with the publication of **the "Fit for 55%" package**, increasing emission reduction targets in several sectors including agriculture, forestry, land use and land use change (AFOLU). The agriculture and forestry sector will become the first net greenhouse gas-free sector by 2035. This sector will then generate carbon credits from 2036 to offset remaining emissions in other sectors based on a robust carbon credit certification system.

On 2 September 2021, the European Landowners' Organization presented its **leadership paper** on Carbon Farming to a select audience of private and public institutions, leading to a policy discussion on how to seize the opportunity and make Carbon Farming a reality on the European market.

It is clear that if carbon farming is to play a substantial role in creating sustainable and resilient carbon cycles, its development and scaling up in Europe (and beyond) must take a number of factors into due consideration. These include, at a minimum, agreement on the definition of carbon farming and the (regenerative agriculture) practices that qualify, the establishment of robust, harmonised standards and an approach to monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) that can maintain the trust and support of a wide range of stakeholders and provide certainty for investment.

The EU Communication **"Sustainable Carbon Cycles"** published on 15 December 2021 limits carbon farming to carbon sequestration in living biomass, dead organic matter and soil. Using this narrow definition is highly problematic, as carbon sequestration also involves emissions and the whole balance must be taken into account. On the other hand, the EU Commission will consider



further integration of carbon removal into the EU regulatory and compliance framework. Farmers' efforts will be rewarded with public and private financial incentives. A robust MRV will play a key role. Harmonisation of calculation methods is central to this, as is clarification of the issue of avoiding double declarations in national inventories and related reports. Finally, the EU Commission sees interesting opportunities for bio-based products, i.e. expansion of the category "Harvested Wood Products" to include bio-based materials from fibres such as flax, hemp and others. Finally, the European Commission will develop a regulatory framework to monitor and verify the authenticity of carbon removals in agriculture (and forestry), to be published by the end of 2022.

2.4 COP26

In 2021, we finally saw the COP26 UN Climate Summit taking place, putting on paper what needs to be done to achieve a climate-neutral society. ELO supports the goal of modernising all sectors of the economy to become more energy-efficient and climate-resilient.

ELO was present at the COP26, which took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021, and considered what needs to be done in the months leading to COP27, which will take place in the autumn of 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

The Earth is still on course for an estimated 2.4 degrees of warming above pre-industrial levels compared to the Paris target of 1.5 degrees. Limiting the warming by 1.5 degrees would require 45 per cent cuts in the 2010 levels of emissions by 2030, equivalent to two years of current annual emissions. **It is now widely thought that it will be necessary to bring forward net zero from 2050 to 2040.** ELO is fully aware of the various challenges ahead, as the repercussions of climate change on our rural areas are evident. Recent years show, without any doubt, the hugely detrimental effects of heatwaves, with extended drought periods, floods, pest and disease outbreaks and a new trend of mega-fires.

As climate policy moves from cleaning up the energy sector into systemic, economy-wide mode; to tackle methane emissions coming from the fossil fuel industry and livestock; to end deforestation by 2030, to increase soil organic matter, the challenges, both for mitigation and adaptation, have never been greater. Climate has reached a tipping

point and the current decade is expected to prove decisive. The year ahead will be especially critical if policymakers are to rise to these challenges in time.

Forestry and harvest

ELO is aware of voices opposed to the harvest of timber. The origins of this issue lies with its association with deforestation in the developing world, which is a different type of discussion, even if often conflated. As in the previous years, we will actively participate in that debate in the months to come to advocate for the Sustainable Forest Management and to increase the carbon sequestration, storage and the substitution capacity of forests and forest products.

The COP26 position paper is available on ELO website.



2.5 Digital Farming

One of the major topics in land management and agriculture is and will continue to be digitising farming activities. Digital farming is key in reaching environmental goals, as it helps enhance efficiency, boost production and reduce input volumes.

With the entry into force of the new Common Agricultural Policy in 2023, advancements in digital farming will play a pivotal role in shaping a greener and more sustainable future for the entire sector. This is why, in ELO's view, innovation funds should be thoroughly used to make progress in this area through research projects, data sharing to benefit the agricultural sector as a whole and better access to public data.



During the EIP-AGRI meetings ELO took part in 2021, the importance of digital technologies for agriculture was frequently stressed. Data-based solutions can benefit farmers by providing better precision, efficiency and sustainability, overall increasing farm performance. An important issue that was raised was farmers' need for relevant data interpretation from the various new technologies they are using on the farm. Therefore, both farmers and advisers need proper skills to interpret data in such a way to make it beneficial for the farm.

However, still large parts of the European countryside are lagging behind in terms of connectivity. High speed internet (broadband, 4G) is still not available in many parts of Europe, making it difficult to implement technology and create networks. It is therefore undeniable that strong public investments should be made in this area to make broadband infrastructure in all European rural areas a reality.

It is ELO's belief that using digital tools to make informed decisions and optimise working flows is the way forward in farming. This is why in 2022 ELO will continue to work on these issues and endorse projects contributing to a better implementation of digital tools in farming.

2.6 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The first half of 2021 was marked by intense trilogue discussions on the CAP post-2020, reaching an informal agreement in June under the Portuguese presidency of the EU Council. This was a major step forward considering that the reform was proposed by the European Commission in 2018. In spite of the delays and the necessity to have transitional arrangements to ensure the continuity of support to landowners and land managers until the end of 2022, the reform is now on track to enter into force on 1 January 2023, running until 2027.

The delays were not only because of the European elections but also due to the Green Deal and the importance to align both policies. Still, the initial aims of a more flexible, performance- and results-based approach that considers local conditions and needs, while increasing the level of EU ambitions in terms of sustainability remain valid. There have been some noticeable changes from the initial proposal, namely the increased relevance of the “eco-schemes” with a mandatory 22% (to 25% in 2025) of all direct payments of the CAP’s first pillar and the introduction of “social conditionality”.

The end of 2021 saw the attention shifting the delegated acts in Brussels and to the drafting of the National CAP Strategic Plans in the different Member states, who had to send in their draft plans by December 31st. The ELO welcomed the recommendations sent by the Commission to each Member State in preparation and a guiding list of potential agricultural practises that eco-schemes could support.

The ELO will continue to follow the process closely in 2022. While not all Member States sent their CAP Strategic Plans on time, the EU Commission expects to be able to analyse the plans in a three-month period and have its verdict by the end of

summer, depending on the quality of the submitted plans.

Our members are invited to continue using our well-established structures, take part in the internal policy meetings and the relevant Civil Dialogue

Groups, to compare national decisions and work towards ensuring a strong agriculture policy that allows for a modern sector ready for the coming challenges.



2.7 Natural resources – EU Soil Strategy

The Green Deal renewed the attention given to natural resources, a discussion that was framed with the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and the EU Action Plan Towards a Zero Pollution Ambition for air, water, and soil, presented in May 2021.

Some of the targets set out in the action plan, follow the line presented in the Farm to Fork Strategy, namely the 50% reduction in pollution from pesticides and nutrient losses in water and soil by 2030. The action plan included the launch of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform, which shall act as a place for common exchange and sharing of good practices in the reduction of pollution. The ELO will follow its activities to make sure that the overall approach does not diminish the ability of farmers and land managers to grow and produce the food and raw materials sustainably. The Zero Pollution ambition conference is scheduled for 2023.

The Soil Health Law is expected also in 2023. This was the major idea introduced in the EU Soil Strategy 2030 that came out in November 2021. As environmental concerns remain high on the public agenda, the commission is confident that, this time, their soil plan will be successful. Ideas of a soil directive remain alive in the commission ever since its initial proposal was blocked by Member States and withdrawal in 2014. By reclaiming the uneven playing field in policy responses in Europe and the transboundary nature of the problem, the commission considers that the best approach is an to present an European proposal to revert the

60 to 70% of soils that are “unhealthy” in the continent. By focusing on the anthropogenic causes, the commission focusses on solutions such as the nature restoration plan to be presented in 2022 and a Soil Health Law to be presented the year after. This law will propose actions such as indicators for soil health, targets for “net land take”, guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (SSM), mandatory reporting and remediation conditions to contaminated sites, among others.

In 2022, the ELO will follow the discussions of the new enlarged Expert Group on Soil Protection and the EU Soil Observatory, to make sure that landowners and land managers’ views are considered in the coming regulations.



2.8 Forestry

2021 was a decisive year for European ambitions on forests. In the context of the Green Deal, the Commission adopted the long-awaited Forest Strategy (July 16, 2021), initiated the adoption of a deforestation-free regulation (November 17, 2021), and is developing guidelines on Closer-to-Nature forestry and biodiversity-friendly afforestation and deforestation, and defining old-growth forest. All emphasise forest preservation at the expense of forest use.

ELO welcomed the political enthusiasm surrounding forests and forestry. Addressing the multiple functions of forests and multiple stakes is indeed necessary to foster forest resilience and promote forest participation to current crises.

While policymakers are convinced of the imperative importance of managing our forests, the developments of the EU cast doubt on their ability to address forest-related stakes. These endeavours prioritise forest preservation. They disregard forest use and sustainable management, which are preconditions for increasing forest resilience and participation in current crises.



ELO encouraged sustainable forest management: it supported a forest owners conference together with stakeholders from public and private sector to share their perspective on the Forest Strategy (October 4, 2021), and issued a joint declaration. Participatory stakeholders and states eventually signed the “Vienna Declaration”, encouraging the Commission to be more transparent and accommodating in the design process and content of its forest measures. ELO also participated in Commission consultations and commented on its guidelines.

ELO will follow up on this stream with key stakeholders. ELO will continue to create awareness about local forestry practises and sensitise EU institutions to the local implications of prioritising forest preservation. ELO is hopeful progress will be made in defining some key concepts, such as “old growth forest” and “forest degradation” to meet its sustainable forest management objectives.

2.9 Farm to Fork Strategy

The Farm to Fork Strategy is one of the main tools by which the European Union wants to achieve its climate neutrality by 2050 through the Green Deal.

In 2021, the European Commission went forward with the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy by proposing several initiatives and action plans such as: Organic Actions Plan, the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, EU Food supply and Food Security Contingency Plan, and the Sustainable food system framework initiative.

Several studies from the sector and academia assessed the impact of the Farm to Fork Strategy on European agriculture and not only. The Commission has also put forward a study (but not a comprehensive impact assessment) conducted by the JRC on the impact of four F2F and Biodiversity Strategy (BDS) targets. The overall results showed that Farm to Fork will have an important impact on European production, trade, food prices, with effects on farmers' income. While authors' recommendations may differ in each study, some conclusions are, if not identical, extremely similar. For example, there will be a decline in overall EU agricultural production and an increase in the third countries output volumes, especially in the case where Europe would be the only one to embrace this philosophy. Moreover, international markets will be affected, with export capacity going significantly down, while the level of imports would increase. Also, food prices will increase, against the background of supply shortages.

ELO has expressed its concerns over the potential impact of blindly implementing this view. In a joint statement, together with the main European organisations, ELO called for a comprehensive assessment to be able to understand where problems are likely to arise, and start a dialogue on the potential solutions. ELO has also organised an expert workshop that explored how the EU Green Deal and its environmental standards will affect the international food sector and livelihoods of farmers in vulnerable rural areas of export nations.

The European Commission has announced in 2021 that it also aims to tackle food security by taking into consideration sustainability objectives throughout the entire food system. To achieve this, DG SANTE has published the roadmap for a Proposal for a Regulation titled Sustainable food system framework initiative. The European Landowners' Organization welcomed the publication of this roadmap, stressing that it is important for European landowners to have EU-wide Marketing Standards that ensure harmonization and a level-playing field for producers' access to the market, while being an important means in tackling food fraud. We called however for special attention to be paid on the definition of eventual minimum standards based on sustainability principles for a fair and just implementation.



In 2022, DG SANTE is expected to start work in a new advisory group focusing on sustainability. Moreover, several legislative initiatives under Farm to Fork are expected to go forward with public consultations - the Sustainable food system framework initiative, the food waste reduction targets, labelling regulation revision. On ELO's side, the priority is to keep an active involvement in European policy elaboration, making sure landowners' voices are being heard. By ensuring an open dialogue on the pivotal aspects of the F2F Strategy, such as trade, innovation, food safety, the goal is to create together with ELO's members and the Commission policies that work not only on paper, but also on the ground.

2.10 Fit for 55

The adoption of the Fit for 55 package paves the way for reducing carbon emissions by at least 55% by 2030. The package gives substance to the Green Deal's objective to become climate neutral by 2050. The European Landowners' Organization has shown how land use activities contribute to carbon emission reduction.

ELO welcomes the endeavour to act upon EU climate law, including energy and land use law to achieve the Green Deal's objectives. The Commission proposed to amend the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation, and the Renewable Energy Directive (RED). These proposals focus on forests, land use activities, carbon storage and how to increase it. Land-use activities and forests are seen as carbon repositories that can offset other sectors' carbon emissions. This approach neglects the strength of land-use and forest substitution capacities, and puts forests and land use in a glass case, compensating for other sectors without the proper recognition..

