FCS Yearbook 2025 – President’s Foreword

Baron Seger van Voorst tot Voorst
President, Friends of the Countryside

Dear Friends,

In times of rapid political and societal change, the responsibility carried by landowners and land managers has become increasingly visible. Across Europe, those who care for the land are asked to reconcile environmental expectations, economic viability and cultural continuity. This task requires steadiness, experience and a long-term perspective.

Friends of the Countryside brings together individuals and families who understand stewardship not as a temporary obligation, but as an enduring commitment. The strength of our network lies in this continuity — in the transmission of knowledge, values and responsibility from one generation to the next.

For this reason, the development of our Young Friends community is of particular importance. It is encouraging to witness a growing engagement among young future landowners and land managers (18 – 35 years) who want to assume responsibility and to contribute actively to our shared work. Ensuring that they can learn from experience while bringing their own perspectives into the dialogue strengthens the resilience and vitality of our network. I encourage all Friends to allow your children or grandchildren to join YFCS. The younger they join, the better. Membership is possible from the age of 18.

As we look ahead, our objective remains clear: to safeguard the independence, sustainability and long-term vitality of Europe’s countryside. This requires calm determination, mutual trust and a shared understanding of the responsibilities entrusted to us.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to CEO & Secretary General Thierry de l´Escaille, General Director Dr. Jurgen Tack and the wider ELO team for their continued dedication and professional engagement throughout the year. Their work provides essential support to our members and contributes significantly to ensuring that the perspective of responsible land stewardship is well represented at European level.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of Friends of the Countryside for their continued commitment and for the spirit of friendship that defines our organization. It is through this shared dedication that our network remains strong and forward-looking.

Yours in Friendship,
Seger van Voorst tot Voorst
President