The General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside each time is an opportunity to revue both the activities of the Friends as well as of the ELO.
The topics discussed during this 15th annual Assembly concerned both generic issues such as land management in Baltic states, as well as topics such as the CAP reform, new technologies in agriculture, forestry management in Natura 2000 sites, and durability of our legislations restricting the use of plant protection products.
The Minister of Agriculture and Lithuanian representatives insisted on the fundamental value of the economic tool consisting in property rights in term of the land management. They reminded that to be efficient for the whole society you have to guarantee the setting in place of seven political principles:
An intergenerational perspective;
An approach based on science and not on hazard;
A voluntary participation;
A proportionality towards problems to treats;
A decentralised approach to solve global problems locally;
A labour which follows natural cycles;
A respect due to the responsibility linked to the right of property.

Who could better speak about it than those deprived of the management of their environment and their economic tools? The way in which Lithuanians are doing this is remarkable, and prove a spirit of entrepreneurship which gives us all faith in Europe.

Friends of the Countryside 15th General Assembly in Vilnius (Lithuania)
from 7th to 10th of June 2012

Thierry de l’ESCAILLE
Secretary General
Giuseppe VISCONTI, President of Friends of the Countryside, opened this 15th General Assembly by welcoming all attendees and thanking the Lithuanian Landowners organisation for their support in the organisation of the event. President VISCONTI spoke of the new challenges affecting the European Countryside and the increasing pressure on landowners to provide food, environmental goods, renewable energy and employment. He highlighted the need for the new CAP to be modified accordingly by referring to some of the points of the Commission proposal for the CAP post 2013: the on-going talks on the budget, the capping proposal, the definition of active farmer which should be replaced by active farm, the issues on transferability and the greening measures. He emphasised the need to be active, to develop partnerships, in order to achieve political cohesion and to change a bureaucratic Europe to a more active, central, strong Europe.

After describing the ELO structure and its partners, Thierry de l’ESCAILLE, Secretary General of the FCS, highlighted the major challenges that are and will affect landowners and rural entrepreneurs. He focused on the pressures on water and on land, which limit their contribution to food and environmental security and which are worsening due to population increase, shift in diets and non-food uses of land. Because of the little prospect of bringing new land into farming, there is virtually no alternative but to increase productivity, particularly in favoured agricultural regions, of which Europe is one. He underlined Europe’s obligation to help fight world starvation; however the EU net-agricultural-trade position is likely to deteriorate as shown during the several meetings on the matter that the ELO takes part, namely the Market Access Ad-
as the new president of the Friends of the Countryside, Giuseppe VISCONTI (IT) as Honorary President, François de RADIGUES DE CHENNEVIERE (BE) as Honorary Member, Seger van VOORST tot VOORST (NL) as Vice President; Teresa MURUBE (ES) as Board Member, and Sebastian HILLGARTH (YFCS) as Honorary Member.

The conference titled "New Members States’ Landowners: Past-Present-Future" began with some welcome words by Gintaras NAGULEVICIUS, Secretary General, Lithuanian Landowners’ Organisation, in the name of the different Lithuanian ELO member organisations.

Kazys STARKEVICIUS, Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania, delivered the opening statement insisting on the fact that Lithuania has been an agrarian state for a long time, and it has painfully gone through the changes of land management. He explained that the last conversion process of land started in 1991, after the Supreme Council – Restoration Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted a Law on Land Reform. One of the major parts of this land reform was the restoration of citizens’ rights to land, forest and water bodies. After 50 years of occupation and collective (state) property, natural human rights to private land ownership were re-established. The change of land ownership relations led to the change of the entire economy, farming structure and property. Since the beginning of the land reform in 1991, 731.38 thousand citizens’ applications to restore property rights for 4.02 million hectares of land in country’s rural areas were submitted (until 01.01.2012). The process of restoration is coming to an end. He also said that Lithuania is moving towards qualitatively new land management and administration principles oriented to the formation of rationally controlled agricultural holdings, by linking it with the rural development and ensuring effective plan-