ELO emphasised the need to use lands, forests and forest products to address climate-related issues, instead of only preserving forests. It did so by providing answers to Commission consultations and by active participation in webinars and summits, such as the Climate Adaptation summit. ELO argued that leaving aside land and forest use from climate change mitigation prospects will have two dreadful interconnected consequences. First, forest products are the best candidates to substitute fossil products to effectively address carbon emissions. Not using forests will not phase-out fossil materials. Second, protecting forests instead of using them sustainably will diminish forest resilience, in turn



limiting its contribution to climate change mitigation. ELO also addressed these points in the stakeholders' dialogue preceding the Vienna Conference (see: Forestry). Joined by forest owners and interest groups, ELO identified and discussed critical points of the Fit for 55 package. ELO will closely follow these files in the next year, and promote forest product substitution while boosting sequestration and taking into account other environmental concerns.

 <https://www.europeanlandowners.org/about-elo/issues-and-policies/climate-change2021>

2.11 Innovation

As ELO strongly believes in innovation as the way forward in helping agriculture meet the growing global challenges and climate ambitions. Support for new breeding developments on the European market was top priority in 2021.

In January 2018 the European Court of Justice (ECJ) Advocate General provided its opinion that New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) should not be counted as GMO, provided certain technical conditions were met. Unfortunately, the ECJ did not follow its AG's advice and did rule that those organisms obtained by use of NGT technology are in fact genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and are subject to the 2001 EU GMO directive.

In 2019, the European Commission (EC) conducted an in-house study on the status of NGTs through targeted consultations with Member States and EU-level stakeholder organisations such as ELO. According to the results published in 2021, these

techniques might contribute greatly to reaching Green Deal and Farm to Fork (F2F) objectives of innovation and sustainability of the food system and to a more competitive EU. The EC recognizes that NGTs simply represent a technologically advanced way of reproducing what can traditionally be done in conventional breeding, such as target mutagenesis or cis-genesis. The current GMO legislation is thus not fit for purpose. The legislation should be adapted to recent scientific and technological progress.

Based on this evidence, the European Commission has decided to initiate a policy action to enable access to the market for plants derived from targeted mutagenesis and cis-genesis, while ensuring appropriate traceability and labeling.

ELO welcomed this European Commission's initiative and believes it's a much-needed step forward. It has been clear since ECJ Advocate General's opinion in 2018 that the legislation is outdated and it needs to be modified to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving food system.

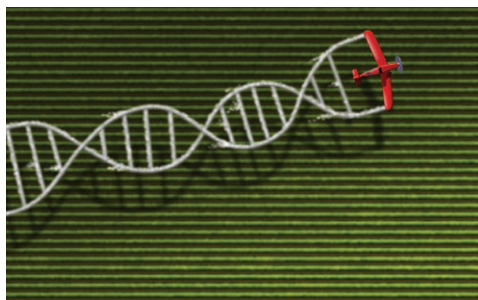
In the feedback to the European Commission, ELO stressed that the EU stands to also lose its competitive advantage should other third countries boost their yields through use of these techniques.

While European farmers would struggle to reach the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity targets without these innovative solutions at hand, non-European farmers could boost their production and hence be profitable while keeping a low-price level.

On commercial use and imports, it is entirely foreseeable that the rest of the world will move ahead with these techniques, much as they have done with GM technology. However, while GM-originated crops such as soy and maize are clearly recognizable and definable at customs due to their distinct genetic characteristics, it will be much less easy or even impossible to detect NGT-derived vs. non-NGT crops as they are genetically identical. This could create massive customs issues, especially regarding animal proteins. Furthermore, should major crops such as cocoa and rice which are primarily grown outside the EU, be enhanced through NGT technology, we will create a consumer-facing situation of lower, more expensive supplies of staple goods.

ELO believes the EU should not be so reluctant to innovate in the sector. NGTs are proved to be different from GM technology and therefore, the approval process should require a less complex procedure, without leaving appropriate traceability and labelling behind. EU law should be able to keep up with scientific developments, while ensuring food safety for its citizens, as well as environmental sustainability.

A public consultation will take place in the first quarter of 2022, after the Commission publishes the policy initiative. ELO will submit an official position paper and will take part in stakeholders' meetings.



2.12 Land Access and Property Rights

**The issue of property rights has been the cornerstone of ELO activities since its creation.
The EU four freedoms - free movement of goods, persons, services and capital - should be applied across all the Member States.**

With 27 different national frameworks there are a number of problems concerning the EU freedoms, specifically free movement of capital where land is a form of capital. We have to be careful not to overregulate the market; liberalised contracts show they are able to stabilise the land market. We need to make sure the access to land is not there just for existing landowners and farmers, but also for future ones. ELO believes that only then, thus in accordance with the rule of law, will ensure well-functioning land and forestry markets, vital for sustainable and profitable European countryside.

Land law has an important role in enabling the capitalisation of the rural economy by the private sector rather than the state. The need for land market regulations is to free up the business structure of the countryside and protect the people who can contribute in a way that is going to allow for a better life for them, as they are not tied to the land, but also as they make a contribution towards net zero emissions. Together with the Wageningen University, KU Leuven and the European Commission, ELO organised in June an online workshop to discuss the newest report on data and information on agricultural land market regulations across EU Member States, published on April 27, 2021.

In addition, on a daily basis, ELO advocates 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. 2021 also kept us busy 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.



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Projects and Networks

3.1 Life Land Is For Ever

Private landowners are a crucial target group to achieve biodiversity related objectives within Europe. This 3-year project under the lead of the ELO combined European-wide surveys, workshops, interviews, webinars and research, to put our insights and ideas on effective conservation tools into concrete policy, ultimately strengthening private land conservation in Europe.



Under the broad definition of 'private land conservation (PLC) tools', many governance arrangements emerge depending on contingents settings, property laws, the role of environmental NGOs and the implementation (or lack) of public policies and incentive mechanisms for the promotion of the tools.

Effective conservation tools make conservation an economically feasible land use while offering flexibility in case of threats undermining the values of the land. The set of tools offered to private landowners should respect the variety of owners and be offered on a voluntary basis.

The engagement in a conservation program should be based on clear and transparent communication and a two-way knowledge exchange in agreeing on a contract.

Application and monitoring requirements should be equal and feasible for both individual owners and NGO's.

Tools and their compensation mechanisms should be organized in a framework which the landowner can trust on the long term. The "permanent" nature of conservation agreements is however in many cases a concern for the landowner if only a one-off compensation can be offered, therefore

the preference goes to annual fees linked to product or service provision.

These factors will now be taken further into consideration within a multi-level governance perspective in discussing the new set of voluntary mechanisms for nature conservation in Europe in the follow-up project, 'European Networks for Private Land Conservation'.

The project brochure and the full set of policy recommendations presented to the EC are available on www.landisforever.eu



The project 'Land Is For Ever' has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union under the grant agreement LIFE17PREBE001.



www.landisforever.eu



@LIFEprojectLIFE



3.2 eNatura2000

eNatura2000 is a three-year-long LIFE project designed to connect Natura2000 land managers and to provide them additional training on Natura2000 topics.

Although many other projects faced additional difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, the eNatura2000 project showed how important it is to have digital connections in these challenging times. When you can not meet people in person, due to a lockdown, virtual experiences are the next best thing.

During 2021, project participants worked together in several virtual workshops and an online summer school, where a range of online digital tools, such as webinars and demonstration videos, were used to gain a greater depth on the topic. Especially exciting has been the success of the eNatura2000 digital app. Originally intended solely for land managers, it has become a worldwide sensation and is currently the 3rd most popular Natura2000-related app in the European Union, and is number 1 in several countries including the United States. Updated 3 times a week, the app provides content on upcoming environmental, nature-based, and educational events and workshops across Europe.

Whether you want to discuss issues and difficulties that arise in the management of Natura 2000 lands, and get inspired by existing best practices and solutions, or you simply want to stay abreast on the latest events, you can download the app for free on Google Play or Natura2000. We encourage you to join our ever-increasing network of users, and you will be able to communicate with others interested in Natura2000 without having to ever leave the comfort of your house. As with all apps and project outputs developed by ELO, this app will be available until 2026. We hope to see you at the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, where we will be demonstrating the app virtually.

 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. Grant Agreement number: KA202-4F115A3B



Supporting e-learning and capacity building for Natura 2000 Managers



3.3 European Networks for Private Land Conservation



European Networks for
Private Land Conservation

An EU-wide network of private land conservation practitioners leveraging innovative private land conservation tools and incentives to preserve private land's values and make conservation an economically feasible land use. To establish that sustainably, the Conservation Landowners Coalition (CLC) was founded, a union between landowners and conservationists.

This project focuses on a set of promising private landowner conservation tools (PLC tools), emphasising conservation easements. We test and support their wider uptake in Europe, engage in the reform of supportive fiscal and other systems incentivising PLC, continue the development of PLC standards and practices, and help with the development of organisations and their networks dealing with PLC (following the US "land trust" model). We are working with volunteers and citizen scientists as well as setting up an international network of PLC Ambassadors who will showcase concrete local actions, issues and solutions, reaching out to landowners and relevant administrations, to also involve and motivate national and regional authorities to include private land conservation initiatives in their jurisdiction.

Key roles of this project:

- **Promote the implementation of tools for private land conservation:** Conservation tools for private land conservation are not yet as effective, available and established as we need them to be.
- **Funding / Incentives:** We need financial incentives and funding sources to advance the concept of private land protection.

- **Capacity Building:** Education and good resources play a key role in ensuring high standards for nature conservation on private land.
- **Awareness raising:** We spread awareness on private land protection, helping to create recognition and the necessary support.
- **Civic Engagement:** Citizen Science and volunteering is a powerful tool to educate and involve the public in private land conservation and to expand the capacity for conservation work on private land.

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



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



3.4 Wildlife Estates Label

Since 2004, Wildlife Estates (WE) has been rewarding exemplary biodiversity management on estates across Europe. With almost 500 estates within the project covering more than two million hectares, it is the largest private label in the field of biodiversity conservation. The territories, which voluntarily adhere to WE philosophy, demonstrate that local human development and sustainable land use have to be integrated into the same project, even in protected areas.



The COVID-19 crisis has not slowed the expansion of the project. In fact, in 2021 we had a growth of close to 70,000 hectares. The inclusion of Hungary in the project has also meant an important renewal of the methodology. 2022 presents us with a challenging year, with new legislation on the horizon, the project continues to change as it has since its inception, demonstrating the work of private landowners in preserving and enhancing the important biodiversity of these days. The new CAP, soil strategy, and many more are challenging the European countryside, but our scientific committee is one step ahead and is already developing version 4.0 of the methodology (actual version is WILDLIFE ESTATES OBJECTIVE EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES Revised & Enlarged 3rd Edition registered with ISBN 978-84-09-18489-7).

Our national delegations are in close contact with the governments of each country to highlight the work of the label, which is increasingly recognised by countries and international bodies.

This year, the WE Plenary Session took place in a hybrid format from Scotland, between 8-9 September. It included a webinar open to the public, with two panels including "WE in Scotland – its

history and current place" and "The economic contribution of biodiversity and country sports in Scotland". The forum provided a platform for foresters, farmers, hunters, landowners, scientists and politicians from the EU, to share their knowledge and experiences on biodiversity-friendly farming practices.

The Swedish National delegation will host the WE Plenary Session in 2022.

For more information visit:

 www.wildlife-estates.eu
 [@Wildlife_EU](https://twitter.com/Wildlife_EU)
 [@wildlife_estates](https://www.instagram.com/wildlife_estates)



3.5 AgriLife

The developing AgriLife project, founded by ELO, is the first-ever label process to reward and encourage farmers as the central actors in restoring biodiversity while promoting quality production through best practices. In doing so, creating a pan-European alliance of all public and private stakeholders to achieve environmental, social and economic goals.

This objective, thanks to impact measurement on biodiversity, relates to several types of agriculture from conventional to many other types. It establishes a common methodology based on scientific criteria to assess the agro-biodiversity conditions of European territories and farms still in development.

The AgriLife Label is significant for farmers due to the current complex policy landscape with the emerging European Green Deal featuring the Biodiversity Strategy and Farm to Fork Strategy coupled with the revised Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). These policies intend to converge, providing the necessary goals, means and legal framework to support the restoration of nature, land, and



biodiversity, however leaving a lack of supportive or coordinated tools for farmers. Therefore, AgriLife anticipates movement towards regenerative agriculture, promotes innovation while aiming to ensure the economic and social viability of agribusinesses through the reward of best practices guiding farmers along the way.

