

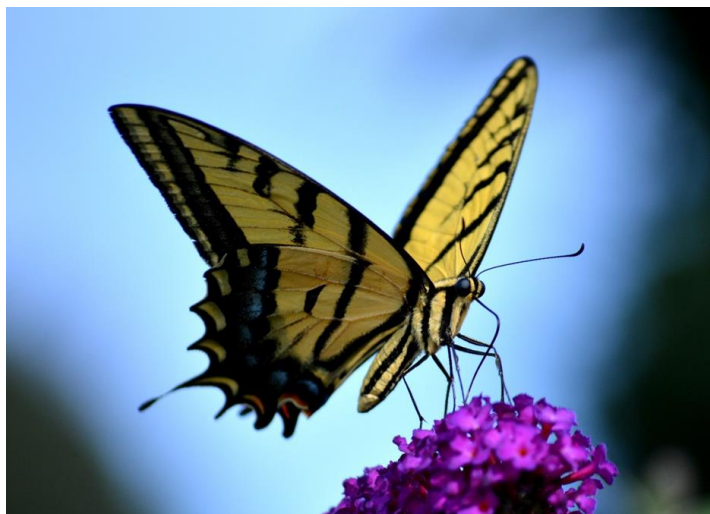
WILDLIFE ESTATES Initiative

"WE act for biodiversity"



The collaboration between ABLE and WEI jells

ABLE -Assessing Butterflies in Europe- is a project delivered by a partnership of the Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE), the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, and Vlinderstichting, with financial support from the EU Commission



The extension of butterfly monitoring across Europe and the development and improvement of indicators for policy evaluation is certainly pioneering. The work of BCE and its partners also raises the profile of wild pollinators and their habitats and advises on how to conserve them through, namely, sustainable habitat management. BCE maintains discussions about European Union agriculture and environmental policies;

also with the public through social media and citizen engagement. Apart from this work, willingness to reform policies and practices on a sufficient scale, needs to be championed much more vigorously by policy makers and farmers leaders, if we are to succeed in avoid runaway insect declines.

ABLE and WEI agreed to collaborate some months ago. The collaboration consists of WEI will try that one estate labelled WE in each country will regu-

larly assess its pollinator populations and will facilitate the information to the ABLE database for the better comprehension of these insect population dynamics. Up to now, three wildlife managers of estates labelled WE are in contact with ABLE. The estates are: Esterházy Betriebe (Austria), De Hoge Veluwe (The Netherlands) and Herdade da Cubeira (Portugal).

People in charge of these estates can be certain that the rest of WEI is very proud of them and thankful for their commitment with our environment: they make a better WEI and a better society.

2018 was the year when most Wildlife Estates labels were awarded to new territories since its creation: 52

During 2018, 1 new estate has been awarded Wildlife Estates in each of the following nations: Austria, Finland, Italy, and Scotland; 2 labels have been awarded both in Denmark and in Germany; 6 in Belgium and the same number in Spain; 7 estates have received the WE Label in France; 25 estates have met our initiative in Sweden.

Already 330 European estates make up the Wildlife Estates Initiative; covering 1,621,005 ha. We defend our nature -in all senses: our environment and our way of managing it- on this basis, of which we as proud as our members are of making part of our initiative.



An excited representative of the family Voortman received a diploma in Brussels for his estate Landgoed Groote Heide having been awarded WE in the year 2018. Dr. Rosa -Director for Nature Capital, DG Environment, European Commission-, Ms. Evenepoel -CEO of the Flemish (Belgium) Agency for Nature and Forest- and Mr. Kostopoulos -COO Wildlife Estates Initiative- handed over the document on behalf of the WE International Jury on February 11th, 2019

The Wildlife Estates reaches the presidency of the European Union

Romania holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union until June 30th, 2019. In November 2018, representatives of the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) visited the Romanian Ministry of Environment, where they met with the State Secretary of the Ministry, Ion Cimpeanu. ELO proposals for the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council were presented by Elga Gaižutis -LMSA (Lithuanian Forest and Land Owners Association)-, and Jurgen Tack, ELO Scientific Director. Mr. Cimpeanu introduced the activities of the Ministry of Environment, the priorities for the presidency of the European Union, and presented the most current challenges in the Romanian environment.