Leaving then the CAP discussions to Corrado PIRZIO-BIROLI, he explained in detail, some likely outcomes regarding the basic payment scheme, the definition of active farmer, the capping, the greening and the situation for young farmers. The president of the Young Friends of the Countryside, Robert de l’ESCAILLE, gave an overview of the organisation and the agenda of the upcoming events. After the words from the next generation, the FCS members confirmed the election of Maximilian HARDEGG (AT) as the new president of the Friends of the Countryside.
ning, rendering and absorption of EU funds. Lithuania’s example shows that fundamental changes in farming can be made during a short period of time. He finished his speech by welcoming all the conference guests, participants and organisers and wishing them sincere communication, cooperation, fruitful work and great experience.

The newly elected president of the Friends of the Countryside, Maximilian HARDEGG, congratulated the Minister on Lithuania’s achievements. As an Austrian he underlined that his country was also occupied by the Soviet regime, and these 10 years affected a lot of relations, so he stated his understanding regarding the hard worked which has been delivered by Lithuania’s citizens. He underlined the need to find the right balance between private and public land, with family business as the basis for that evolution.

Kestutis MOZERIS, Lithuanian Landowners’ organisation, gave an overview about “History and experiences of the re-situated and new landowners in Lithuania”. This very interesting presentation on the restoration of private landownership in Lithuania was followed by the speech of one of the youngest members of the European Parliament, Radvilé MORKUNAITE-MIKULENIENE answering to the question “What role for Lithuania in Europe?”. She underlined that Lithuania is one of the most un-urbanised and un-industrialised EU countries, where nature plays a high role. Representing a small country the biggest challenge is to not be perceived as ‘national oriented’, which is a demanding issue. She re-insured that assuming the Presidency of the EU Council in 2013 Lithuania will focus not only on this problematic, but also use enthusiasm of Lithuanian citizens to face the growing scepticisms around the EU.

Algis GAIZUTIS, Adviser, Lithuanian For esters, gave a very interesting overview of the “Current situation of Forestry in Lithuania, environmental & economic challenges”. He focused on the role of the forest sector and the status of family forestry, the situation in the private forestry and on forestry resources. One has to keep in mind that from 3 Million inhabitants in Lithuania (as 500 000 left) more than 800 000 are forest owners or their family members. Forestry is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors with a significant positive export-import balance.

Mindaugas KUKLIERUS, Vice -Minister of Agriculture for Lithuania gave an overview on “What future and opportunities for the Lithuanian Agriculture?”. He focused especially on the Lithuanian position concerning the on-going CAP reform. He described the official point of view on greening, capping direct payments, definition of active farmer, and actions for small or young farmers. He underlined the biggest challenges of Lithuanian agriculture such as land abandonment and soil quality.

Then followed the presentation of Johan NORDENFALK about the Anders
WALL Foundation Award. Together with Anders WALL they ran the awarding ceremony. This year’s winner was Karl GROTENFELT (Finland), due to his work in the “Järviäla Estate” who passed over his business to the next generation as his son represents the 11th generation running the estate in the family since 1674. After the meeting the Friends of the Countryside gathered together for a cocktail in the geographical centre of Europe before a very original medieval feast and dinner in TRAKAI Castle.

On the 9th of June different visits were proposed to the FCS. A visit was guided by Algis GAIZUTIS to a forest domain, the Esperanza ressort and Uzutrakis Estate in the surrounding area of Trakai. A second visit was organised by Kestutis MOZERIS to a private owned farm, Ausktaitijos National Park and Vidiskai manor. Another group was welcomed by Minister Kazys STARKEVICIUS in his farm and followed by a visit to Babtyno-Zemaïkienė estate and of to one of the best examples of monastery remaining in Lithuania, the Pazaislis Comaldeose Monastery and church. And some 40 participants registered for the visit of the Martinelis farm, Sesuleleika Estate and Taujenai Manor. These different visits focusing on forest management, tourism, historic buildings, and farming were perfect opportunities for all the participants to learn more about the country and Lithuanian culture.

