



LANDCARE EUROPE

Captures Carbon

– Supporting Natural Climate Protection in
Agricultural Landscapes
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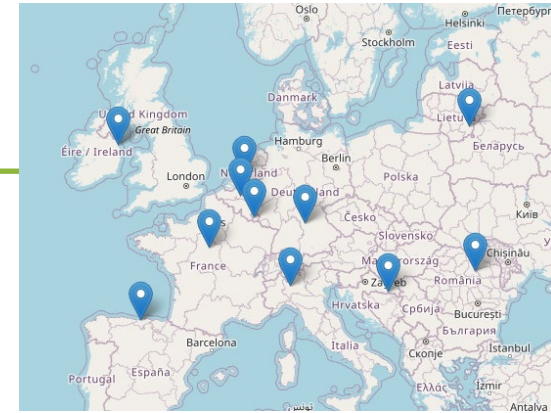
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LANDCARE EUROPE e.V.



Founding event: 7.06.23, Brussels

Founding members:

- Deutscher Verband für Landschaftspflege e.V. (DVL), Germany
- Agri-Cultura-Natura Transylvaniae Association (ACNT), Romania
- Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF), Lithuania
- BoerenNatuur, The Netherlands
- Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels, France
- Boerennatuur Vlaanderen, Belgium
- Legambiente Lombardia, Italy
- Brodsko ekološko društvo - BED, Croatia
- Sonairte, Ireland

New candidates:

- Naturschutzsyndikat SICONA, Luxembourg
- Perinnemaisemayhdistys ry. (Pemy), Finland
- Deutscher Fachverband für Agroforst, Deutschland (Friends of LE)

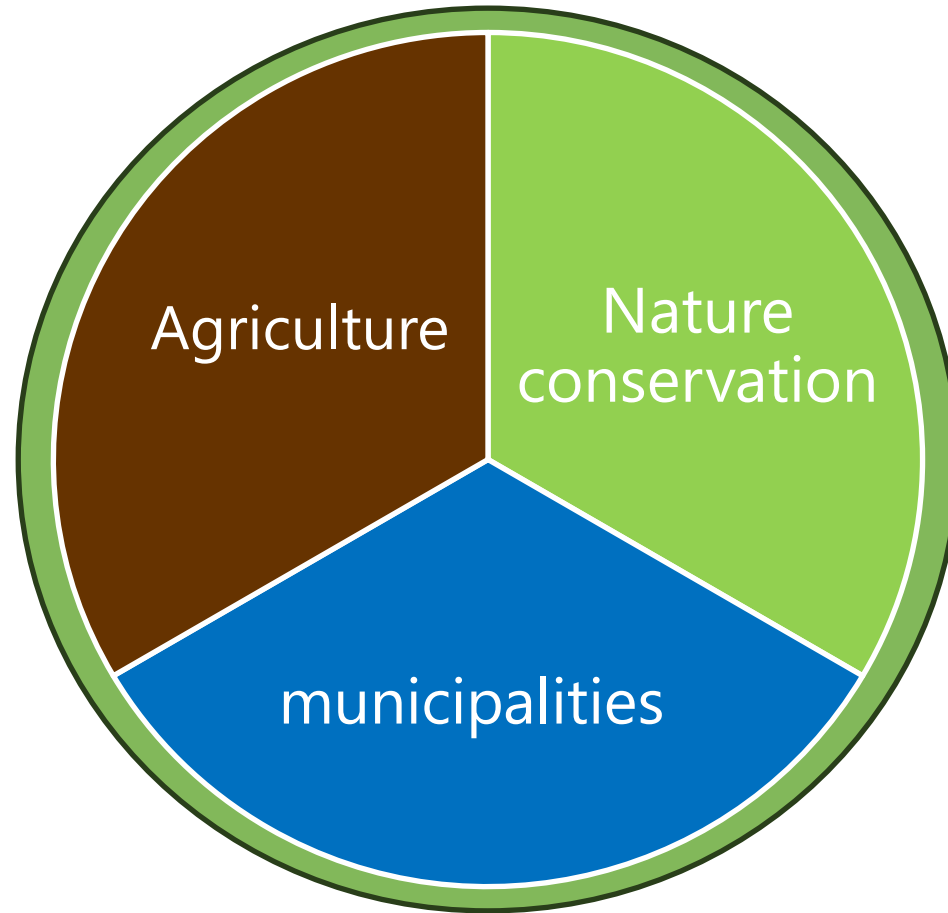


Goals of Landcare Europe e.V.