At that occasion, Mr. Cimpeanu became aware of the WE Initiative, our structure, activities, and ideas from Algis Gaizutis -ELO vice-president- and Dr. Tack.



Wildlife Estate Label France meeting 2018. An Event reflecting a very positive evolution of the actions and the commitments accomplished by the French environmental actors

Excellent presentations by thirteen speakers were held at the Wildlife Estates Label France Meeting 2018, together with networking opportunities, wide-ranging information about environmental management, and exchange of views between landowners. The event was held at the Fondation François Sommer headquarters -in Paris- on December 20th, 2018.

Through several examples, the sixty-five attendees that day became aware of the evolution of the French territorial policies, namely thanks to the case of Basse Vallée de la Durdent -an estate awarded Wildlife Estates in 2017 by the initiative of its farmers and hunters association-, combining private and public ownership. Such success was better understood thanks to the collaboration of the Seine-Normandie Water Agency and of the Conservatoire du Littoral (a coastline conservation organisation). The account of the latter illustrated the very positive improvement regarding the land management issued by the agreement and the faith between territorial actors. It is with the selfsame spirit that, at the European level, the Wildlife Estates network develops interest and understanding.

New perspectives for the labelled estates at the Event were showcased by several organisations. These include: International Union for Conservation of Nature, Caisse de Dépôts et Consignations Biodiversité, Centre d'études et d'expertises sur les risques, l'environnement, la mobilité et l'aménagement, and Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage. Those perspectives address the issue of the pair « ecosystem complexity » (measured through biodiversity or others) - « climate »: the former is eclipsed by the latter these days. Nevertheless, is advisable not to forget that both are faces of that same coin called environment.



Pierre Mougenot, owner of Territoire de Merlet, an estate awarded WE in 2018

Peter Svetina is Slovenia's new Human Rights Ombudsman

Peter Svetina -one of European Landowners' Organization (ELO)'s Slovenian partners on an Erasmus project FARMID on social farming- was appointed Human Rights Ombudsman.



Peter Svetina -fourth from right- with ELO project officers at a Farmid Transatlantic meeting in Austria in September 2018

Mr. Svetina is a special education expert who has been working with persons with special needs for all his professional life. He runs Gunt, a social entrepreneurship established in the countryside, north-west of Ljubljana. He succeeded Vlasta Nussdorfer on February 23rd, 2019, when her five-year term ended.



Farmid is a project of ELO that was born following the identification of social entrepreneurship as a new opportunity for farmers to deliver alternative services, diversify the scope of their activities and their role in society with effect on social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas.

2nd Dinner and WE Label Award Ceremony in Belgium

Thierry de l'Escaille –Secretary General, European Landowners' Organization– welcomed the two hundred attendees and introduced Humberto Delgado Rosa –Director for Natural Capital, DG Environment, European Commission–, who addressed an interesting speech stating the reasons why the Wildlife Estates Label contributes to nature conservation policy all around Europe.



Two special speeches were addressed by Marleen Evenepoel - CEO of the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest - and Philippe Baret –Dean of agronomy at the University Catholique de Louvain–. The first speech emphasised the very positive impact

of the Label in Flanders; the second discourse dealt with the new agricultural proceedings and the stakes that society has to face taking into account the limits of natural resources.

During the soiree, the thirteen estates labelled Wildlife Estate in Belgium and the one labelled in Germany with Belgian landownership during the last year received WE diplomas from the hands of H. D. Rosa and Konstantin Kostopoulos –adviser Natura 2000 and CEO Wildlife Estates-. This award ceremony was presented by Martin de Cock the Rameyen – President of Agriland, the sponsor of the event– with an analysis of the WE Label in Belgium, a country with already 35 members of the Network, which represent an area of almost 24,000 ha of excellent environmental management and whose managers are proud of. Alec van Havre -Landelijk Vlaanderen- and Jurgen Tack -ELO scientific director- presented each of the Flemish estates; the equivalent was done by Patrick Miel –Fondation pour la conservation des habitats– for the Wallonian properties. The future of the WE Initiative is very promising in Belgium, as it is in a number of other nations such as Sweden and Spain, who all share a common interest in European culture (which comes, most of it, from the rural area), rural economic activity, social concerns and, of course, in fostering ecosystemic strength and complexity, as the basis for the rest.