A visit of the Museum of Applied Arts in Vilnius, a short concert by the worldwide known Ciurlionis Quartet and a wonderful dinner closed this 15th edition.

On Sunday the 10th of June some 28 FCS from 13 different nationalities, continued for a very exclusive Post Tour from Vilnius to Riga (Latvia) and from Riga to Tallinn (Estonia) visiting various estates in Latvia welcomed by Friends of the Countryside and ELO members among Dana BELDIMANN in Rumene Manor, Arnis MUIZNIEKS in Birini Castle, Daniel JAHN in Kuksu Manor and Madar KALNINS, winner of the Anders WALL Award 2011, in Erini Manor. In Estonia Imre SOOAR welcomed the group on MuHu Island for a memorable dinner and stay in Padaste Manor and Karl von RAMM, representing the next generation made a very interesting tour of Padise ancient Monastery and Manor. These 3 days presented a complete overview of all the aspects of land and property management including also a very important wood factory and modern vegetable farm visit.

The General Assembly 2013 is planned in Toledo (Spain) from 23th to 26th of May 2013.

If you need more information do not hesitate to contact us at coordination@elo.org

Jehanne de DORLODOT VERHAEGEN
FCS Coordinator
What does the future hold for European landowners?

It is nearly impossible to predict the future, above all not in an economic sector ruled by outside forces such as global weather, public opinion and political agendas. Our aims must be to feed ourselves, export high quality products and, protect and preserve Europe’s cultural and environmental heritage.

Europe is unique since it usually enjoys public support and strong identification of the people with the countryside. This leads to healthy discussions in Brussels and within the member states as to the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, forestry strategy and all other environmental questions (Natura 2000 etc).

I believe that in the future, European landowners must pay more attention to what nature is trying to tell us and to try to balance the intensity of production with the preservation of the landscape and the environment. These ideas have to be dealt with over generations, with the goal of finally achieving sustainability.

I see three main challenges: improvements within the estates, the creation of a positive political system and strengthening our ties to the public through better communication.

Another question in my mind is regarding the transfer of the estates to the next generation. In the majority of businesses there is a mandatory retirement age, not so much in family held operations. Questions of succession are often put aside due to family relationships and an unwillingness to prepare for the future thus hampering progress and losing out on a wealth of new ideas and knowledge from the next generation. Therefore one of my personal aims is to promote the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) as I strongly believe that the future lies in their hands.

Secondly in order to create a positive political system we must concentrate on lobbying on various international and national levels. Starting at the European level we are extremely lucky to have the ELO (European Landowners Organization) with the President Corrado PIRZIO-BIROLI and the General Secretary Thierry de l’ESCAILLE. The work that this Organisation does, substantially influences future policies in Europe and through our financial support they can further our interests through the correct channels. Politicians need to be informed by experts in all fields and here we have a direct link. A good farm policy requires solid fundamentals and we have the experts in the running of small, medium and large estates. On the national level I hope that in the future our Organisation can bring more influence to bear on our National Landowners Associations.

Thirdly the basis of the future is communication. Communication is a necessity for modern day farming, meaning communication between the farmers, politicians and, above all, the local public through every form of media channels. I would like to improve the press work around our yearly conferences, invite opinion leaders to special events and promote our ideas to a wider audience.

Finally I see a prosperous future for European landowners and although our Organisation is small I believe our members have a wealth of ideas that can benefit our future, therefore I hope with your active support we can continue to influence the future of farming, forestry and the environment and I look forward to future discussions.

Maximilian HARDEGG
FCS President
The Järvikylä Estate has been in the GROTENFELT family for 340 years. The present owner is the 11th generation. Through the centuries the occupation and interests of the owners have varied from fighting wars for the Swedish kings in the 17th, 18th and early 19th century to building a modern farming and dairy operation during the rest of the 19th century.

