

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

Progress Report: March 2018

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 2017-18.

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 is now over 50 participants or correspondents, representing 20¹ countries.

Business meeting 2017 – governance issues

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

In November the EAC Board decided to authorise the continuance of the EAA and EAC Joint Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management and expressed their appreciation for the activities of the Working Group (which pleased us very much of course and encourages us to continue our mission).

Developments in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy and Forestry

The first consultation for the new programming period was held. The WG Chair filled it in on behalf of the working group and referred to the EAC non-paper on rural heritage. Main themes 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.

Important regarding Heritage is the more holistic approach to environmental care and the combination of measures and actions of different pillars. The result becomes more important. The EU will set out basics and guidelines and the Member States will have freedom to design measures as they see fit. The various proposed changes that will follow as the details emerge, will have to go through the various stages of scrutiny in the European Parliament and perhaps that is where we, as the EAA-EAC WG need to start thinking about making more serious lobbying and making representations as well. In parallel, the UK government have now set out their plans for a domestic successor to the CAP, the proposal being to gradually remove agricultural supports in favour of a system that rewards farmers for the environmental public goods that they provide, including rural heritage.

Developments in relation to other relevant EU Policy

Vince Holyoak attended the Council of Europe's session on the European Landscape Convention in Strasbourg 23-24 march 2017, both on behalf of his employer and on behalf of the EAA. This gives our working group a direct link to this important and widely supported European policy developments and network. Vince reported this to the EAA board. He concluded that, in respect of persuading the EU to recognise a more inclusive definition of landscape within its own policy, the ELC seems to offer a very good starting point, and concurring with the EAC non-paper he also recommended that the EAA accepts future invitations to participate in the conference and (if possible) the workshops.

He also attended the European Landscape Convention workshop in Brno in September.

EAA Conference session 2017

As agreed in the business meeting 2016, we tried to organise a joint session with another working group, but due to lack of time and interest we failed. We agreed instead to hold a business meeting before the start of the conference and to try to present an overview paper with the work of our working group in some other session to raise our profile.

Emmet Byrnes, Cees Van Rooijen and Karl Cordemans presented a paper titled 'The impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on archaeological heritage. Cause and remedy?' in the ANHER discussion session by Marjo Schlaman, Heleen Van London and Arkadiusz Marciniak on Integrating Natural and Cultural Heritage: political conditions and future developments.

According to the organisers the presented papers are supposed to be published in a peer reviewed journal too.

EAA Conference session 2018

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

A session proposal by Vince Holyoak and Karl Cordemans on behalf of the working group was accepted by the scientific committee. The session is called "Making the Case: collating and using evidence on the value of rural heritage to influence EU and domestic policy".

The session will have contributions from across Europe. It will look at what types of evidence has already been collected, how has it been used - and identify both the gaps and what more can we do to make future progress in this area. Seven papers were submitted and are now in the process of being reviewed.

Other planned events

Emmet Byrnes will be attending and speaking on the *Archaeology of Woodlands* conference from 19-21 April 2018, in Białowieża, Poland.

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. With 2018 being the EU's European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH), the Working group encourages the EAC to use the associated elevated profile for cultural heritage and cultural landscapes as a further opportunity to link the need to protect cultural heritage and cultural landscapes in the rural environment with the development of the rules and provisions in the next EU RDP.

We will keep trying to broaden our geographical working field and actively seek collaboration by Member states in South and Eastern Europe. A formal request to the EAC board to appoint a liaison for each Member state to feed the working group with data will follow.

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