The event ended with a reinforced consciousness of team among the WE members, a good impression for the prospective members who attended the soiree, and a willingness to continue our work enhancing excellent and diverse environmental management.



Belleuropa Award 2018: La Ronca estate

The estate La Ronca received the Belleuropa Award 2018 on December 4th. Every year, one territory labelled Wildlife Estate is awarded with this prize in recognition of the richness of its natural and cultural heritage and of the voluntarily commitment of its landowners and land managers in enhancing that heritage. The event was supported by Neorurale Acqua & Sole, the European Landowners' Organization, the Instituto Ibérico para el Medio Ambiente, and Rural Investment Support for Europe.

The Belleuropa Award Ceremony was celebrated -together with the Bee Award- as the culmination of the European Biodiversity Conference, entitled "Concrete implementation of the Nature Action Plan". This event is organized yearly by the European Landowners' Organization and hosted this time by the Member of the European Parliament Karl-Heinz Florenz. The European Biodiversity Conference on December 4th was the last Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside session in 2018.

The conference focused on the future of the Biodiversity strategy in the framework of the Multiannual Financial Framework, the Common Agricultural Policy post 2020, and the Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy. The future CAP should deliver a higher level of environmental and climate ambition; in this framework, the EU environmental future strategy will be key and should be in line with the agricultural framework policy. How to improve the situation for the post 2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy was a key element which

was discussed at the event. The opening speeches were addressed by: K.-H. Florenz, Thierry de l'Escaille -ELO secretary general- and Dr. Jurgen Tack -ELO Scientific Director. Luc Bas -IUCN- dealt with the issue of privately protected areas and CAP & post biodiversity 2020. Sue Collins -Butterfly Conservation Europe- was also in the panel discussion. Romain Lasseur -IZI Group- addressed the topic of invasive alien species management, and Ms. Katrina Marsden -EU Large Carnivores Platform-, the rural development tools for the management of large carnivores. Daniel Calleja Crespo -Director General of Environment, European Commission- addressed the closing keynote and handed the Belleuropa Award over together with Konstantin Kostopoulos -CEO Wildlife Estates Initiative-: a diploma and a painting.



La Ronca is a private estate located in the Central Plateau of the Iberian Peninsula. The owner, Andrea Marazzi, is dedicated to a management model that promotes the conservation, preserving the traditional land uses. The estate has many different Mediterranean habitats, the largest in terms of area covered being *dehesa*, the typical Mediterranean forest with pasture, highly biodiverse, with centenary evergreen oaks, and

that combines in perfect harmony different land uses including the grazing with sheep and the collection of high quality honey from nomadic hives. The mosaic of different crops - cereals, olives, fruit trees and vineyards- provides refuge and food for many small vertebrate species such as rabbits and partridges. These are the base of the chain



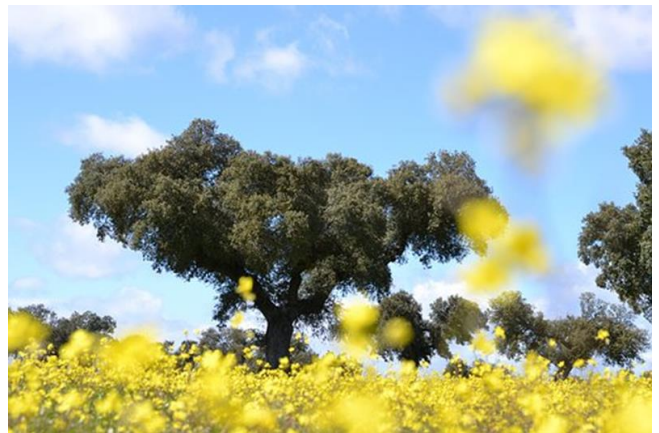
food for the most endangered predator in the zone: the Iberian imperial eagle. The property borders with Alberche river, which is included in Natura 2000 for the habitats and flora present in the riparian forests. Thanks to the permanent water table, alders, ash trees, and other accompanying vegetation serve as corridor for wildlife like otters and many protected species.