At its peak the estate encompassed 8000 hectares and included a primary school, a dairy school and a dairy that produced ‘Paris Butter’ as its specialty. The butter was mainly exported to St Petersburg and was awarded several first prizes at farming exhibitions in Finland and in Europe. The butter was very coveted at the Court of the Tsar. This was the first consumer product of the estate. The First and Second World Wars brought large changes to the estates in Finland. First the tenant farmers were given their farms and then after the Second World War the refugees from Carelia, lost to Russia, were given land as means of work and income. This in combination with several distributions of estate meant that the farm encompassed only 800 hectares when Karl GROTENFELT took over in 1975. Considering alternatives it was obvious that the farm income would not be able to support both a family and simultaneously finance the restoration and upkeep of the buildings on the estate. After some consideration it was decided that the primary aims would be to look for opportunities outside traditional farming. The main reasons for this were low profitability and total dependence on the state for the pricing of farm produce. One has to remember that the farm is located north of latitude 62. The secondary aim being to enlarge the estate when financially possible.

The first crop chosen in 1978 was turf for football stadiums, parks and gardens. This remains the main field crop grown while the remaining acreage is used for cereals. In 1987 a new use was found for the old cow house and stables when the first greenhouses were built. It was an investment in totally new technology- year around hydroponic growing of lettuces and aromatic herbs. What started off with 1200 m2 of greenhouse area is now 50,000 m2 producing 23 million pots of living produce annually. A 3 MW biofuel boiler was built in 2008 to provide all the heat needed on the farm. The forests and marshes provide the heating fuel. The forestlands have been managed by 10 year management plans since the beginning of the 20th century. Several areas have been left untouched to form private nature reserves.

The success of the two main businesses have made it possible to restore all the buildings and also to buy back 800 hectares of land originally part of the estate. Over the last 15 years investments have been made in wetlands bringing new fauna, in re-introducing the grey partridge and enlarging and enhancing the park surrounding the main house. The estate presently employs some 110 persons and has an annual turnover of 15 million euro.

When looking back at the almost 40 years of development it is interesting to consider what the driving forces have been. Keeping a family tradition going and trying to build an economic base to support and keep intact the estate for future generations. Private ownership and family involvement are important cornerstones.

Karl GROTENFELT
Winner of the 2012 Award
In 2004 my mother, Jacqueline Violet, was awarded the first Anders Wall prize for Sustainable Development. Sustainable development, two little words that mean so much. Grow green!

It is no secret that to preserve Nature one needs the funds to do so. Therefore it is even more important in a Wildlife Estates such as the Herdade do Pinheiro to ensure balance of agricultural income and ecological investment. It is without saying that in time of crisis this balance is not easy to assume.

But what is a work day like here? The new tractor has just broken down, your favorite employee come to ask to go to his mother-in-law funereal…for the 4th time! The 12 ton harvester is stuck in the mud of the rice fields, the oats, matured to perfection and ready to be harvested have been beheaded by a family of glutinous boars, the storks and herons are taking advantage of the harvester being stuck and trampling that rice as they hunt for frogs and crayfish, someone has again forgotten to close a gate and the guards must chase the dozen cows that have taken off if it is not the ‘retired’ male horses that have decided to take a stroll to come and see the mares…

Flexibility, tell me about it. Nothing is quite what is seems and nothing runs quite as smoothly as hoped for.

I was inspired by Corrado’s PIRZIO-BIROLI speech pronounced during the ELO GA, and if you will forgive me for quoting his words: we live here, in the Herdade do Pinheiro, not a situation of surplus and deficit countries but a surplus and deficit entities, the birds definitely defining themselves as the deficit and we as the surplus. Take an example of the ducks last year. After completely destroying 20 hectares of newly germinated rice, twice, they greedily helped themselves just beheaded! The cost of this protection of Nature amounted to approximately 40 tons of rice!!

We are not here to complain, only to point out the realities of a Wildlife Estate managed with Sustainable Development.