The project consists of a steering committee led by Alain SCRIBAN, Special Advisor to ELO, and a scientific committee led by Martin GERZABEK of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna.

**For more information, please contact
Alain SCRIBAN at alain.scriban@elo.org**



"Presentation of the AgriLife project during the European Biodiversity Award on December 7th, (from left to right) Erik MATHIJS, François OMNES, Martin GERZABEK and Alain SCRIBAN"

3.6 AGRIWATER

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



Throughout Europe, there is an increased likelihood of droughts because of climate change, meaning there will be areas with little to no precipitation for extended periods, creating shortages in the water supply. This will impact crops and soils and increase the prevalence of pests and diseases in agriculture. Further, there will be more shortages of drinking water for animals. Therefore adaptations to drought will be needed so that farmers and landowners can plan for these

future droughts and in context to their land's environment, soil characteristics, water sources and legal options.

The AGRIWATER project aims to help farmers and landowners start, implement, and sustainably maintain water in the agricultural system, water systems and/or adopting other adaptation methods to droughts. The main objective is to assist farmers in keeping their agricultural lands by implementing innovative adaptation measures to drought and further raising awareness of the importance of taking this land management approach.

AGRIWATER started in December 2020 and will run for two years across the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium. At the start of the project, it became clear that all countries involved in the projects have been impacted by drought to some degree.

The AGRIWATER project's summary reports have been published in the past year, and best practice case studies have been identified for analy-



sis. These will help build an educational platform where farmers and landowners have the opportunity to learn more practical adaptation strategies and water management systems, which can be adapted to their own water management projects. The learning platform will include the present situation of partner countries and offer information on problems and possibilities of innovation adaptation tools to drought from each country.

33



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

3.7 FARMID

"The Farmid project, funded by the EU Erasmus + Programme, aims to increase the employment of people with mild intellectual disabilities (MID) on farms"



Individuals with MID generally have lower levels of access to formal education and skill development, which negatively affects their future employment opportunities. On-farm activities, however, have been identified as a key opportunity to increase social inclusion and employability among people with mild intellectual disabilities (PMID).

Therefore, the FARMID project has developed a training program to guide farmers who want to work in the field of social entrepreneurship in agriculture and the rural sector, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed in social farming and employment of PMID.

FARMID, therefore, prompts social inclusion and improves the economic situation of both PMID and farmers themselves. The project has developed the following four outputs:

- Guidelines for the employment of PMID on farms;
- Selection and study of examples of good practices for hiring PMID in rural farms;
- Development of special skills in the field of employment of PMID, as well as their management, mentoring and training;
- Develop and implement a training program for farmers and their educators in the form of an e-learning platform.

The training programme is relevant for farmers, landowners, social entrepreneurs, students, trainers, and anyone interested in employing PMID on farms. The programme is available online and free in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, and Slovenian.

Overall, the FARMID project addresses significant barriers surrounding PMID and shows that these individuals are fully compatible workers and can thrive as active members of the workforce. If you are interested in employing people with intellectual disabilities on your farm or want to learn more about the project, do not hesitate to contact the ELO project team.



 www.farmid.bc-naklo.si

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

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

3.8 REWARD

REWARD is an EU-funded Erasmus+ project, coordinated by L'Association Générale des Producteurs de Blé (AGPB), that provides rural women with the tools to manage a wide range of multifunctional activities that relate to agriculture and rural cultural heritage.

The general objective of this project is to provide training to women living in rural areas in order to be able to manage multifunctional activities related to agriculture and rural culture. To facilitate this, the REWARD project developed a set of training materials, gathered in a web-based app, that provides the knowledge and skills needed to carry out a fulfilling business initiative based on multifunctional activities related to rural cultural heritage.

The REWARD training path consists of three main elements:

- An overview on the economic and social situation of rural women in the EU which will help the learner to identify employment opportunities linked to multifunctional farming activities related to rural cultural heritage;
- Case studies about the most relevant entrepreneurial initiatives carried out by women in European rural areas linking multifunctional farming with cultural heritage;
- Training modules that provide the necessary knowledge to start and manage a business linking multifunctional activities and rural cultural heritage. Users can customise the learning experience according to their pace and needs, take a quick look over all the contents, or carefully study the modules one by one.



In the training modules, the user can find information about i) rural development through multifunctional farming activities that relate to cultural heritage, ii) start-up entrepreneurship with multifunctional farming, iii) management of multifunctional farming activities, iv) business communication & marketing in rural areas, v) professional-family life balance.

The project finished in April 2021, with an online virtual conference coordinated by ELO. For more information about the app or potential collaborations, visit reward-erasmus.eu, or contact the ELO Projects Team.



 reward-erasmus.eu

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

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

 [@REWARD Project](https://www.youtube.com/REWARDProject)

 Co-funded by the
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of the European Union

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

3.9 LAND MOBILITY

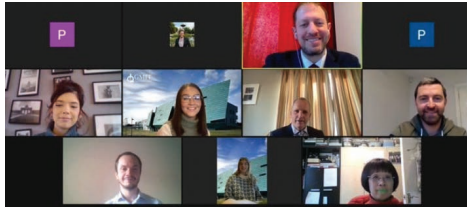
As farmers get older and seek to retire, they look for a way to transition their farm to the next generation. Similarly, as young entrepreneurs seek to enter the field of agriculture, they try to figure out how their goals can be achieved.



Land Mobility, an Erasmus+ project, finished its 26-month cycle in December of 2021, and helped make those dreams a reality for many farmers, young and old. This project expanded from one country (Ireland) to several across Europe and hopes to eventually operate land mobility brokerage training in all 27 member states.

Land Mobility's goals were to create innovative and digital training materials to foster land mobility initiatives in the European Union. This was done by developing training materials and guidelines for landowners, farmers, authorities and advisors in the area of land mobility services, land management partnerships, and farm take-over brokerage. They achieved these goals and more!

Amongst the outputs available on the project's website are training modules for those interested in land mobility. These include written documents, presentation slides, and animated videos as the project recognises that there are different learning styles and that successful training must be respectful to each.



The project concluded with a virtual final conference at the end of the year, where each partner shared their outputs. If you'd like to learn how Land Mobility can work for you, be sure to visit the project's website which will be available for 5 years after the completion of the project or contact us on social media.

 <http://land-mobility.eu/>

 [@Land Mobility](#)

 [@LandMobility](#)



3.10 FARCURA

"Farcura (Fostering Inclusion through Social Farming) is a collaborative social farming project funded under the Erasmus+ Programme"



Social farming refers to the therapeutic use of agricultural landscapes and techniques on part or all of a functioning farm to give health, social, educational, and vocational support to a small group of people at risk of social exclusion.

Through a free online training course, FARCURA strives to build and increase knowledge and skills in the field of social farming. Eight partners from five European nations (Ireland, Slovenia, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal) are involved in the project,

each having their individual knowledge and skills in the field of social farming.

The FARCURA training course gives a wide range of stakeholders (farmers, social farming representative bodies, social and health care providers, farming bodies, and so on) the tools they need to develop and improve social farming as an innovative approach to fostering social inclusion among marginalized groups in European rural society. This is achieved by:

- Analysing the current status of social farming in each of the partner countries and at a European level,
- Developing an online training course on key aspects of social farming and making this available on the projects website to direct beneficiaries through an open source training platform,
- Hosting a series of conferences and training sessions for direct beneficiaries of social farming.

The training course, available on the FARCURA website, provides an overview of the different social farming models, factors that support and/or hinder a successful social farming enterprise (cultural, legal, financial, administrative), and the steps required to be successful in creating partnerships and relationships with social farming target groups.

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

 <https://farcura.eu/>

 [@Farcura](#)

 [@FARCURA_ERASMUS](#)

37

3.11 HERIT

HERIT (Heritage Efficient through Relevant IT use) is an Erasmus project that began in June 2021 and is set to run through May 2023 and is the first project coordinated by ELO Projects team. With the lockdowns that accompanied COVID19 in many countries throughout Europe, it became increasingly clear that many historical houses faced challenges in an increasingly digital environment.



This project aims to boost the digital education and readiness of the private owners of historic houses in the aspect of cultural tourism. Despite having only started in the Summer of 2021, the project has already achieved several of its outputs, including 5 national reports and 1 executive summary report, which explain the existing conditions within the partner countries. Likewise, case studies representing each partner's country have been completed and published on the website.

The project has already met several times, with a kickoff meeting held virtually through Zoom on June 21 and July 5 and the second Transnational Meeting (TNM) hosted by Invasioni Digitali in Milan, Italy from December 16 to 17. The in-person meeting was especially fruitful, as the partners had the chance to meet in person, visit a beautiful historical house called Residenza Vignale, and discuss topics in a round-table manner in both English and French.



These are only the beginnings of the project, with a Massively Online Open Course (MOOC) currently in development by the project and an anticipated completion in 2023 at the end of the project. This course will help historical house owners train and learn about digital education at their own pace. If you have a house that you would like to share on the HERIT website or if you would like to be involved in the training, please contact us through Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

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

 [@erasmusherit](#)

 [@ErasmusHerit](#)



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

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

3.12 SOILGUARD



SOILGUARD is a four-year Horizon 2020 research and innovation project.

The main goal of this project is to boost the sustainable use of soil biodiversity and to have a positive impact on the environment, economy, and social well-being. SOILGUARD has a transdisciplinary twenty-five project partner consortium from seventeen countries.

Recent reports highlighted that unsustainable soil management practices and climate change are the main drivers leading to land degradation. There is also evidence that European soils are increasingly more unhealthy, posing a serious concern for European agriculture. It goes without saying that urgent action is needed in order to protect our soils. This is the main objective of SOILGUARD - to protect the soil using a holistic framework.

ELO is a key partner in the SOILGUARD project, which addresses major knowledge gaps related to soil-based ecosystem services and biodiversity by creating frameworks that have a serious potential to become the global standard for future assessments of soil biodiversity status, thus contributing to soil multifunctionality and human well-being as a whole. This framework will be validated this year with an innovative experimental design, combining multiple study sites across biomes based on land-degradation and climate changes models.



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



3.13 SAFEGUARD

It has been said that if bees disappear, the world would collapse within a few years. While the accuracy of the quotation is debatable, it is clear that the preservation of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators are vital to agriculture, the environment, and global health in general.

SAFEGUARD (Safeguarding European Wild Pollinators) is a Horizon2020 project with partners across multiple continents working together to reverse the trend of decreasing wild pollinator numbers.

This project connects NGOs, world-class researchers, industry, and policy experts to identify and face emerging threats. SAFEGUARD will also create a framework that will serve as the core for European and global policies regarding the contribution of pollinators to society.

The project began in September 2021, and although the partners have only met virtually, significant progress has already been made. The Kick-off Meeting was held virtually on September 7th to 9th and a plan for the entire life of the project was established. Although the meeting was virtual and shortened from the length of an in-person meeting, the partners were still able to go into detail with all eight Work Packages, all 44 tasks, and a discussion on both a tandem project as well as a chance for feedback.


Though the project has just begun, it has already had several early successes in the first few months, including attending workshops as well as sharing the plans with key stakeholders and co-

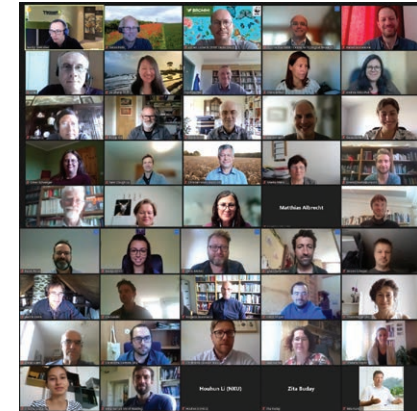
ordinating with the necessary parties to ensure a successful project. If you would like to "safeguard" the world, or learn more about wild pollinators, be sure to watch for our educational hub which will be available in early 2022.

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

 [@SafeguardProject](#)

 [@Safeguard2021](#)

 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.



3.14 FERTIMANURE

FERTIMANURE is a Horizon 2020 project directed to the "innovative nutrient recovery from secondary sources- Production of high-added value FERTilisers from animal MANURE".

This project has twenty partners from seven European (EU) countries, Argentina and Chile, including universities, research centres, cluster organisations, public bodies, SMEs and NGOs, all involved in the manure research sector and across the value chain. The project will last for 48 months.

Through the project, innovative Nutrient Management Strategies will be developed, integrated, tested and validated to efficiently recover mineral nutrients and other relevant products with an agronomic value from animal manure. This project aims to have a zero-waste manure management approach while obtaining reliable and safe fertilisers to compete in European fertiliser markets.

Manure is the European livestock sector's most significant nutrient-rich residual biomass flow. This biomass stream is an opportunity to upgrade tailor-made fertilisers that comply with the requirements of different crops while minimising loss to the environment. On-farm pilot plants are set up for five innovative and integrated nutrient recovery experiments in Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany.