Fighting bull breeding arrives to the European Parliament bull ring

Directors of the Unión de Criadores de Toros de Lidia (UCTL; Fighting Bull Breeders Association) met several European Parliament

representatives and WEI secretariat in February 2019. This association represents breeders from Spain, Portugal and France.

They have the same environmental, social and cultural principles than the European Landowners' Organization and WEI. Their visit was triggered by the fact that there are some risks for fighting bull breeders in the change of the Common Agricultural Policy. Fighting bull breeding -together with big game hunting and extensive pig breeding- is the activity allowing to manage the Mediterranean forest in such a way that it takes the form and the function characteristic of what is called *dehesa* in Castilian, one of the ecosystems with a highest environmental value in Europe.



UTCL and WEI representatives left the barn door wide open for further collaboration.

Future public European Union consultations

-Expected in 2nd quarter 2019:

- a) Evaluation of the European Union agricultural promotion policy.
- b) Evaluation of the Common Agriculture Policy measures applicable to the wine sector.



-Expected in 3rd quarter 2019:

- a) European Union farm policy. Evaluation of its impact on habitats, landscapes and biodiversity.
- b) EU farm policy. Evaluation of its impact on water.
- c) Evaluation of the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on generational renewal, local development and jobs in rural areas.
- d) Origin labeling for meat – evaluation.

Swift agreement on European Union budget, essential to ensure continuity in farm payments

That was the main reaction from Commission Hogan after Agriculture Members of the European Parliament announced that they will only vote on the legislation for the next Common Agricultural Policy in April 2019, which means the next European Parliament will have the final say on the policy overhaul.



At the December 2018 European Council, European leaders endorsed the aim of reaching political agreement on the budget by autumn 2019. "This will be essential to pave the way for finalising the Common Agricultural Policy negotiations and to ensure a smooth transition to the next period," Hogan said.

Romanians weigh options for reducing Common Agricultural Policy payments to big farms

The Romanian Council presidency has put forward its own ideas on how to reduce the disparity in farming payments between small and big farms under the Common Agricultural Policy. According to a Council working paper, Romania suggests three options that would allow for varying degrees of flexibility for EU countries to limit payments. One of them, for example, would allow for more consideration of local conditions such as production costs and farming structure. Another would gradually reduce CAP payments on a sliding scale between € 60,000 and the ceiling of € 100,000.

Common Agricultural Policy reform. Commission Official defends national plans

Rudolf Mögele, deputy director in the European Commission's agriculture department, on March 4th, 2019, defended a hallmark component of Commissioner Phil Hogan's reform proposal for the Common Agricultural Policy. Hogan wants member countries to be obliged to submit so-called national plans for farmers to implement in order to merit subsidies. A concern expressed by countries is that this would fragment the commonality of the CAP and lead to a breakdown in the policy's strength. However, Mögele said this would not be the case: "One could believe that the member states will put together their plan and that's it. No, it's the opposite," he said. "These

plans will be discussed with the Commission," he added.



Summary Common Agricultural Policy post 2020

The cuts proposed to the CAP continue to be a contentious point, with the majority of agricultural ministers calling for a stronger budget but with several key players and finance ministers not wanting to increase their share of the EU budget. For instance, Dutch Minister



Carola Schouten said that it was “inevitable that CAP cannot be maintained at current levels” as a result of Brexit and EU’s new priorities faced by the Community, adding that any decisions on the CAP budget must be made in the context of the Multi-annual Financial Framework.