2012 is a year of a crisis. This has not stopped us from embracing new projects and it is perfect that today of all days I may tell you about them as they are all about preserving biodiversity. For years we have bred native Mertelego cows for meat. This year we decided to breed them to show. The National Association has already come to buy heifers from us for breeding purposes. The Garrano Poneys of the North of Portugal are an endangered species counting 1500 heads. We have de-
cided to breed them here. It is true that we cannot create their natural habitat but we are hoping that by promoting them through riding and harnessing. Today despite their small size people forget that they were once ridden by the kings and queens of Portugal and that many a time they were used in combat against the Spanish and French enemies. We also have a project to breed pure Alentejano black pigs in a twinned project with an association that breeds native wooly pigs in the Jura in Switzerland. I can already hear someone asking how much we receive in subsides... it is a fact, incomprehensible to many around us, that we do not take into account any new projects that will not be financially sustainable without the use of subsides.

(Let us not forget that the Herdade is also an educational centre for wildlife. We collaborate on various university projects and thanks to the kindness of the Municipality of the town of Alcacer - Mr PRES-we have been able to use the school as a centre of education. At the moment there is an expo on roman ovens that I invite you to visit. In the past we have used the school as a conference centre and in the near future we hope for ornithological classes to take place.

Managing a large private estate that is part of a National Natural Reserve can sometimes be a challenge when the state forgets that it is private and wished to lay down some laws on making roads or pathways public... To ensure that the Reserve and the Preservation of Nature was always taken into consideration despite certain political pushes I remind you that we created our own association with the barbarian name of CAIHP for the protection of our wetlands expanding them to 700 hectares from the initial 500 hectares).

It is a known fact that working with your hands, touching the earth has a soothing feeling. It is fun to farm despite the turbulences. Of course we could do without the pine nematode invasion that cost us over 7000 trees, cut and burned, the red beetle that has already killed many palm trees, cut and burned and for which we are treating over 100 hopefully healthy ones, the new bug that is attacking the stone pines making the pine cones fall prematurely or the latest, a ferocious caterpillar that attacks the cork tree leaves and like a school of piranhas leave nothing within a day. Eventually the tree dies.

Evidently none of these 'extra costs' are compensated for.

But it is with relentless stamina and great pride that my mother and I continue to manage this estate as best as possible. After yesterday’s talks and with your permission, I will leave the heavy-duty analysis, the economic thinking and the finding solutions to you brilliant people. We will put our energy and efforts trying to maintain a long-lasting relationship with our furry and feathered friends.

Thank you for your visit. Thank you for being here. Thank you ELO for all your efforts to support us. May the rest of your visit be happy!

Stéphanie GICOT
Member of the Friends of the Countryside

This speech was pronounced during the visit of the Estate, after ELO General Assembly and the attribution of Wildlife Estates labels, held last May in Portugal.
Comparative study on the demographic explosion of the wild boar population in Europe and the best management practices to contain it.

The ELO, in collaboration with its partners and under the scientific direction of the Polytechnic University of Madrid, has recently published a comparative study of nearly 15 countries of the European Union, entitled «Demographic explosion of wild boar in Europe-Issues and Challenges».

Due to the current political climate in Belgium, Luxembourg and France, the ELO seized on this opportunity to clarify the misconceptions and to confront meaningfully, the multiple causes underlying this increase of the wild boar population. This study is also part of the wider issue which affects the management of big game (roe deer, red deer, etc.) in the different parts of Europe.

This study is appropriate because of the general lack of research at the European level on the current demographic explosion of the wild boar in Europe. Using national and regional data, it analyses the trends and the main causes, and sets up an inventory of management practices on this animal in different important countries. It underlines the most effective management tools and provides solutions on the practical as well as the political side.

The significant causes that explain the increase of the wild boar population are numerous. Climate change (through favorable winter and abundant acorns) is a key factor. The profound changes in agricultural practices have also been identified as major causes. Indeed, in the past 15 years, the expansion of high filed crops has ensured that the wild boar has cover and tranquility for a longer period of time over the year. The increase in sole maize coupled with the exponential development of covered winter as mustard, funded by the second pillar of the CAP, provided to these opportunistic animals many options to have food, tranquility and protection.

Human activities such as the feeding practice are also addressed in the study. It is important to stress that artificial feeding has only had a little influence as the wild boar population has exploded in the same order of magnitude in countries that prohibit this practice compared to those that do not regulate. This assertion induces that the deep causes of this phenomenon have to be found somewhere else.

