

EAA and EAC Joint Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management

Progress Report: February 2019

The Working Group, originally organised under the aegis of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) became a joint Working Group of EAC and EAA in March 2009. This report covers the work of the joint group during 2018-19.

Background

The Working Group has identified rural land uses (most notably agriculture and forestry) as amongst the most potentially destructive of processes acting on the archaeological historical landscape in Europe. It is a particular concern that these processes, in contrast to construction and development, have few or no widely established mechanisms for archaeological impact assessment, avoidance or mitigation.

Membership

The group continues to reach new professional archaeologists interested in the interface between archaeological heritage management, landscape, rural land use and nature conservation. Group membership fluctuates around 50 participants or correspondents, representing 20¹ countries.

Business meeting 2018 – governance issues

It was agreed on the business meeting in Barcelona that Karl Cordemans will stay on as Chair, Hugh Carey as Vice Chair with a focus on agriculture and rural land management and Leif Gren (Swedish heritage board) as Vice Chair with a focus on forestry.

It is clear that with the approaching Brexit, a lot of energy and efforts of the members from the UK and Ireland is and will be dedicated to the effects of this process. It is expected that more general issues around heritage management will suffer of this. Nevertheless, important developments on the new CAP (in preparation) will be monitored and communicated. All members have to be made aware that the coming year is vital if we want to ensure that heritage management is included in the new domestic CAP and RDP.

Developments in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy and Forestry

Main themes in the new CAP are modernisation and simplification, delivery of public goods and monitoring (delivery). Special attention will go to the budget; with the Brexit the total budget will decrease with about 13 billion euro, which will have an impact on CAP-budget too.

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Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Eire/Ireland, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Wales

The EU has identified 9 key objectives that will be the basis upon which the future CAP Strategic Plans will be built and will be the cornerstone of a more results-oriented policy. The objectives are a.o. *to preserve landscapes and biodiversity*. It is acknowledged that farmers play a key role in tackling climate change, protecting the environment and preserving landscapes and biodiversity. In its proposal, the European Commission sets high ambitions on environmental and climate change. Mandatory requirements include preserving carbon-rich soils through protection of wetlands and peatlands (which is favourable for archaeology). Furthermore, farmers will have the possibility to contribute further and be rewarded for going beyond mandatory requirements (conditionality). EU countries will develop voluntary eco-schemes to support and incentivise farmers to observe agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment. Beyond this there will be room for payments for environmental, climate and other management commitments. A general brochure on the new CAP can be found [here](#).

Developments in relation to other relevant EU Policy

In September 2018, a new Agriculture Bill has passed in the English Parliament as a successor to the CAP for England. Colleagues from Historical England managed to include a subsection (1.C) that will enable the Secretary of State to provide financial assistance for managing land or water in a way that maintains, restores or enhances natural or cultural heritage.

This may include a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic, historic or traditional interest. They include “designated cultural heritage assets” and natural heritage such as geological assets. The maintenance of historic farm buildings, dry stone walls and conservation of limestone pavement are examples of how this subsection may be used to incentivize activities which conserve our cultural and natural heritage, which have intrinsic value as well as being resources for research, education, recreation and tourism. This would contribute to the provision of societal benefits such as beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment.

EAA Conference session 2018

As agreed in the business meeting 2017, we organised a session to gather data that can help us in convincing policy makers that heritage should be part of the new CAP 2020.

The session was called :“Making the Case: collating and using evidence on the value of rural heritage to influence EU and domestic policy” (Session no. 638 organized by Vincent Holyoak & Karl Cordemans).

The papers presented were:

- Developing Evidence to Inform Land-use Decision Making in Scotland (John Raven)

- Archaeological Heritage Management in rural Flanders: Fallow Land of opportunities (Karl Cordemans & Erwin Meylemans)
- Integrating Heritage into work on Ecosystems Services and Natural Capital Accounting - insoluble problem or a shining opportunity? (Vince Holyoak)
- Determining the impact and value of heritage conservation under CAP and local agri-environment schemes in the UK (Peter Gaskell)
- Repairing old farm buildings as a means of conserving the Irish rural landscape. (Ian Doyle, Anna Meenan)
- Archaeology and Agri-tech (Henry Webber)
- Spreading the love: Some Irish examples of getting monuments valued in other people's policies. (Hugh Carey)

Again, it was a very interesting session with a diverse view on related topics, that illustrated that heritage in the countryside has many aspects and that the European policies such as CAP and RDP can have a big impact and make a difference.

EAA Conference 2019

Due to lack of time by the 'core-members' of the working group no session was organised ☹.

Other planned events

The working group made a big contribution to the [Bench](#) marking organised by the EAA, notably question 2 on Integrating Cultural Heritage in EU Common Agricultural Policy. We also refer to the EAC non-paper, EAC n 4 or the Dutch heritage-CAP brochure.

Future

The Working group will continue to monitor the impact of European policy on heritage and to try to influence the decision making regarding this. Member States are encouraged to make sure that domestic CAP and RDP take heritage into account.

We would like to ask the EAC board to appoint a liaison for each Member State to feed the working group with data on the ongoing preparations of the CAP and RDP.

Karl Cordemans
Working Group Chair
Archaeologist
Vlaamse Landmaatschappij
Flanders - Belgium

Karl.cordemans@vlm.be