Since the project began, all pilots are set up and are operating, producing 16 different bio-based fertilisers that will be tested and evaluated. Further, these will be used to produce high-added value tailor-made fertilisers.

Market analyses' are being curated from the data collected at the start of the animal densities, nutrient and manure generation within the five pilot regions. These will be used to form life cycle analyses' and appropriate business plans. FERTIMANURE's social impact assessment and the assessment of the current legislative framework of bio-based fertilisers is headed by the European Landowners' Organization.



FERTIMANURE



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



3.15 CONSOLE

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



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

Examples of existing innovative and effective contract solutions aimed at improving the provision of AECPGs have been collected as case studies from partner countries. The totalling sixty case studies were categorised to be either: result-based, collective, value chain or environmental tenure-based. This project has a primary objective to produce a framework designed to use different contractual solutions and be made available to practitioners.

The CONSOLE project attended the ELO Solutions Workshop to connect and synergise collective action for a sustainable future. There will be a series of workshops and roadshow events.



Through environmental policies and the CAP, the research results of CONSOLE are aimed at contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



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

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

[@Console.project](#)

[@ProjectConsole](#)

[@CONSOLE Project](#)

[@Console-project](#)



INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
ESTABLISHED IN 1988



3.16 ALL-READY

The ALL-Ready project, funded by the EU Horizon 2020 funding programme, aims to shape the future network of Living Labs (LL) and Research Infrastructures (RIs) to accelerate agroecological farming in Europe.

The project's overall goal is to integrate agroecology knowledge into agricultural production systems by engaging all the stakeholders in the value chain. The LL and RIs, in coordination with farmers and researchers, will generate scientific results that will benefit the agroecology transition.

Agroecology is a unique method of agricultural and food system organisation. It incorporates adaptive management at all levels of the agri-food system and works with food production that considers the local context. Agroecology is a fundamental shift in thinking about the design and function of food systems. It affects citizens and policymakers on a local, national, and global scale, both individually and collectively.

The main aim of the ALL-Ready project is to prepare a network of LLs and RIs that will be known as "AgroEcoLLNet" that will use highly participatory and inclusive methods to experiment in real-life environments, enabling the agroecological transition in Europe.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Define the mission and vision for the AgroEcoLLNet with all relevant stakeholders
- Identify, map and evaluate existing components of AgroEcoLLNet
- Develop an implementation plan (2023-2030) for AgroEcoLLNet

- Prepare and initiate a capacity building programme for the AgroEcoLLNet
- Roll out a communication programme to ensure a common understanding of agroecology among key stakeholders

The project outcomes will be communicated widely throughout Europe through various tools and mechanisms. If you have any questions regarding the ALL-Ready project, please do not hesitate to visit the project website and/or contact the ELO project team.

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

 **ALL-Ready**

 **@ALLReady_EU**



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



43



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada



3.17 WATER2RETURN

Water2REturn, one of the longest-running projects that ELO has participated in, will be coming to an end in 2022. This project developed a customisable integrated system to treat wastewater while recovering nutrients consisting of a novel combination of technologies and processes in cascade that maximized the extraction of valuable products.






It takes 3 different raw materials which will be the basis for further manufacturing the agronomic products. These raw materials, concretely nitrate and phosphate concentrate, hydrolysed sludge and algal biomass, are obtained at different stages of the process. Finally, 3 agronomic products manufactured in production lines built up within the Water2REturn project, free of pathogens and pollutants and ready to be commercialised: 1 organic fertiliser and 2 biostimulants.

2021 was a very active year for the project, with several major achievements being accomplished. Most notably, the development of the pilot process was completed at "Matadero del Sur", a slaughterhouse in Salteras, Seville. An animated video was created that explains the process to interested stakeholders (in 6 European languages), and the project has been disseminated at major workshops across Europe, both virtually and in person. The project was even specially invited to WaterEurope as one of six EU projects to present to the European Commission.

The last few months of the project will be extremely active, with our final conference to be held in Brussels, several more workshops for both farmers and slaughterhouse owners, and in-person tours of the pilot location in Spain.

If you would like a tour of the plant, a copy of the video, an explanation of the process, or simply some of the best fertilizer around, let us know through any of our social media or via the Water2REturn website.

 www.water2return.eu
 [@Water2REturn](https://twitter.com/Water2REturn)
 [@Water2REturn](https://www.youtube.com/Water2REturn)



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



University of Ljubljana



UECBV
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union





3.18 UNISECO

The UNISECO project came to a successful conclusion in April 2021 and is rapidly becoming the central location for resources on agro-ecological (AE) approaches and implementation within the European Union. With over 100 deliverables, including case studies, issue briefs, policy briefs, methodological briefs, abstracts, published papers and articles, and videos, there is an incredible body of research now available for those interested in AE practices.

The final conference was hosted online on March 18th and 19th with over 50 sessions and a large audience made possible due to the virtual environment, allowing visitors from not only European Member states, but also North and South America as well as Asia. The conference was also a chance to share the Agro-ecological Hub (AEH). This hub recognizes that different stakeholders have different expectations and interests and as such provides unique tools for each, whether they are NGOs, farmers, consumers, scientists, or others. Each location within the hub specifically targets their key goals, such as price concerns for consumers versus financial viability for farmers.

Despite the conclusion of the project in April, efforts continued with UNISECO presenting at three different sessions at COP26 in Glasgow this year, the premier Climate Change conference in the world. One particular session by David MILLER,



"How agroecology can contribute to a just transition to climate neutrality" received heavily positive feedback across social media during the event.

If you're a farmer, scientist, consumer, policymaker or NGO interested in agro-ecology or organic food production, be sure to visit us on social media, or on the project website and learn how you can help create a greener, healthier future for both yourself, your family, and your community.

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

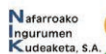
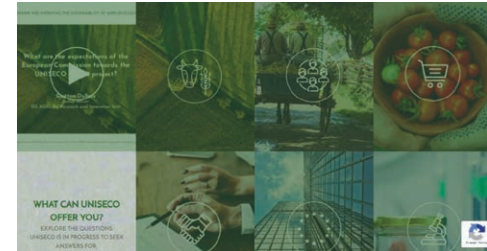
 [@ProjectUniseco](https://twitter.com/ProjectUniseco)

 [@UNISECO Project](https://www.linkedin.com/company/uniseco-project)

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



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



3.19 BIOPLAT-EU

Sustainable bioenergy is a key element for reaching the EU climate targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. Marginal, underutilised and contaminated (MUC) lands present a viable option as they do not compete with food and feed production but can still produce biomass for energy purposes. The overall objective of the BIOPLAT-EU project is to promote the market uptake of sustainable bioenergy in Europe using marginal, underutilized, and contaminated lands for non-food biomass production through the provision of a web-based platform that serves as a decision support tool.



To facilitate this, the BIOPLAT-EU project has generated the BIOPLAT-EU WebGIS tool, which provides a comprehensive online platform for supporting the decision-making process for new bioenergy investment projects that rely on biomass from MUC lands in Europe and neighbouring countries. This comprehensive free platform includes information about the project, a helpdesk and the webGIS tool. The webGIS tool allows users to search for MUC lands in Europe, to select a suitable crop and bioenergy pathway and conduct a sustainability assessment that provides the user with specifications about the land including GHG emissions, water footprint, impacts on employment, and much more. Farmers, landowners, investors, and industry players interested in implementing sustainable bioenergy projects can use these tools to test the achievable performance for their ideas.

The project has also conducted detailed feasibility studies and business models of the bankability of 12 value chains in 6 different countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Spain, and Ukraine). Thanks to the tool, BIOPLAT-EU industrial partner, NESTE, successfully utilised the webGIS tool to conduct a

pan-European assessment to explore MUC lands suitable for oil crop production in Europe.

The project wrapped in October 2021, with a hybrid final conference and workshop taking place in Matera, Italy, with the online tools now available.

For more information, visit www.bioplat.eu.



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



www.bioplat.eu



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<https://www.flickr.com/people/189253496@N07/>



@bioplat.eu



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@Project BIOPLAT-EU



3.20 COUPLED

Land use is one of the main challenges of today. It is now clear the impact that humans have on the environment. Human consumption of food and agricultural products can have a negative impact on the environment and on the regions where they are produced.



Therefore, the way we use the land is essential for our well-being, and it represents one of the main challenges of the agricultural world. Scholars agree that land use can have a direct impact on global food security, climate change, mitigation, and biodiversity conservation.

This EU Horizon 2020 project aims at educating researchers and entrepreneurs in assessing and governing land use in a systematic way, putting forward the risks and opportunities related to the use of land. This will be possible by developing rich analytical tools and creating awareness that will help private and public organisations to identify where and how they can exploit the land in a sustainable way. In order to achieve this, a team of researchers, coordinated by the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, has developed a European Training Network (ETN) in order to better integrate research, innovation and social responsibility framed around the concept of telecoupling, and of course, where agriculture meets the environment. ELO plays an important role here.



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

 @CoupledITN

 @CoupledITN



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



3.21 REFLOW ETN

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

The project aims to tackle the challenge of excess phosphorus (P) stemming from the dairy industry, more specifically by closing the phosphorus loop through recycling processes which provide various benefits such as cost-effectiveness, minimising leakages, as well as producing effective, high-value, and safe fertiliser products. The work carried out across this ETN has the following objectives:

1. Developing and demonstrating P product recovery and reuse processes from dairy processing waste;
2. Establishing optimum values and application rates of such fertiliser products thanks to laboratory protocols alongside field trials;
3. Addressing overarching sustainability challenges across environmental, economic, social, and food safety sectors to develop new market-driven solutions for novel processes and their resulting fertiliser products

The project comprises industry representatives, academic advisors, and most importantly 13 Early-Stage-Researchers (ESRs) coming from various academic and cultural backgrounds, situated all over Europe.

2021 marked an important year for the project: the first half of the year was highlighted by the adaptability of the ESRs to perform their own work, carry out their own research in their respective countries, and to the best of their abilities based on the respective restrictions of each of their hosting countries.

However, the second half of the year was home to a beacon of hope: in early October, the first in-person meeting took place over the course of 2 days in Vic, Catalonia, hosted by the BETA Tech Centre. An overwhelming majority of partner representatives were able to travel to Vic to present, discuss, and collectively build a path ahead for the project. After over a year of virtual meetings and events, there was collective eagerness to participate and build synergies like never before.

Afterwards, the 11 ESRs present stayed on in Vic for their 2 week summer school programme, combining appropriate academic, industry, and social learning. The ESRs were able to strengthen their bonds together, collectively develop their future research strategies together, and get to know each other for the first time in person. One thing was clear from this meeting: in-person meetings make all the difference.



 www.etn-reflow.eu

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

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

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

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

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



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



3.22 TerraNova



TERRANOVA is a Horizon 2020 Marie-Curie funded project with the mission to develop an unprecedented digital atlas of Europe that combines human population patterns in the past, plants and disturbances, animal development, and climate change.

This atlas will serve as a foundation for politicians and landscape practitioners to develop strategic guidelines and policy measures, demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary research in academia in the Anthropocene, and raise long-term awareness of landscape reform among academia, commerce, and the general public.

The ultimate goal of the TERRANOVA project is to inform the policymakers and general public on how to cope with the current transition into the Low Carbon Society.

TERRANOVA aims to provide a new generation of Early Stage Researchers (ESRs), working with policymakers and the general public, with a deep understanding of a wide range of sectors affecting landscapes, as well as a new generation capable of coproducing responses to the interdisciplinary challenges of land management that balance ecosystem services, cultural heritage, and economic qualities while taking ongoing climate, environmental, and social change into account.

The research will aid in the identification of prior important shifts in resource usage and energy regimes, as well as opportunities for future transitions to a low-carbon society. The following are the main research goals:

- To reconstruct the deep history of Europe's cultural landscapes and corresponding changes in coupled human-nature interactions;
- To rethink the outcomes of human-environmental interactions over the past three energy regimes in order to inform future energy transitions;
- To design landscape management strategies.

The TERRANOVA project will provide key information to land managers and policymakers on approaches to land management that support both social and environmental benefits. If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact the ELO Projects Team.



terranovaltn.eu

[@TERRANOVA4EU](https://www.facebook.com/TERRANOVA4EU)

[@TERRANOVA4EU](https://twitter.com/TERRANOVA4EU)

[@TerraNova ITN](https://www.youtube.com/TerraNovaITN)



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



3.23 MICROSERVICES

The MICROSERVICES project, “Predicting Climate Change Impacts on the Crop Microbiome and Cascading Effects on Ecosystem Services Delivery in Agroecosystems”, is a Biodiversa funded project which started in April 2021.

The project's context surrounds the impacts of climate change on agroecosystems, specifically linked to increased warming and its impacts on such systems, which catalyse when other drivers are taken into account (e.g. unsustainable land management). This directly threatens food production, especially with demographic trends highlighting increasing populations.