- 1) **Knowledge exchange** between regions and countries, especially in the areas of agriculture, nature conservation, administration, politics, research and tourism
- 2) **Political and practical implementation of EU strategies**, e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Water Framework Directive (WFD) or the "Farm to Fork" strategy
- 3) Support the **foundation of new Landcare organizations** and umbrella associations in the Member States

How Landcare Associations (LCA) operate

- Cooperatively
- Voluntarily
- Independently
- Regionally
- Interdisciplinary



The farmers we work with...

- ... > 100.000 in Europe
- ... cultivate grasslands, arable land, wetlands and special crops
- ... in a conventional or non-conventional manner
- ... on farms stretching from <1 ha to >3.000 ha
- ... on private, public and communal land
- ... from family to agri-businesses



What is our project goal?

LANDCARE EUROPE Captures Carbon – Supporting Natural Climate Protection in Agricultural Landscapes

- **Knowledge** on the political and practical implementation of **natural carbon sinks** in agricultural landscapes has improved in Europe amongst **political decision makers, multipliers and practitioners.**



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Emissions from agriculture

- EU-28 agriculture: total, 490.6 million tonnes of CO₂eq (12.4% of total EU emissions)
- 434.9 from methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide from livestock, nitrogen fertilisation and others
- 55.7 million tonnes carbon dioxide from agricultural organic soils and the conversion of permanent grassland to arable land, minus the sink effect of mineral soils.
- sink function of mineral soils: 50 million tonnes of CO₂.
- The largest source of CO₂ is the use of peat soils.

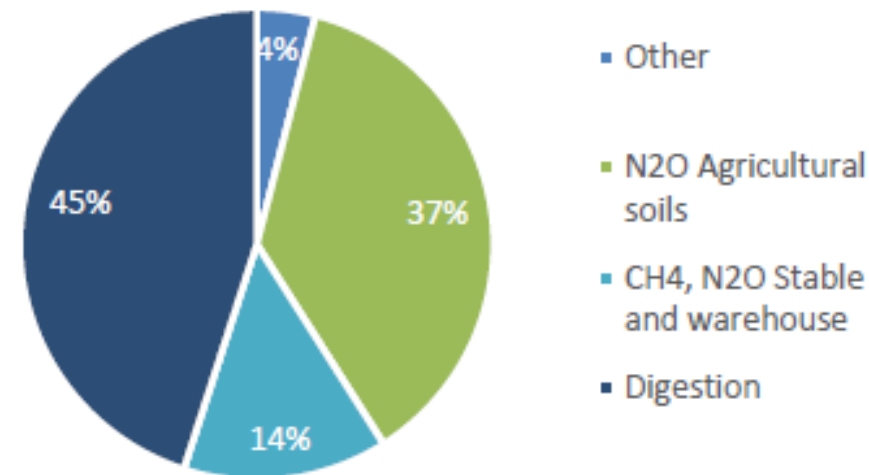


Figure 1 Source: UNFCCC Inventory Submission 2020

“Improving the contribution of the Common Agricultural Policy to climate change mitigation” - Germanwatch - Quantification of greenhouse gas emission reduction potentials of the CAP; conditionality (GAEC standards) for direct payments and possible eco-schemes

Highest saving potentials

- the **reduction of nitrogen inputs** including the reduction of nitrogen surpluses
- the **land commitment of livestock**, in particular grassland commitment for ruminants
- the **management of organic soils** used for agricultural purposes
- the **expansion of uncultivated land and agroforestry systems.**

Table 3: Overview of the mitigation effects of the CAP

Measures	Reduction (million tonnes of CO ₂ eq.)
GAEC standards	-0,3 bis -28,9
Eco-Schemes	-72,1
TOTAL	-72,4 to -101,0
Overall reduction compared to 2018 (490,6 million tonnes of CO ₂ eq.)	-14,8% to -20,6%

Source: Own calculations based on UNFCCC 2020 and Eurostat Database 2020

Workshops - topics

Country	Time	Topic
Croatia	11. - 13.06.24	Extensively managed grasslands as natural carbon sinks and requirements for CAP measures
Czech Republic	30.09 – 02.10.24	Soils as natural carbon sinks – Practical implementation of water and soil management and requirements for CAP measures
Romania	June 25	Traditional & modern agroforestry systems as natural carbon sinks and requirements for CAP measures
Lithuania	Sept 25	Peatlands as natural carbon sinks – water management, preserving farming methods, value chains and requirements for CAP measures

Positions on CAP & Climate

1. **Holistic approach:** Measures on improving carbon storage in agricultural landscapes need to be balanced and should create win-win situations with the production of healthy food and the protection of biodiversity, water and soil.
2. **Profitability:** Implementing climate protection measures as public service needs to be economically sustainable for farmers through public payments relevant to income or higher retail prices for agricultural products and services.
3. **Practicability & Suitability:** Regulatory frameworks for climate protection measures need to consider aspects of practical implementation and regional specificities. Measures need to be simple to administer and control.
4. **Advice & Support:** Funding for advising and supporting farmers on climate protection measures is needed.