Hunting practices have also changed in the past few years. Whatever the reasons, they induce a high rate of breeding animals, spared voluntarily or not, that generate the actual explosion. Moreover, hunters have now a lot of difficulties in controlling all those aspects. These skids, causing damage to agriculture, forestry and increasing the risk of collision, encourage the public administration to impose massive cuts through irregular policies. Added to the demographic pressures and their potential dangers, the potential health risks trough the precautionary principle is particularly important with the emergence of diseases such as brucellosis.

It seems important to understand and identify mechanisms which explain the excessive development of the population. A preventive management would avoid the brutality of massive and blind cuts. In other words, it should not be necessary that quantitative requirements take precedence over quality management where we measured the positive effects in areas where it has been applied.

In line with the new development of public policies, it is important to acquire knowledge to preserve biodiversity: understanding of the spatial distribution, identification of genetic exchange between populations and movements, and therefore necessity of free movement.

Landowners, farmers and hunters contribute to the management and the restoration of their habitats, and help find a balance between agriculture, forestry and hunting which is vital for the European countryside. Such patrons, invest, time and money, which benefits many species. They have an excellent knowledge of the species present on their territories. This contribution to biodiversity and to the economy should not be underestimated.

The equation between agriculture, resource owners, hunters and biodiversity is at the same time obvious, and a source of solutions. Wise management of wildlife contributes positively to the conservation of wildlife populations and their habitats. Landowners, farmers and hunters must work together on this issue of the management of natural resource.

The use of semi-natural and agricultural lands and hunting grounds are not separable. Such links must be taken into account for a sustainable agriculture and environmental harmony.

Delphine DUPEUX
ELO Policy Officer
This study was formally launched at the European Parliament under the patronage of MEP Véronique MATHIEU, President of the Intergroup on Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity, Forests and Rural Activities, who stressed the quality of ELO’s work.

Stakeholders have helped advance the debate. Delphine DUPEUX, Policy Officer at ELO, stated that « the study on the demographic explosion of the wild boar in Europe – Issues and challenges » stresses that a good implementation of mechanisms for sustainable management, conservation and monitoring is of vital importance. There is no doubt on the relevance of this issue because the facts are there. The wild boar as well as the whole big game are in concrete expansion and are responsible for serious damages. It is important to answer this problem without adopting a dogmatic vision. Those issues require a rapid intervention in order to contain this phenomenon. One must thus analyses the key factors of this explosion in order to identify the most efficient measures that have to be set up in the medium term, in conjunction with the different stakeholders (Public Private Partnership –PPP).

Yves LECOCQ, Secretary-General of FACE, raised the question of the need of a common strategy at European level to monitor the wild boar. This question was particularly relevant in the European Parliament. He also stressed the need to develop specific indicators, if we wish to properly assess the impact of this animal on the environment.

Mr. GUIBERT responsible for game damages at the National Federation of Hunters (FNC) gave an overview of the French actions to manage the wild boar. He stated that there are no real reliable counting systems and that the increase of the population of wild boar is confined to 10% of French municipalities. He strongly emphasized the correlation between rental prices and increased of hunted wild boars. He stressed that compensation to farmers for the damages in France went up to 32 million Euros for 2011. The debate was ended with the clear assertion that there is a net increase of wild boars population in all European countries. MEP Véronique MATHIEU emphasized the need not to hide the economic stakes of this issue. She underlined the importance of further research and to obtain more reliable figures in Europe, on hunted wild boars and on crops, particularly on rates of sowing crops in Europe over the last 20 years. Finally, she assured that she will make sure that a follow-up is done on this specific issue and propose to review the study to update the information in the years to come.
A new network to implement greening practices
The Pollinator Network initiative (PNi)

Multifunctional Landscapes can deliver ecosystem services and help achieve a sustainable use of resources in order to provide safe, healthy and affordable food.

The ELO together with Syngenta created a network of farmers and land managers who are willing to implement innovative practices and are able to secure both sustainable food production and an environmental balance.