In the last farm council (2019/01/28), several agri ministers drew attention to the need for a strong 2nd pillar.

Meanwhile, Council is divided on proposals to scrap the threshold of € 2,000 for financial discipline to fund the agricultural crisis reserve with the likes of FI, SE, FR, CZ, DE, IE, NL, DK, LU & SK backing the Commission proposal in the interest of simplification. Others such as SI, AT, HR, PL, CY, MT, LT, HU, IT & EL said the € 2,000 threshold should be maintained. There was broad agreement that the crisis reserve should be financed by unused funds and assigned revenue in future years, with financial discipline used as a last resort to replenish the fund.

The European Landowners’ Organization has been working in a joint statement with the Rural Coalition to voice again the opposition to the CAP budget cuts announced, which do not only send the wrong message but also threaten the existence of rural areas as viable and attractive places to live and work. The Coalition also wants to focus on increasing synergies between other European funds such as the ERDF and the Cohesion funds to address the structural development of rural areas.

European farm diplomats on 2019/03/25 gathered in the EU’s Special Committee on Agriculture, where they discussed, among other issues, the so-called new greening architecture in the Common Agricultural Policy. This refers to the complicated set of rules that will nudge farmers toward adopting better environmental practices.

An Official present at the meeting said that the debate flowed in “very many directions,” but that many delegations pushed for simpler rules and more flexibility — a time-honored demand of national agriculture ministries. Ministers will discuss the new greening architecture in April 2019.

Ireland ‘willing to introduce further capping of farm payments’. The Irish Government is willing to introduce further capping of large EU farm payments and said the EU should not cap eco payments or payments to young farmers.



The Minister for agriculture, Michael Creed considers that plans to allow farmers to deduct labour costs would undermine such cuts and that it would also be cumbersome to administer. Therefore, he said a key issue for Ireland is that proposals to deduct labour costs must be voluntary for member states. Under the new proposals, the wording to the regulation will change from 'shall' to 'may' which will allow Member States to decide whether to allow for labour costs to be taken fully into account when capping payments. Commissioner Hogan warned that such an approach would undermine the commonality of the CAP and the level playing field between EU farmers.



Commission rejects demands to increase coupled support. The Agriculture Ministers of seven Central and Eastern European countries have asked for higher limits and fewer restrictions on EU farm subsidies coupled to production, but the European Commission said their demands are “not appropriate”. “Proposal would seriously undermine the common nature of the CAP”.

Ongoing work on the legislative proposals for the CAP 2021-2027 - Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

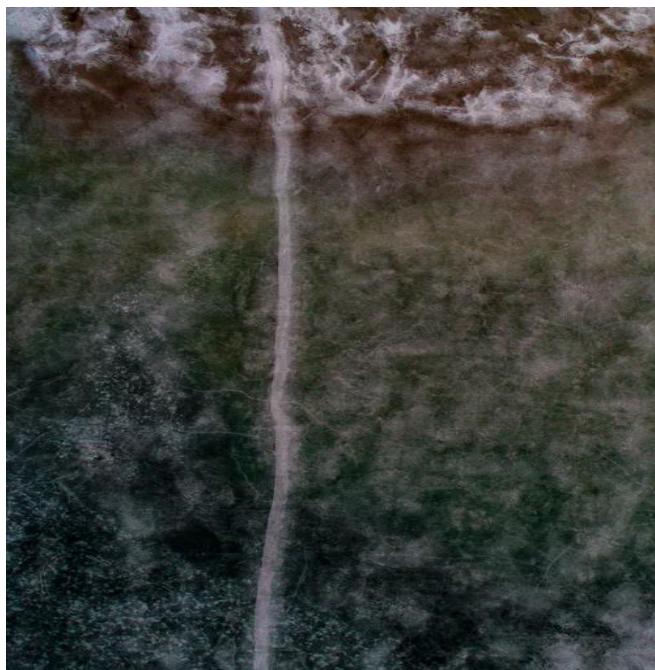
Members held an exchange of views on the three CAP proposals, which will be voted in the coming weeks. The current state of play can be summarized as follows:

-The Strategic Plans Regulation (Ms. Herranz García -EPP, ES-): Over the course of 35 technical meetings and 17 shadows meetings, 123 compromise amendments, covering the vast majority of the amendments, have been discussed.