Grounded in the importance of below-ground soil biodiversity and the climate change resistance and resilience properties that microorganisms provide for crops, microbial functioning is targeted with the hopes of improving sustainable agricultural production.

The goal of the project is to improve the forecasting capacities of cascading effects of climate change on microbial diversity within crop-ecosystems, crop-microbiome interactions, and associated ecosystem services. This contributes to sustainable agriculture, associated policy agendas (and conservation), and, more globally, raising awareness towards the importance of soil biodiversity.

MICROSERVICES focuses specifically on wheat cropping ecosystems, due to the importance of Europe as the world's largest wheat producer (nearly a third of the world's global production) as well as it being cultivated across the majority of European biogeoclimatic regions. A multitude of wheat cultivars are declining, and are projected to continue due to climate change and decreased climatic resilience.

So far, the project has developed in-situ field manipulation experiments to simulate drought conditions as well as looking at natural climate gradients provided by Earth Observation data. Moving forward, the project is delving into European wheat rhizosphere microbial diversity surveys to analyse interactions between crops, their associated microbiomes, and ecosystem multifunctionality. This will be done by extracting soil samples from wheat farms in member countries, and in return participating wheat cultivations will receive free microbial and biological assessments of their soils. Region-specificity is crucial, as the effects of climate change on ecosystem multifunctionality and biodiversity will vary based on each biogeoclimatic



region. The project is actively empowering and supporting collaboration amongst researchers, agricultural stakeholders, and policymakers.

Further down the line, the project will employ machine learning algorithms to develop correlations and a predictive regression model.

3.24 CARBON CONNECTS

The Interreg Carbon Connects (CConnects) project aims to reduce the unnecessarily high emissions caused by traditional practices on agriculturally converted peatlands in Northwest (NW) Europe by introducing new bio-based business models developed for sustainable peatland management practices.

The CConnects consortium, including stakeholders and partners in the UK, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, are working with a representative range of 11 pilot sites across NW Europe. On the pilot peatland sites low carbon land management and restoration practices are tested in tandem with sustainable business models. These include livestock adapted to wet conditions, cultivation of peat moss as an alternative to fossil peat substrate and the introduction of alternative crops (for example cattail and reed, which can be used as low embodied carbon construction materials, biofuels and animal feed).

In addition to growing wet agricultural crops, CConnects is exploring a carbon and blue credit scheme to monetise the ecosystem services provided by sustainably managed peatlands. This helps to develop and promote the uptake of wet agriculture in peatlands. CConnects has implemented a network of farmers/landowners/

experts, a farmer-to farmer learning program, and an online toolbox.

By promoting and developing sustainable methods for farming peatlands, CConnects not only aims to protect farmers, landowners, society and the environment from the consequences of climate change, but also offers practical solutions to reduce CO₂ emissions and store carbon in the peat soil, as well as sustainable biobased products.

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

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



3.25 BioWILL

BioWILL focuses on integrated "Zero Waste" Biorefinery utilising all fractions of Willow feedstock to produce high to medium based Bio-Chemicals/Materials, Renewable Energy in the form of Bio Methane production and Natural Fertilizers. This project is funded by Interreg NWE and counts ten project partners in four different countries across Northwest Europe (NWE). This project will last 36-months, and the regions selected have small amounts of willow, which are currently providing low income to growers.



The past year has been essential in establishing the willow plants to test and produce biodegradable packaging and salicins, which can be used as critical proofs for crop value and profitability.

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

[f @BioWILLNWE](#)

[t @BioWILL_NWE](#)

[i @biowill_nwe](#)

[in @BioWILL](#)

[v @BioWILL NWE](#)



52

This project promotes a transition to a zero-waste circular bio-economy by recovering small quantities of high-value extractives from biomass. BioWILL aims to produce pharmaceutical chemicals, energy, and materials to ensure sustainable economic development. This project demonstrates the commerciality of scalable rural biorefineries for NWE, providing an alternative income for farmers and employment across a broader skill base.

The partnership provides an integrated research and commercial exploitation platform. ELO's role is to promote the potential of sustainable willow

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



A close-up photograph of a white butterfly with a single black spot on its hindwing, perched on a purple flower. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. The butterfly is positioned in the center-right of the frame, facing left. The flower is a raceme of small purple blossoms, hanging from a thin green stem. The overall composition is serene and naturalistic.

4

ELO Awards

4.1 European Bee Award

The **European Bee Award** was established by the European Landowners' Organization 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.

In a ceremony hosted by **MEP Franc BOGOVIČ**, the VIII edition of the European Bee Award acknowledged the great commitment of private and public organisations, as well as the involvement of the research community, to enhance pollinators' wellbeing and support bee-friendly farming practices in Europe.

The 2021 edition received 28 applications from 12 different European countries. ELO and CEMA were delighted to provide the prizes to this year's winners:

- **Category 'Land management practices': 'Coup d'Pousse'**, a project by **Réseau Biodiversité pour les Abeilles**. With the participatory action of melliferous fields sponsorship, farmers can register to benefit from seeds to sow flower strips in fallow land in spring, and intercrops in summer. Beekeepers can also register to get in touch with farmers who implanted

floral resources in their department, to set up their hives there.

- **Category 'Innovative and technological solutions': 'Connected scales'**, an initiative by **FDSEA Ile-de-France (Departmental Federation of Farmers Unions in the region Ile-de-France)**. This project aims to allow the best living conditions for bees by protecting them from phytosanitary treatment periods. Besides agricultural practices adaptation to bee protection, this project also implements flowering fallows to make them available to pollinators.

In addition, the 'Special Mention of the Jury' was bestowed to **'Smartomizer H30 protecting bees by reducing the pesticides use'**, by **Pulverizadores Fede**. The Smartomizer H30 is an integrated pest management system that reduces negative effects on pollinators and also protects biodiversity by reducing the environmental impact of the high value crops protection task by carrying out precise and eco-responsible treatments.

To learn more about this award please visit:

🌐 www.europeanlandowners.org

🌐 www.cema-agri.org

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



1. Project 'Coup d'Pousse' by Réseau Biodiversité pour les Abeilles receives the Land management practices prize.
2. Project 'Connected scales' by FDSEA Ile-de-France receives the Innovative and technological solutions prize.
3. Pulverizadores Fede receives the Special Mention of the Jury for their 'Smartomizer H30 protecting bees by reducing the pesticides use'.
4. Daniel CALLREJA CRESPO addresses participants. On the panel, from left to right: Gilles DRYANCOUR, Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Robert KONRAD, Franc BOGOVIČ.



4.2 Belleuropa Award

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



The Belleuropa Award recognises outstanding initiatives undertaken by private land managers and public-private partnerships in the protection and conservation of local landscapes and wildlife within the members of the Wildlife Estates Project promoting sustainable business models based on responsible agriculture, rural tourism and the promotion of low-impact products or activities.

The ELO presents the Belleuropa Award to the winning candidate in the framework of the European Conference on Biodiversity, organised by the European Parliament under the patronage of MEPs.

The conference brings together land managers, policy makers, NGOs and industry representatives to discuss the involvement and role of land users and managers, as well as agribusiness, in the protection of biodiversity.

This year, the winning estate was Högestad & Christinehof in Sweden, for its efficient management of biodiversity within the forestry framework. It is an astounding example within the Wildlife Estates project.



4.3 The Land and Soil Management Award



The Land and Soil Management Award is annually granted to an outstanding project that contributes to and acts as a role-model for soil protection from the viewpoint of agricultural practice. Soils are facing several threats, to which land management is at times a contributor.



Copyright: Biodynamic farm ČERNELIČ

Resilience in food production and forestry is crucial for the future of humankind. In 2021, the Jury received a large number of excellent proposals, amounting to a final total of 19 eligible proposals from nine European countries.

Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans, and Fisheries announced online the unanimous winner: **Zvone ČERNELIČ, "Biodynamic farm ČERNELIČ"** (Slovenia) for his outstanding proposal on "Improving soil biodiversity and humus content for better soil fertility and climate change resilience of farms".

In addition, the Jury attributed four 'Diploma of Recognition' to: Alfonso CHICO DE GUZMAN, La Junquera: fighting land degradation with regenerative practices in South Spain; Petr MARADA'S

Ecofarm in Czech Republic; the project Carbon action from Finland, Baltic Sea Action Group (BSAG); and Zukunft Erde – humus formation program, by RWA Raiffeisen Ware Austria AG.

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



Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS

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*



Member of the Jury, the winner and the recipient of the diploma of recognition.

4.4 Belgian Tree of the Year 2021

The winner of the Belgian Tree of the Year 2021 is the giant sequoia proposed by the College Notre Dame du Bonlieu in Virton, in the Province of Luxembourg. This tree won the contest thanks to the 4,352 votes counted and is now crowned "Belgian Tree of the Year 2021".

This sequoia tree is symbolic to the school and has seen thousands of students pass under it. This sequoia tree is an ambassador of the site which has many other significant trees.

Congratulations to this tree and to all the other nominees who all represent essential elements of our cultural, historical and biological heritage.

Context

In 2021 the contest was organized in Wallonia and Brussels by the Walloon Foundation for Habitat Conservation and ELO, with the support of the Baillet-Latour Fund for the Environment. In 2022, the Belgian Tree of the Year contest will be held in Flanders and Brussels.

Concept

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

 <https://arbelbelge.be/>

 <https://boomvanhetjaar.be/>

 @Arbelbelgedelannee



5



Events

5.1 ForumforAg2021 Month of March

This past year the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (ForumforAg) has shifted towards digital and hybrid events. The Forum reinvented itself with its Month of March concept and welcomed more than 6500 participants over three weeks during the 'Solutions Week', 'Policy Week', and the Annual Conference. With representatives from 91 countries connecting online from around the world to watch the events showcasing the global reach of the ForumforAg.



The month opened with 'Solutions Week' events led by the Partners and Supporters of the Forum, including ELO, Syngenta, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Indigo, Cargill and SYSTEMIQ. These events covered diverse topics relating to 2021's theme 'Food System Renewal', such as sustainable water management, tools and instruments for private land conservation, nature-positive farming, plant-based proteins, soil health and carbon farming.

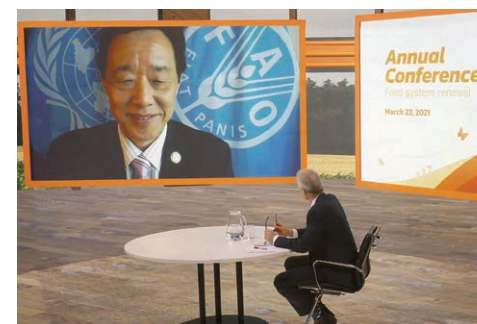
Following the 'Solutions Week', the Forum held its 'Policy Week', which featured the ELO Soil Award and four high-level debates on important European policies, including the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Common Agricultural Policy, Forestry Strategy, and a final event on Transatlantic cooperation for research and innovation in the agri-food system.

To close the Month of March, the Annual Conference, which took place on March 23, featured captivating keynote addresses and interventions, engaging moderated panel discussion and insightful Q&As between the speakers and ForumforAg moderator Stephen SACKUR. The day was split into five sessions. The ForumforAg2021 Annual Conference explored how we can renew leadership in the food system; shape a climate-re-

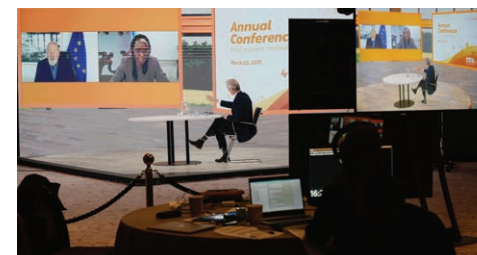
silient food system around the globe, produce healthy food for all at scale. Further was to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and set out the role and intentions of the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021.

The Annual Conference featured a great list of speakers, including the Forum's chairman Janez POTOČNIK; QU Dongyu, Secretary-General of the Food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations (FAO); World Food Prize Laureate and former Executive-Director of the World Food Programme, Catherine BERTINI; Frans TIMMERMANS, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, European Commission; Climate Activist, Vanessa NAKATE; UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Agnes KALIBATA; United States Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. VILSACK; and many more high-level food system experts.

 www.forumforagriculture.com
 [@ForumForAg](https://twitter.com/ForumForAg)
 [@forumforagriculture](https://facebook.com/forumforagriculture)
 [@Forum for the Future of Agriculture](https://linkedin.com/company/forumforagriculture)



QU Dongyu, Secretary-General of the Food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations on screen being interviewed by ForumforAg's moderator, Stephen SACKUR.



5.2 ForumforAg2021 Regional Portugal Edition

The ForumforAg2021 Regional Portugal brought together stakeholders to discuss Food System Renewal for a hybrid event that took place in Santarem, Portugal. The event was also broadcast online to hundreds of viewers who attended through the Forum's unique digital venue.