Positions on CAP & Climate

5. Collective approach: It should be possible for farmers to implement climate protection measures in a collective approach as it can increase effects and reduce administrative burdens.

6. Priority measures: The most effective climate protections measures and good practices in agriculture that should be supported include:

- a. Reduction of nitrogen inputs to minimize N₂O emissions
- b. Rewetting of organic soils & peatlands and farming on those lands
- c. Traditional and modern agroforestry systems including landscape elements
- d. Grassland commitment for livestock on extensively used grasslands
- e. Soil protection and humus building measures



Roundtable discussion

Positions on extensively managed grasslands

Extensively managed grasslands are **permanent grasslands** (min. 5 years) with:

- **no use** of mineral fertilizers and herbicides/pesticides
- **sustainable grazing**: min. and max. grazing livestock unit per ha (GLU) and
- **sustainable mowing**: subsequent cutting dates and frequency, depending on the environmental and climatic conditions of the region
- higher numbers of plant species and a diversified horizontal and vertical structure of the grassland compared to intensively managed grasslands



Positive effects of extensively managed grasslands for climate & public goods:

- increase **CO₂ storage capacity** of soil and avoiding CO₂ emissions from soil erosion and loss of organic material
- **lower N₂O emissions** from agricultural soils
- **lower NH₄ emissions** through reduced number of ruminants through commitment of livestock to grasslands and grassland based nutrition
- improve **biodiversity** on grasslands (→ EU Natura 2000 protected areas)
- combat the decline of **insects** (→ EU pollinator initiative)
- improve **natural water retention** (→ EU Water Framework Directive)
- reduce **effects of extreme weather situations** (→ climate change adaption)
- preserve **cultural heritage landscapes** (→ rural economies and quality of life)

Treads for extensively managed grasslands and livestock farming

- **High sanction risks & High legal requirements**
- **Low income:** high labour costs vs. low hourly wages
- **Labour shortage:** high work load, low income & social status, unclear future prospects
- **Declining tradition of pastoralism**
- **Unclear status of land** of formerly communal managed grasslands in socialist countries

Recommendations

Step 1: Recognition of extensively managed grasslands through administration

- **EU definition** of the agricultural activity includes “the production of agricultural products and the maintenance of the agricultural area, leaving the choice between those two types of activity to farmers” (Art. 9, Regulation (EU) No. 1307/2013).
- This definition needs to be implemented in the Strategic Plans and executed by administrative bodies to significantly reduce sanction risks.
- The introduction of a **specific use code** (e.g. “Nature conservation area”) for biotope grassland (Natura 2000 habitat types) and grasslands with landscape elements, shrubs and other grazable plant species is recommended.



Recommendations

Step 2: Implementation of coupled payments

- The **coupled payments** are directly relevant to income and can significantly improve the economic situation of grazing livestock farming. Watering down these flat rate bonuses by offsetting agri-environmental services on grazing land must be prevented.

Step 3: Eco-schemes for extensive grassland

- (Extensively managed) grassland must be covered by the yearly requested **eco-schemes** of the first pillar (Art. 28 COM (2018) 392 final).



Recommendations

Step 4: Agri-Environmental Measures for extensively managed grasslands

- Establishment of **agri-environmental and climate measures** with attractive funding rates for grazing, mowing, no or reduced use of fertilizers and pesticides, species rich-grasslands and the conversion of arable land to grassland
- Promotion of:
 - grazing animal-related infrastructure, e.g. drinking troughs, fences, stables
 - preventive livestock protection against large carnivores and compensation payments,
 - scrub clearance to restore former pastureland in danger of loss to succession
 - the creation of development plans, e.g. grazing concepts, concepts for areas of pastoralism



LANDCARE EUROPE is capturing data for farmers through Landcare (-like)

Questions

1. Are the recommendations **suitable** for your country?
2. Should the EU make these recommendations **mandatory** for the Member States? What could be minimum requirements?
3. Do you have regulations/eco-schemes/agri-environmental schemes that can be used as a **best-practice** (measures efficient for climate protection that are easy to administrate)?
4. How can we **advocate** more climate/nature conservation in the CAP given the political context?