-The CMO/Amending Regulation (Mr. Andrieu -SD, FR-): 61 compromise amendments have been negotiated during 13 technical meetings and 7 shadows meetings.

-The Horizontal Regulation (Ms. Müller -ALDE, DE-): Over the course of 13 technical meetings and 5 shadow meetings, Ms. Müller has managed to negotiate 15 compromise amendments covering 234 amendments. An additional 16 compromise amendments are still currently under discussion, covering a further 330 amendments.

Mapping Europe's ecosystems key to ensuring their future health and resilience



That is why the European Environment Agency is currently working on enhancing the data and knowledge of Europe's ecosystems which will support the European Union's work on the final evaluation of the European Union biodiversity strategy in 2020.

Sustainable finance. Members of the European Parliament agree on taxonomy definition

Developing an EU classification system for sustainable economic activities.

The development of an EU-wide taxonomy for environmentally sustainable economic activities is an integral part of the EU efforts, under the EU's sustainable development

agenda and the carbon neutrality agenda, to connect finance with needs of the real economy and drive forward the Capital Markets Union.

The European Parliament adopted some weeks ago its position on a Commission proposal to define what counts as environmentally sustainable investment at the EU level. This is part of a push by Brussels to green the financial sector and raise the hundreds of billions it needs to achieve its climate goals. The Parliament's report passed with a large majority: 316 MEPs in favor, 93 against and 192 abstentions. A majority of MEPs from Poland and the Czech Republic voted against the report, co-authored by Green MEP Bas Eickhout and Sirpa Pietikäinen from the European People's Party. The French, British and Greek delegations were also divided.

The European People's Party promotes a resolution on large predators and their management

In February 2019, Mr. H. Dorfmann -on behalf of the EPP Group- presented a motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the European Commission pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure on large predators and their management (2018/3006(RSP))

The European Parliament called the Commission to regularly evaluate the Habitat Directive and its annexes in light of current developments and to subsequently propose updates allowing the protection status of species to be adapted as soon as the desired conserva-



tion status is reached. The document also calls the Commission to recognize the need for a more active involvement of regional and local actors and the cooperation between regions and at cross-border level granting them the necessary flexibility to allow concrete actions to be taken in particular regions that can effectively resolve conflicts of co-existence between large predators and some human activities and life styles. It is fomented as well the consideration of the aquaculture sector, which is also highly affected by predators such as cormorants, pelicans and otters; the Commission and the Member States are invited to support the acquisition of equipment to defend against predators.



Coexistence humans – wolves. No other option; no other aim

The European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella and the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan have written to the Ministers for the Environment and Agriculture in the EU Member States regarding the situation of the wolf in Europe. The letter acknowledges the challenges faced by many member states in addressing conflicts associated with wolves and describes the work that the European Commission has carried out in this respect. It highlights the opportunities available to Member States to support coexistence between people and large carnivores with EU and state funding.

In November 2018, the European Commission amended its State aid Guidelines for the agriculture sector, enabling a full compensation of damages and protection measures related to large carnivores. Until now, compensation for indirect costs such as treatment costs of wounded animals could only be covered up to 80%; member states may now fund this to 100%. Additionally, member states can finance investments into protection measures up to 100% through their own budgets (this was already possible with European financing under the EAFRD).



Upcoming events

- **June 4th - 5th, 2019** – European Landowners' Organization General Assembly. Finland.
- **June 13th – 16th, 2019** – 22nd General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside (Post tour “Private family business in historic places and the history of France”, until June 20th, 2019). Anjou; France.
- **September 3rd - 4th, 2019** – Wildlife Estates Initiative Plenary Session: “Cultivate & Protect”. Esterházy Betriebe estate; Eisenstadt; Burgenland; Austria.



WE act for biodiversity



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