The day was opened with a compelling speech from ForumforAg2021 Chairman, Janez POTOČNIK, who called for urgent action stating: *"It is high time that global and local communities live up to the promises they have made about sustainability. Whether it is about access to water, international trade agreements, or climate change."* The former Commissioner stressed that there is still time left to avoid the worst effects of climate changes, so long as we work together.

The first session highlighted the importance of sustainable water use, water saving technologies and how they can be placed in the hands of farmers and ensure that they have the right knowledge and practices to employ them. In

that same session, Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General of the European Landowners' Organization, also spoke of the importance of equipping farmers with the right tools for farmland management practices and how farmers can be supported with the green transition.

Going beyond sustainability on the farm level, the second session examined how to increase sustainability standards in European and global trade deals, the responsibilities of the public and private sector when it comes to enforcement of any sustainability chapters, and how non-governmental actors such as businesses and NGOs play their part in delivering on trade sustainability.

The afternoon featured a Solutions Workshop exploring the role of New Genomic Techniques (NGT) in agriculture and plant breeding. The first hour focused on how NGTs can support farmers towards reaching the targets embedded in the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. The second hour investigated the potential of NGT as a tool to tackle climate change on both an EU and global level.

The dialogue was organised under the auspices of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. To learn more about what was discussed during the day, visit www.forumforagriculture.com where the sessions are available to watch.



 www.forumforagriculture.com

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5.3 ForumforAg2021 France Regional Edition

The Forum for the Future of Agriculture hosted their second regional conference of the year in Paris, France, as a hybrid event, broadcasted online to hundreds of viewers.



The discussion was primarily split into three different sessions: the EU's environmental targets in the Farm to Fork Strategy, sustainability standards in international trade, and forestry management and climate mitigation. The day also featured an intervention on geopolitics and food security and the first edition of the Forum's start-up corner with its 'Leaders of Change.'

The opening session featured words of welcome from ELO's President, Pierre-Oliver DRÈGE, an opening speech by Janez POTOČNIK followed by a discussion with French Senator Sophie PRIMAS.

The first session concluded with a video message from the French Minister of Agriculture, Julien DE-NORMANDIE who outlined France's vision for a sustainable food system and their plans for the 2022 EU Presidency.

The first panel discussion was framed around how the environmental targets in the Farm-to-Fork strategy can be achieved. The panel welcomed sustainable and strong environmental standards but strongly highlighted the condition to work alongside farmers instead of imposing restrictions.

The following session explored sustainability standards in international trade, where the panel argued that to ensure sustainable development we must work together to achieve higher trading standards for our food system and support one another.

The discussion on French forests and climate change adaptation led to an insightful panel discussion which stressed that the polarised debate on forest management has to change as the current dialogue is framed around the notion that managing forests is not compatible with biodiversity as if forestry was an attack on nature and signifies deforestation.

The events could not have been possible without the support of the Forum's partners alongside the local collaborators, AGPB and the Fondation François Sommer. To learn more about what was discussed during the day, visit www.forumforagriculture.com where the sessions are available to watch.

 www.forumforagriculture.com

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

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

5.4 The ForumforAg's UNFSSID, Transatlantic Panel & EU Green Deal Debate

In 2021, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture had the privilege of hosting three other unique events alongside the new 'Month of March' and the recurring two regional events. The first unique event was a United Nations Food Systems Summit Independent Dialogue (UNFSSID) on Mainstreaming Regenerative Agriculture, the second a panel on EU-US transatlantic cooperation for agriculture, and lastly, a moderated panel on the European Green Deal.

First up was the UNFSSID, co-organized by the Forum for the Future of Agriculture and Nestlé, on the 30th of June 2021, Seventy-seven experts and stakeholders from across the food supply chain gathered to explore how to mainstream regenerative agriculture. The debate on the definition and scope of regenerative agriculture, its adoption around the globe, and integration into the policy environment. The main findings of the discussions were compiled into a report and officially submitted to the UN Food Systems Summit.

On November 3rd the Forum co-hosted a milestone event alongside Farm Europe which brought together US Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas VILSACK; EU Commissioner of Agriculture, Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI; and Member of the European Parliament & Committee for Agriculture and International Trade, Paolo DE CASTRO. The officials unveiled a new platform where ideas and practices can be exchanged between nations and explored how both sides of the Atlantic intend on tackling issues related to climate change, making

our food system more sustainable, and shaping a better future for all.

The Forum hosted a panel event on November 23, 2021 to tackle the thorny question of whether the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategies are on track to address the complex interconnected needs of food, climate and biodiversity. Moderated by Rose O'DONOVAN, Editor-in-Chief AGRA FACTS, the event was both lively and timely, coming on the day that the European Parliament voted to approve the Common Agricultural Policy Reform proposed by the European Commission.

 www.forumforagriculture.com
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From left to right: Thierry de l'ESCAILLE (Secretary General of European Landowners' Organization); Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI (EU Commissioner for Agriculture); Thomas VILSACK (United States Secretary of Agriculture); Paolo DE CASTRO (Member of the European Parliament); João PACHECO (Senior Fellow at Farm Europe); Mark TITTERINGTON (Senior Advisor to the ForumforAg).

5.5 ELO General Assemblies in 2021

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

The meetings in 2021 were foreseen to take place in June in Ljubljana and in December in Paris.

Nevertheless, in view of the continuing difficulties and restrictions in traveling 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, from 19 European countries.

The GA's gave the opportunity to listen to the priorities of the Slovenian and the French from their respective authorities. The ELO's main messages for agricultural and environmental priorities were handed over and discussed with the speakers from both countries.

The ELO would like to warmly thank the Slovenian authorities from *the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food* and the *Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry*; as well as the *French Association Générale des Producteurs de Blé et autres céréales (AGPB)* and *Fondation François Sommer* for their support to organise these meetings which enabled fruitful discussions and planning for 2022 actions.

The June GA was also the opportunity to warmly thank Michael SALM zu SALM (Germany) for his years of service as he stepped down from his function of ELO Vice-President, and welcomed Max von ELVERFELDT (Germany) as he was unanimously elected to take over that function. Moreover, Zeno PIATTI (Austria) took over the co-chairmanship of the Policy Group from prof. Emeritus Allan BUCKWELL (UK). ELO members warmly thanked prof. BUCKWELL for having shared his knowledge for so many years.

The December GA allowed us to welcome a new member from Slovenia: the Association of Slovenian Large-Sized Forest Properties (ZVGP).



5.6 European Biodiversity Conference 2021

Soil Strategy: Where to go? A chance to make it work at a local level?

The annual European Biodiversity Conference is organised under the auspices of the Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” of the European Parliament. The 2021 edition was organised in a hybrid model in December, addressing the specificities of the freshly released Soil Strategy placing the spotlight on soil and land-related issues.

The EU context of the Green Deal combined with the CAP, Farm to Fork Strategy and 2030 Biodiversity Strategy is putting the Soil Strategy at the heart of the debate. The EU’s aim is to address soil and land-related issues in a comprehensive way to help achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, one of the commitments in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Soil is an invaluable natural resource and habitat which is currently under pressure. Crucial for land managers’ businesses, it is the natural starting point allowing the maintenance of European food quality and security. All farmers, land managers, foresters have an interest to step up and engage further for sustainable practices. The intention of this conference was to clarify and provide solutions for better and effective soil policies and incentives at the EU level.

The various high-level experts from European Commission, Research institutes, and industries reflect on European soil ambitions, intentions to develop the restoration target for soil ecosystems,

and how to better promote soil sustainable practices through CAP (eco schemes) & Rural Development funding, avoiding over-regulation and complexification for the local community. It also provided the opportunity to discuss on how to improve the research of soil health and share some examples from the private sector involvement in soil biodiversity.

The conference was also the opportunity to launch the AgriLife project. It was closed by the awarding ceremony of the Belleuropa Award.

For more information please visit:

 www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference



Erik MATHIJS, Claudia OLAZABAL



5.7 Innovation conference

On the background of major challenges on the horizon for the next years and decades in the agricultural sector, ELO's annual innovation conference explored the role of agri-technologies in delivering the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy. This event was held online in February 2021.

The conference inquired into how innovation in agriculture and new technologies can help farmers meet the F2F targets. The event took a holistic approach on the matter by looking at both policy makers, industry and farm-level perspectives.

What is the EU's plan for innovation in agriculture? What technologies are currently available or developed which could help farmers meet the F2F targets? These were the main questions speakers tried to answer during the two panels by introducing the dialogue on innovative solutions for achieving the goals set out by the Paris Climate Agreement and making the EU climate resilient.

The event was hosted and moderated by MEP Martin HLAVÁČEK, who welcomed all participants and presented the speakers. He introduced the topic of reaching F2F targets through a combination of technology innovation and policy coordination, in order to make agriculture a resilient yet profitable sector.

The keynote speech was given by Luis VIVAS-ALEGRE from DG SANTE, who emphasised on the importance of leading the transition towards sustainable food systems both at European and global level through revision of legislation and its implementation. On the topic of enabling EU

innovation for F2F he presented an array of tools such as AKIS, Farm Advisory Services or Horizon 2020 that are meant to fund research in this area.

The first panel channelled the discussion towards innovative tools already available in practice. Eric DEREUDRE from Corteva Agriscience focused on the role of new crop protection products with lower impact on the environment in reaching the F2F goals. In combination with precision agriculture solutions, new breeding techniques and agronomic research, significant progress can be made. Jari PENTINMÄKI, Vice President of Yara Europe, shared his views on delivering higher nutrient use efficiency and reduced footprint through innovation. By using nitrate based solutions instead of nitrogen ones, farmers can increase yields, reduce GHG and ammonia emissions and improve Nitrogen Use Efficiency.

During the second panel, Zeno PIATTI-FÜNFKIRCHEN from Land&Forst Betriebe Österreich, who's also an organic farmer, discussed both opportunities and challenges arising from delivering the F2F Strategy. From Wageningen University, Hanna SCHEBESTA made legal remarks related to the Farm to Fork legal actions and unlocking innovation through a food system perspective.



Overall, the conference underlined the need for a combined effort in terms of both solutions and actors, in a way that balances the environmental, social and economic aspects of this transition.

5.8 1st Farming Biodiversity Summit: the role of agriculture in tomorrow's world

On May 27, the day after the regional FFA2021 meeting in Portugal, ELO and CAP (Confederation of Portuguese Farmers) organised the 1st Farming Biodiversity Summit in Santarém, Portugal with the participation online and in person of numerous high-level speakers.

The meeting was organized under the auspices of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union. ELO and CAP received support from several partners for this event: CropLife International, Consulai, Travel Tomorrow and the conference's media partner Agroportal.

In their introductory remarks the hosts Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, ELO Secretary General, and Eduardo OLIVEIRA E SOUSA, CAP President, referred to the growing impact of biodiversity policies on agriculture. Furthermore, the intensification of agriculture during the past 50 years has certainly had an impact on biodiversity. While farming must adapt to this new situation it also gives several possibilities for farmers and landowners. Farmers will need to find a new balance with nature and society. Ecosystem services will become part of the daily agricultural business.

Antonio GUTERRES (UN Secretary General) acknowledged the farming dilemma and spoke about the interdependency of biodiversity and agriculture. He stressed that agriculture would need to protect nature, restore ecosystems, and establish a balance in its relationship with the planet. The rewards, he said, will be tremendous, but he made it clear that not only agriculture has to play

a role. With Maciej GOLUBIEWSKI (Head of Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Agriculture) the participants were able to get the latest update on the new Common Agricultural Policy.

The first session focused on scientific evidence. Xavier LE ROUX (Senior Scientist – INRAE) in his keynote speech gave the participants several insights on the relationship between agriculture and biodiversity.

The second session was more policy oriented. The Portuguese Minister for Agriculture, opening the debate, spoke about the opportunities in the

Green Deal and the more ambitious CAP in which biodiversity and climate change play an important role.

In the afternoon a special online ELO Workshop Solutions took place to present the support needed for synergies.

Interested in this event? Please visit the FFA2021 platform hosting it through www.forumforagriculture.com to view-on-demand the entire conference.

This event was organized following COVID-19 restrictions rules in place in May in Portugal.



5.9 European Tree of the Year 2021

On the background of major challenges on the horizon for the next years and decades in the agricultural sector, ELO's annual innovation conference explored the role of agri-technologies in delivering the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy. This event was held online in February 2021.

An unprecedented wave of enthusiasm and interest rose around the contest resulting in the highest number of votes for candidates ever reached. The winner even crossed the limit of 100 thousand votes received. In first place the Spanish millennial oak received 104.264 votes while in second place the Italian ancient plane tree received 78.210 votes. The sycamore tree from the Russian federation ended in third place with 66.026 votes, which in previous years would have been secure enough to win the ETY contest.