The Pollinator Network initiative (PNi) is the emblematic project of this approach and promotes a model of economically viable, highly productive and resource efficient agriculture demonstrating that modern farming and environmental management can coexist on the same field. This strong commitment is ensured by a network of farmers and land managers acting for biodiversity who are willing to use field margins as a “bed” of plants which are particularly indicated for pollinating species. These margins are also considered as excellent habitat and a source of food for birds, small game and roe deer.

The Pollinator Network Initiative’s ambition is to provide training support for farmers, land managers and agronomists. It is designed to create a forum for knowledge-sharing on sustainable agriculture practices for biodiversity all around Europe and enhance the harmonization of our current agricultural system within the European landscapes.

→ Training video to be found at: http://elo.tv/pollinator/

Present in over 16 countries of the European Union, the Pollinator Network initiative seeks to promote greening practices, in a simple but concrete and understandable way for farmers and land managers. In 2012, the network will reach about 10,000 hectares of pollinators strips implemented in Europe. If you would like to support and be part of the initiative, please contact us!

→ Current and future actions:
Several TRAINING SESSIONS and FIELD TRIPS will be organized in October 2012, in Brussels and Czech Republic. Other upcoming events and new tools available soon!

For more information
Delphine DUPEUX: nature@elo.org;
Caroline MAHR: project2@elo.org

Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife Conservation

RESOLUTION
CICGA59.RES01 of the 59th CIC General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa on 11th of May 2012 (extracts)

The GA REQUESTS the CIC President with the assistance of the Executive Committee, the Director General, and with support and assistance from the Divisions to actively seek partners and pursue the process of establishing a global voluntary platform entitled “Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife Conservation” (CPWC), SUGGESTS that instead of limiting the partnership geographically to tropical and subtropical countries and thematically to the issues of bushmeat only, as suggested by the CBD, the CPWC should have a wider global scope and a broader thematic framework, ENCOURAGES the CIC Headquarters to obtain the mandate of hosting the Secretariat of the CPWC and to secure contributions of financial resources for the employment of a full time CPWC coordinator for a one year period with possible extension, CALLS UPON the members of the CIC to support at the national level, the process of establishing the CPWC, by obtaining the political and financial support of their respective governments.

CIC TEAM
Full version can be read on the Website http://www.cic-wildlife.org/
The ninth international conference, organised by the International Centre for Research on Environmental Issues (ICREI), dedicated to the topic of agriculture and forestry issues, was held from the 21-23 June 2012.

As the eight previous one, also this conference focused on the problematic of contribution of property rights and economic instruments – tradable permit markets, fees and charges- to the protection of environment. The main purpose of this year event was to analyse those topics using at the same time a more systematic, but also global and always multidisciplinary approach. More than fifty speakers took part in this conference, including ELO representatives.

1. Property rights, agriculture and forestry

We know already the link established by Garret HARDIN between the absence of property rights and the overexploitation of natural resources due to a free access: this is the “tragedy of the commons”. The incompleteness of the property rights under its various form constitute a favouring factor of the degradation of the environment. This approach was completed by the work of Elinor OSTROM, 2009 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, who showed the interest of a common management of resources on a local level. ICREI event pursued this discussion, in particular during the first plenary panel with the lecture of Etienne LE ROY and Max FALQUE. Several case studies (China, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe) have shown the negative impacts on the environment, as well as on the agriculture productivity itself due to a lack or due to an insufficient definition of property rights of the farmers. When rights concerning common goods are wrongly defined, precarious or unstable, they lead to an overexploitation and to under-investment. It is clearly not at all a dilemma between agricultural productivity and environment, on the contrary, as a wrong definition of property rights lead at once to an agriculture and forestry underproduction and to an overexploitation of natural resources.

2. Agriculture, forestry and economic instruments – taxation, charges, and tradable permit markets

J. HARDELIN (OECD) presented the problematic of the management of water resources in the agricultural sector. He reminded the necessity of accurate water pricing in this sector in order to collect payments through the cost associated to this resource: operational costs, user costs for the capital, but as well environmental costs. However one has to recognise that tradable permit markets in water sector have been developed only on a small scale, basically in Australia and the USA.

