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

**Progress Report: March 2014**

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 2013-14.

**Background**

The Working Group has identified rural land uses (most notably agriculture and forestry) as amongst the most 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 established mechanisms for archaeological impact assessment, avoidance or mitigation.

**Membership**

Group membership is now almost 40 participants or correspondents, representing 17[[1]](#footnote-1) countries.

The Working Group has now achieved a reasonable balance between western, central and eastern European membership and will now focus its attention on recruiting members from southern Europe.

**Governance issues**

At the annual business meeting, held in Pilsen (6 September 2013) Karl Cordemans(Flemish Land Agency) was confirmed as Chair of the Working Group. Also both Vice-Chairs were confirmed for the next yearly period: Vince Holyoak (Head of National Rural and Environmental Advice, English Heritage) stayson as Vice-Chair of the Group with responsibility for its position on agriculture / CAP reform and Emmet Byrnes (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland) stays on as Vice-Chair responsible for Forestry matters.

The Chair and Vice Chair positions are on the agenda for discussion at each yearly business meeting.

**Business meeting 2013**

The 2013 annual business meeting of the Working Group was also held in the margins of 2013 EAA conference (notes attached).

Members present gave an update on the situation in their country. Recent relevant developments regarding heritage and agriculture & forestry were discussed.

The notes of the business meeting can be find here



**Advice in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy**

In November 2013, the Lithuanian Presidency organised a workshop on the integration of Heritage in other sectors and policy domains: “[Cultural Heritage and the EU 2020 Strategy: towards an integrated approach"](http://www.eu-heritage2013.kpd.lt/). Leif Gren(working group member from Sweden) was asked to chair the session on Agriculture and Heritage. Some other members attended this workshop a.o. Hugh Carey. English Heritage was present too; direct input of working group members was delivered to their Chief Executive.

The success of the workshop illustrates the possibilities of heritage as acting force in the further European development and thus the continued importance of the role of our working group regarding forestry, agriculture and rural development matters.

**Forestry**

Several sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (INC-Forests4) have taken place in 2013. At the last meeting (Geneva, November 2013) representatives of 38 European countries from the pan-European region and the European Union worked hard on the final draft text of the convention, and all core elements linked to sustainable forest management were agreed upon.The results of the work carried out during the negotiation on the LBA on forests in Europe will be presented to ministers at an Extraordinary FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference, for their consideration and for appropriate actions. Also thanks to the active (professional) involvement of our Vice-Chair Emmet Byrnes, the presence of Cultural Heritage (art. 10a) was assured.

**EAA Conference session 2013**

In September 2013, a session was organised on behalf of the Working Group at the 19th Annual EAA meeting, in Pilsen. Thomas Westphalen, Michael Strobel, NoémiPažinová and JánBeljak organised the Session on behalf of the working group: Mission accomplished - what may Archaeology expect from the new CAP after 2014?

The session stood still with the current situation of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), looking back at the past programme period with a short review on achievements in England and looking to the future with an analysis of the possibilities of the next programme period. On top of that a fascinating insight in the gigantic machinery behind European policy and decision making processes was presented.

A more extensive account is published in the winter edition of TEA (see attached document).



**EAA Conference session 2014**

For next year’s EAA Annual Meeting to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, we proposed to organise a session called: Is there reason to party? Ten years of the Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management. The session will be organized by Karl Cordemans (Flemish Land Agency, Belgium), Jon Humble (English Heritage, UK) and Emmet Byrnes (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland).

The group was originally established at the 10th Annual EAA Meeting held in 2004 at Lyon, and thus in 2014 will be celebrating a decade of existence. In the session we’ll look back at what has happened since the start of the WG. What has changed, what have we accomplished and what can we learn from past events? At the same time we want to look ahead and determine where the future focus of the WG should be, and how we can do better. Since the Common Agricultural Policy has been such a big focus of the group's attention over the past decade, and particularly over the last two years (as a new policy has been negotiated), part of this assessment of our achievements – and the continuing obstacles – will look at how member states have managed to incorporate heritage in their Rural Development Programmes for 2015 onwards.

The session was recently accepted by the EAA comity and 9 papers were submitted. Review of the papers by the Scientific Board is ongoing and assessment is expected by the end of March.

**Karl Cordemans**

**Working Group Chair**

**Archaeologist**

**Vlaamse Landmaatschappij**

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1. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Eire, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Wales [↑](#footnote-ref-1)