It was impossible again to organise the Award Ceremony in the European parliament, however we have decided to upscale the event and move it a bit more towards the EU policy making while combining it with a brand new concept of conference on the EU initiative to plant 3 billion ad-

ditional trees in EU by 2030 called Planting for the Future. The conference was a success and the European Commission has participated in all four working groups. We were asked to organise it regularly, on a yearly basis in order to evaluate the progress within the EU tree planting initiative.

Traditionally the contest received patronage from the EU ENVI Commissioner. This year again from Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, who also delivered a keynote speech in the Planting for the Future Conference. The concept combines experts, corporate partners and policy makers participating in the The concept combines experts, corporate partners and policy makers which in the Conference as well as in the Award Ceremony will be kept for future ETY editions.

 www.treeoftheyear.org

Conference:

 <https://www.treeoftheyear.org/Test/Planting-for-the-future-conference>



5.10 Insights from EU Projects

68



On May 27th 2021, alongside ELO's Farming Biodiversity Summit and the FFA2021 Regional Hybrid Event in Portugal, the **ELO Projects Team** organised a Solutions Workshop aimed at building synergies between European rural sustainable development projects and the 1st Farming Biodiversity Summit. Concrete solutions were discussed through the lens of supporting biodiversity across projects, both in the past and in the future.

The eight European projects that were present at the workshop were presented into four overarching themes: bridging science and policy, research, cross-sectoral and multilevel approach, and land use change. The projects present were BIOPLAT-EU, BIOWILL, CONSOLE, MICROSERVICES, REFLOW, SAFEGUARD, SOILGUARD, and UNISECO. The goal of the workshop was to create a platform where the coordinators of these projects could present and set the foundations for synergies to be built between the projects to maximise each project output and contribute to collectively building a more sustainable and bio-diverse European environment.

Moderated by ELO, the workshop started by gathering the audience's prior knowledge on the state of biodiversity as well as which tools should be prioritised when it comes to reaching biodiversity goals on a global scale.

This was followed by the panel discussions, where the audience was able to witness synergies being built across such projects, especially through the lens of biodiversity. Project representatives were able to interact, question, and most importantly highlight how each of the project's aims, results, and outputs in supporting biodiversity and empowering the European agricultural sector as a whole.

This was done through the topics of sustainable bioenergy from non-food biomass production, circular economy processes utilising willow trees, phosphorus recovery in dairy waste water treatment, microbial functions in the soil, soil management practices, reversing pollinator losses for ecosystem services, agri-environmental public goods, and agro-ecological approaches in farming systems.

The recording of the workshop can be found online under the title *"ELO Solutions Workshop: Insights from EU Projects on Co-designing Research with Rural Actors"*.



Communication and Scientific Publications

6.1 CountrySide Magazine

For almost 27 years, our magazine has remained the voice of land managers and rural entrepreneurs, providing a platform for exchanging opinions and best practices. It provides such a platform and connects various aspects of agriculture, the environment, and rural businesses. It is also the perfect place to present the numerous projects the ELO is involved in.



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

The CountrySide Magazine is the perfect place for land managers and rural entrepreneurs voices to be heard and disseminated to ensure that it is taken into account in every process of decision making.

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 proved once more how important online communication is. From early spring, it allowed on a daily basis to stay connected with our members and partners, as well as allowed our team, based in Brussels and elsewhere, to not only secure a smooth functioning of the ELO office, but just as important, ensure that in case of any emergency no one would be let alone.

The ELO team has fine-tuned the use of various communication platforms, and developed new procedures to smoothly and efficiently exchange information with our network and collaborate. A lot of events were run online or in a hybrid format, when the in-person presence allowed. We continued the improvement of the ELO tools specially dedicated to our members, including weekly newsletters, monthly online policy meetings, and bi-annual general assemblies, as informing them is a key issue for us, as well as having their feedback to ensure that their own voice is heard in Brussels.

The ELO website remains the 'digital' window to the world, and is continuously one of the main communication tools for our members and supporters. Here, we post all information on relevant policies, conference invitations, ELO projects and other worthwhile material.

Special attention was attributed to ELO 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



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

6.3 Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe

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

This report describes the declining biodiversity of fields and meadows in Europe and how the European Union has acted on this by adopting nature legislation and by developing biodiversity strategies. Even though this has not always been successful.

The decline in small wildlife populations is caused by multiple practices including crop intensification, agricultural land consolidation, use of pesticides, urbanisation etc. This study will have a closer look at agricultural production techniques, study the effect of grazing, and the use of fertilisers and pesticides. It will also discuss the role of hunting and study the increasing populations of predators and their effects on the small wildlife of fields and meadows.

depends on the consistency with which they are established, as well as on the size of their sitting areas.

Next to habitat management, this report describes management practices at the species level, including the regulation of predators and artificial feeding. But the report also has a look at more innovative practices such as nature-based agriculture. It questions if organic farming is really having a positive impact on biodiversity and it has a look at the potential cooperation between stakeholders in the countryside. The report also takes a look at the importance of guardianship and how the "Wildlife Estates" label can play a role in the much-needed public recognition towards private landowners.

In order to encourage the implementation of voluntary actions in favour of the environment in agricultural areas, the CAP has launched the programme of Agri-Environmental Measures (AEM) based on multiannual contracts. These allow for the implementation of developments on the edges and within the crops that increase the carrying capacity of the plains, i.e. the capacity of a territory (and its habitats) to accommodate a certain density of individuals for each species.

The report looks forward to the new CAP under development and the role it could play in the protection of small wildlife. Next to CAP-funding, the

LIFE-programme can also play a role in supporting small wildlife, be it more specifically in Natura 2000 areas.

The report concludes this study with several case studies which successfully used one of the instruments or methods described in the study, as the proof is in the pudding.

Digital version (English, French):
<https://www.europeanlandowners.org/multimedia/publications/2021>

Printed version (English, French):
available through the ELO secretariat



Cooperation with the EU Institutions

7.1 Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside"

The Intergroup organises regular meetings in the European Parliament to encourage fruitful exchange of views and, in some cases, decides to adopt positions, resolutions, or recommendations. From 2020, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, all meetings were held remotely via online meeting platforms.

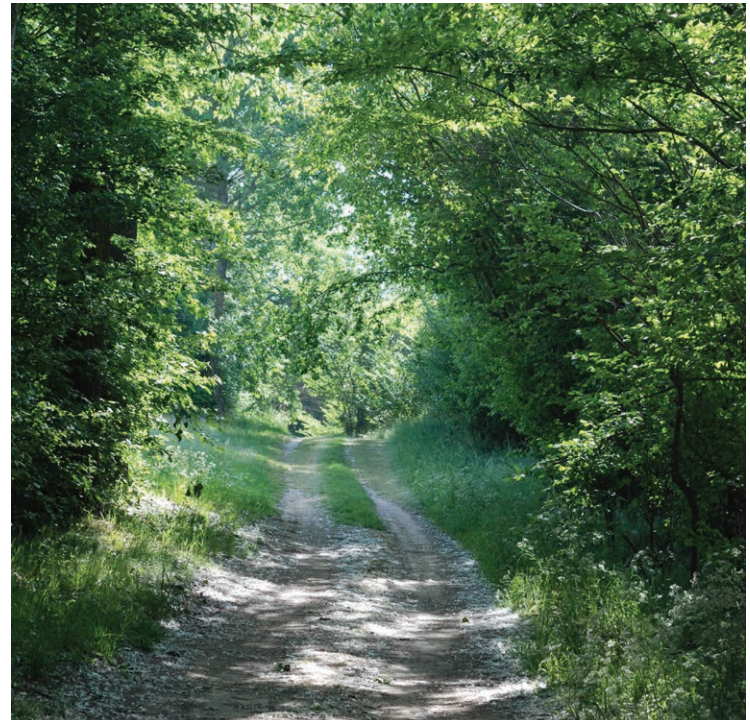


Under the Intergroup Board members' initiative, in 2021, ELO & FACE organised five timely high-level conferences for the 2019-2023 EP term. The topics included: *Hunting under the Birds Directive: An open debate on the state of play* (February); *EU Nature Restoration Targets: State of play and next steps* (April); *Dynamic of Agriculture for a Lively Countryside* (June); *Combating the greatest threat to wolves in Europe: Illegal killing* (September); *Soil Strategy: Where to go? A chance to make it work at a local level?* (December, in the framework of the European Biodiversity Conference).

The online and hybrid mode allowed the Intergroup to enlarge its audience with an average of more than 300 participants. The various debates were dedicated to major issues related to the EU Green Deal implementation. Throughout its yearly work, the Intergroup explored ways and remedies for the agriculture and environment sectors to thrive and face the future challenges to improve EU sustainability, ensuring the diversity of the farming and forestry professions, as well as resilience of rural areas.

The December Board meeting aligned the Work Plan for 2022 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.

For more information you can consult the ELO website or
 **www.biodiversityhuntingcountryside.eu**



7.2 The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores

The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores (LC) was set up in 2014. Throughout the existence of the platform, ELO was the co-chair of the platform, together with the European Commission. The following activities were organised in 2021:

April 12, 2021

Thematic Webinar – Stakeholder involvement in large carnivore management in Europe: Example of Swedish Wildlife Management Delegations and international comparisons

The event was organised by the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, the Regional Platforms on Large Carnivores and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The webinar presented results from a survey on stakeholder participation in the Swedish Wildlife Management Delegations, gave an overview of how participants interact in such fora in the light of the ongoing update of the Large Carnivores Management Plans in Sweden and presented the overall context of participatory management of large carnivores in Sweden as well as lessons learnt and experiences from other regional platforms in Europe.

May 20, 2021

Online Plenary meeting

The eighth annual meeting of the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores took place online on May 20, 2021 under the presidency of Jurgen Tack, chair of the EC Large Carnivore Platform. A range of policy initiatives relevant to the work of the platform were discussed including an update on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and the restoration instrument, LIFE projects and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Platform members discussed the activities planned on gathering information about livestock protection and large carnivores. The Platform's communication plan was updated including a discussion of improving the platform's communication as well as on the next steps for implementing the platform's work plan.



November 26, 2021

EUROPARC Workshop – Coexistence with large carnivores: the role of Protected Area

The workshop, targeting protected area managers specifically, was organised by EUROPARC in collaboration with the EU Large Carnivore Platform secretariat and the Regional Platforms project. During the workshop, the European Commission activities supporting coexistence were presented as well as the activities carried out by the platforms which are of relevance to protected area managers. A facilitated discussion helped gather experiences and the need for further support in promoting coexistence.

December 10, 2021

Regional Workshop in Ávila, Spain

The regional workshop of the EU Large Carnivore Platform on Coexistence between people and large carnivores: Presentation regional platform agreed actions was organised by the Ávila platform on large carnivores in collaboration with the EU Platform, the Ávila regional platform and the Asociación Raza Avileña. It took place on December 10 and was hosted by the EU Platform in the Lienzo Norte Congress Centre in Ávila.



More information:  https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform.htm

A close-up, slightly angled view of a mature apple tree. The branches are thick and dark, covered in a dense canopy of green leaves. Numerous apples are visible, some green and some with a red blush, hanging from the branches. The lighting is natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

8

Partners

8.1 European Historic Houses

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to bring damaging consequences to various sectors including the cultural sector, but EHH has pushed forward with a dynamic, innovative, and digitally responsive approach to its advancing projects.

Throughout the year, EHH has made significant progress regarding both its virtual and European projects. These initiatives have given its members the opportunity to travel both virtually and physically, and they have helped owners become more familiar with digital tools to enhance, promote, and manage their houses. Following the successful pattern of last years' **Facebook Live Visits** and **Houses of the Month** virtual projects, EHH continued to allow people from all over the world to visit marvelous historic gems from the comfort of their own home. During 2021, EHH has launched three European Projects: **CHARTER, HERIT**, and **IDENTITY AND INNOVATION**. The CHARTER project published its first result, presenting a new model for the cultural heritage sector: **"A new**

landscape for heritage professions - preliminary findings". The **Executive Summary Guide** for the HERIT Project was published recently, and the IDENTITY AND INNOVATION Project consortium is now preparing for the **transnational meeting** for 2022. In April 2021, EHH held a **Next-Gen conference** that virtually gathered close to one hundred young owners from all over Europe.

While EHH understands the importance of the **Green Deal** and its objectives, it will continue the fight for exemption: keeping the special status of Historic Houses in the European regulations for buildings is essential for the protection of our cultural heritage. For this reason, EHH created **a short film** that explains in detail the impact of the

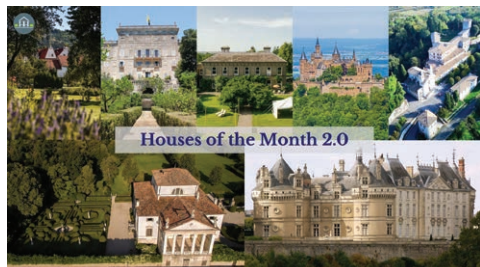


Fit for 55 package on privately-owned historic houses.