3. Contractualisation, compensation and payments for the environmental services

The most discussed instruments during the conference were those concerning from one side compensation and payments for the environmental services, and from other side the conventional environmental easements; so globally speaking the contractual approach.

The plenary session organised by the Lincoln Institute presented to the public a very rich experience of the conventional environmental easements in the USA. Thierry LAVOUX presented the state of play occurring in the French debate around this topic.

The need to use the contractualisation was illustrated may times through various case studies: production of untreated water of good quality for forestry (Julien FIQUEPRON, Institut pour le développement forestier) and the interest to develop contracts between forestry owners and sanitation agencies; farming environmental lease and agri-fauna programs presented by Annie CHARLEZ (Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage).

4. Eco-conditionality of agricultural subsidies

The successive reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy since 2003 have allowed to reshape public support for agriculture in a way more favourable for the environment. This is definitely the implementation of the compensation principle: payments for the farmers for the environmental services or compensation of the reduction of damages done to the environment.

Henri LAMOTTE
Vice President and ICREI general rapporteur

For more information on the conference please visit the ICREI site http://www.icrei.org/
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Find out more about Deutz-Fahr on www.deutz-fahr.com
During the first week of June the YFCS had the pleasure to participate to the 15th General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside (FCS) which was held in Vilnius – Lithuania. The group from YFCS was welcomed by representatives of the young Lithuanian Farmers Union who gave us a warm hospitality during the weekend and helped us feel at home in their wonderful capital.

During the General Assembly of the FCS a short presentation on the current situation and future prospects of the YFCS was given by the President Robert de l’ESCAILLE, who pointed out the need for strengthening the involvement of current members while focusing on recruiting. He explained how the organization aims to strengthen the role of the YFCS Ambassadors as key promoters of the organization in their country. While recognizing the challenges posed by the current financial situation, he explained how the Board of YFCS intends to secure a sponsor and follow up on the collection of the membership fees. He then concluded his presentation by announcing the launch of the Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship which should be launched in February 2013. During this general assembly the FCS decided to elect former YFCS board member Sebastian HILLGARTH as honorary board member of the FCS in an effort to ensure stronger communication and connection between its “daughter” organization.

On the Saturday the group of Young Friends visited a family-owned forest holdings and saw mill in the Elektrenai district. During the excursion the group had the chance to observe and compare the differences in composition, growth and management of Lithuanian forests with the ones in central and northern Europe. The group could also discuss with the owner and manager his plans and expectations regarding the new forest stands. After having a delicious lunch the group visited the Uzutrakis estate which, after the war and Soviet occupation, is today managed by the state and open to public visits.

This incredible weekend was a great opportunity to see a unique part of Europe in the company of good friends. YFCS plans to continue offering its members a variety of exciting and informative events across the Union during the current and coming year.

Francesco KINSKY dal BORGO
YFCS Secretary General
Are MCPFE Indicators Suitable for Planted Forests?

Summary and comparative analysis of the FORSEE project results: assessment and relevance of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in cultivated forests

J.-L. MARTRES, J.-M. CARNUS, Ch.ORAZIO
Discussion Paper 16, 2011,
European Forest Institute,
http://www.efi.int/portal/virtual_library/publications/discussion_papers/16/

This paper provides a constructive critique of indicators for sustainable forest management and aims to show their value and their limitations. According to the interpretation of the definitions, the way to collect data, and the ecological and economical context, the realities described by these indicators are not homogeneous and comparable at the inter-regional level. By applying the same set of indicators with the same protocols scientifically based in eight Atlantic regions, we obtained various results extracted from the regional studies and outlined below (all reports cited in this paper can be downloaded from: http://forsee.iefc.net). We demonstrate the variability in the quality of indicators and the limits of their comparability. In this work, therefore, we illustrate the diversity of indicators to assess Sustainable Forest Management, the weaknesses of the existing ones and the benefits of new ones that were tested during the project.

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