EHH is preparing some attractive activities for 2022, namely the NextGen Conference in April that will take place in Dublin, if the sanitary situation allows it, along with other events designed in accordance to our members' interests. Finally, we are keeping our fingers crossed for positive selection results of the MERITA Creative Europe Project.

Find out more info at:

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



8.2 EUROPA NOSTRA: For a New European Renaissance

Europa Nostra hosted the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021 from 21 to 24 September in **Venice** - the first and largest physical event of its kind since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Summit received the support of the European Union and was held under the patronage of the European Parliament, the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Italian Ministry of Culture.

Some 10 events were organised - from an inspiring **European Heritage Awards Ceremony**, to celebrate the winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2021 and of the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes 2021, to a thought-provoking **European Heritage Policy Agora**, with the participation of high-profile political representatives, including the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission **Margaritis SCHINAS** and **Dubravka ŠUICA**, the Slovenian Minister of Culture and Acting Chair of the EU Council of Ministers **Vasko SIMONITI**, and the Italian Minister of Culture **Dario FRANCESCHINI**.

At the concluding event of the Summit, Europa Nostra launched the **Venice Call to Action "For a New European Renaissance"**, which makes a strong plea to European leaders at all levels of governance as well as to all heritage actors to duly integrate the transformative power of culture and cultural heritage among the strategic priorities for




the reshaping of our societies. It puts forward **12 concrete and actionable proposals** that aim at unleashing the potential of cultural heritage for the European Green Deal, the New European Bauhaus and the European Year of Youth 2022, among other key priorities of the European Union, as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. **We invite you to read the Venice Call to Action and share it.**

2021 was a "green year" for Europa Nostra. Together with ICOMOS and the Climate Heritage Network, Europa Nostra published the **European Cultural Heritage Green Paper** "Putting Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal" on 22 March. This ground-breaking Paper correlates the contribution of cultural heritage to all key areas of the European Green Deal and proposes a series of concrete recommendations both for policy-makers and heritage stakeholders. This Paper received the support of the European Investment Bank Institute and the EU Creative Europe programme. In November, Europa Nostra was appointed as the new Regional Co-Chair of the **Climate Heritage Network** for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Together with the global heritage community, Europa Nostra contributed to COP26 in Glasgow, including by participating in and co-organising 4 heritage-related events.

Europa Nostra also stepped up its action to **save threatened heritage in Europe**, in particular by enhancing its **7 Most Endangered** programme thanks to the increased support of the European Investment Bank Institute.

In addition to these flagship initiatives, Europa Nostra worked on a **wide range of activities** in 2021.

Find out more & join Europa Nostra!

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



2021 Winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards.
Copyright: Courtesy of Europa Nostra

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.



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 carried on its legacy by organising the "Jump for heritage" across Europe, to raise awareness on the importance of safeguarding our religious heritage. The competition received hundreds of photographs from more than 24 countries and had great success in raising awareness for 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 8,000 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

In 2021, the completed factsheets were presented at the FRH Biennial Conference and are now available on the FRH website. They include an overview on the state of religious heritage sites on a Europe-wide scale, covering 30 European countries.

Events

In 2021, FRH organised 4 hybrid conference events within the framework of the Biennial Conference 'Europe's Living Religious Heritage', each addressing one of the conference subthemes; Continuity in Function or Use (28 May 2021 – Barcelona, Spain); Continuity in Community Connection and Dialogue (24 September 2021 – Bologna, Italy); Continuity in Evolving Cultural Expressions (22 October 2021 – Michaelstein Abbey, Blankenburg, Germany); and Continuity in Care and Safeguarding (November 2021 – Brussels, Belgium).



Jump for Heritage campaign:

🌐 <https://www.frh-europe.org/projects/jump-for-heritage/>

Religiana:

🌐 <https://religiana.com/>

FRH Inform factsheets:

🌐 <https://www.frh-europe.org/projects/frh-inform/>

2022 FRH Conference events:

🌐 www.frh-europe.org/events/frh-conference-2021-europes-living-religious-heritage/

📷 @frh_europe

📘 @FutureForReligiousHeritage

🐦 @FRH_Europe

📺 @FRH - Future for Religious Heritage

FRH Conference 2021 – Europe's Living Religious Heritage



8.4 EFFORTS EUROPE

The EFFORTS Europe 6th annual 2021 congress on Green and Blue Fortification heritage took place online on 13 January 2021, and counted 121 participants from 23 European countries and with, among others, speakers from the European Commission, the European Investment Bank Institute, and Europa Nostra. EFFORTS presented its 2022-2025 Network Project 'EFFORTS Goes Green' there.



The July EFFORTS workshop at member Hellevoetsluis (Netherlands) on the Fortified Heritage Impact Study was organised in a hybrid fashion. The EFFORTS October workshop on civil participation and volunteering, organised as an official partner of the EU Week of Regions, together with the URBAN Culture and Cultural Heritage project, was online.

In 2021, EFFORTS organised three EU Interreg Fortitude project expert workshops in Bar (Montenegro, online), Banja Luka (Bosnia & Herzegovina, live), and Karlovac (Croatia, live), three EU Interreg Recapture the Fortress Cities project stakeholder workshops in Belgium, and participated in the Barcelona URBAN conference on Dissonant Heritage.

The EFFORTS presidency of Bergen op Zoom (The Netherlands) welcomed an EFFORTS and partners delegation in its own new heritage site 'Verborgen Vesting' ('hidden fortress'). EFFORTS was present at the Valle Alpino Conference in South Tyrol and at the live presentation of a dedicated book at its member Herceg Novi (Montenegro), which was also the winner of the 2021 EFFORTS Award for innovative participation in the annual European Fortress Summer event.

In 2021 membership rose to 150 institutions, universities, museums, and NGOs from 23 countries. EFFORTS started the set-up of an International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Scientific Committee on Fortifications and Military Heritage (ICOFORT) cooperation within its newly organised EFFORTS/Forte Cultura Joint Scientific Committee. The latter is active in the EFFORTS Fortification Heritage Knowledge Center.

 www.efforts-europe.eu

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

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

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



8.5 EPA – European Partnership Association

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



ELO and EPA has traditionally organized a joint project, the **European Tree of the Year (ETY)** contest. The ETY 2021 was the last edition organized in this tandem. Since Spring 2022, a small but important change was introduced. The role of EPA was taken over by one of its members, the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (CEPF) which has become more active at the EU level.

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

The CEPF is one of the strongest players among environmental foundations in the CEE region. It is not only providing funding for other organisations, but also developing its own expertise within national and European projects. It is currently focused on climate change adaptations, using its capacities to improve the situation both in cities and in the countryside. This is a shared common interest with ELO.

The ELO has participated in the **Planting for the Future Conference**, organized by EPA (CEPF), where the EU initiative on planting additional 3 bn trees in Europe by 2030 was discussed and the strategy how to reach this goal was outlined. ELO became involved in order to protect the interests of its members. With the encouragement from the European Commission, the CEPF and ELO decided to organize this conference on annual basis and include the conference into the ForumforAg.

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

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



8.6 EUROPEAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE

A decade-long partnership

In 2021, the European Heritage Alliance celebrated its 10th anniversary as it was launched in June 2011 in Amsterdam on the occasion of the European Heritage Congress organised by Europa Nostra. On this occasion, 25 Europe's major heritage networks agreed to work more closely together to promote the untapped potential of Europe's heritage, cultural and natural, immovable and movable. The Alliance founding members brought together Europe's civil society organisations, historic cities and villages, museums, heritage professionals and volunteers, (private) owners of collections of artefacts, historic buildings and cultural landscapes, educators, town planners, etc.

10 years later, the European Heritage Alliance gathers **51 European and international networks** active in the wider field of heritage and has become a key player in the world of heritage consulted from all sides on various heritage issues.

Since 2011, Europa Nostra has coordinated the Alliance as part of its network projects co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, and will continue to do it as part of its new network project "European Cultural Heritage Agora: Empowering Europe's Civil Society Movement for Heritage" (2022-2024). In 2021, Future for Religious Heritage was the first member to moderate an Alliance session following the collective decision to introduce an annual "rotating chair" of the meetings.

On 9 May, Europa Nostra in association with the European Heritage Alliance launched a wide **call to organise inspiring and engaging citizens debates on the future of Europe** in cultural heritage sites across Europe in 2021 and 2022. This grassroots initiative was a suitable way to mark the Alliance's anniversary and a meaningful contribution both to the **Conference on the Future of Europe** and to the **New European Bauhaus**, of which a number of Alliance members are proud official partners.

In 2021, several Alliance members also actively contributed to the **European Cultural Heritage Green Paper** "Putting Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal" which was officially launched on 22 March by Europa Nostra and ICOMOS.



European Heritage Alliance

 <https://europeanheritagealliance.eu/>



8.7 European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform

ESPP www.phosphorusplatform.eu promotes sustainable phosphorus management, in particular nutrient recycling.



In 2021, ESPP has been active with the EU Fertilising Products Regulation 2019/1009, with publication of criteria for recycled struvite and precipitated phosphates (2021/2086), use of ashes in fertiliser production (2021/2087), and biochars / pyrolysis materials (2021/2088). Proposals are now underway to also cover nitrogen salts recovered by ammonia stripping from digestates, and phosphogypsum. ESPP is also working on authorisation of use of recovered nutrients in Organic Farming (see FIBL in ESPP eNews n°60).

2021 saw a publication by JRC of the MSA (System Analysis) for **P4 (white phosphorus)**, based on the workshop on P4 co-organised by the European Commission and ESPP in 2020 (SCOPE Newsletter n°136). Both phosphate rock (i.e. phosphorus in fertilisers and food) and the specific material P4 (essential for a range of chemicals) are EU Critical Raw Materials.

In the context of the **EU Algae Initiative**, ESPP organised a webinar to explore regulatory questions concerning algae grown using waste inputs (e.g. grown in wastewater, or using off-gas CO2 ...), and with EABA and Eureau, has formally put resulting questions to the European Commission. ESPP also organised a working webinar on regu-

latory obstacles to recycling manure to fertilisers, and will pursue this further with the European Commission and EFSA in 2022.

ESPP organised the 4th **PERM5 Phosphorus in Europe Research Meeting** online (see SCOPE Newsletter n°141).

In 2022, the 4th European Sustainable Phosphorus Conference (ESPC4) Vienna 20-21 June 2022 will be the biggest phosphorus stakeholder meeting globally for 4 years (since ESPC3 Helsinki, with 300 participants from 30 countries, see SCOPE Newsletter n°127) and will be followed by PERM5, the 5th Phosphorus in Europe Research Meeting, Vienna, 22 June 2022. The event will be 'hybrid', with networking tools enabling dialogue between online participants and those meeting in Vienna throughout the duration of the conferences. We look forward to seeing you there! <https://phosphorusplatform.eu/espc4>

ESPP is 100% membership-fees funded since establishment in 2014 and 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.

 www.phosphorusplatform.eu

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

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



8.8 Rural Coalition

The ELO, together with six other organisations involved in rural activities, continue to strengthen the voice of Europe's rural population and increase the competitiveness of the rural economy. The new policies being developed, such as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Sustainable Food Systems Law, 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 published 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 2022, 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

Debates within the European Union and around the globe concerning climate adaptation and mitigation are pointing towards the need for responsible and sustainable land management and agriculture. We will carry on our mission to showcase the capabilities of private landowners and farmers to support climate goals.

Part of our focus will remain on the Wildlife Estates and its farming counterpart AgriLIFE to complement the works of any land manager or farmer who engages in sustainable practices that enhances our environment and regenerates biodiversity. I strongly believe that in this coming year and the years to follow, both of these initiatives will have a significant role to play for landowners across the European Union.

With the Common Agricultural Policy reformed, we are now in the waiting process for national strategic plans of the EU Member States to see how farmers will be supported through legislative tools. We want to ensure that our members as well as any private rural actor is fairly represented both in Brussels and on a national level to help create policies that support responsible and sustainable land management.

We also intend to follow closely the 'EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030' and the 'EU Forest Strategy 2030', and continue tackling the notion coming from the European Institutions that forestry management, or any form of land management for that matter, equates to the loss of biodiversity. We aim to dispel this idea and illustrate the fact that responsible forestry management is the optimal way to support biodiversity and enhance the potential

that our forests have with regards to climate adaptation and mitigation.

The right to land access, property rights and the land market will remain a core pillar of our work at ELO, where we intend to reinforce the four freedoms of the European Union - movement of goods,

persons, services and capital. In recent years, we have seen some cases of these freedoms neglected, therefore, we will continue supporting the need for a lively, sustainable and robust rural economy which can only happen if those freedoms are enforced also in the countryside.



NOTES

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