

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

### **Progress Report: February 2020**

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 spring 2019 – spring 2020.

### **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.

The work of the EAA and EAC Working Group on farming, forestry and rural land management in recent years has focussed on the potential impacts of rural land-uses on the archaeological heritage, in particular intensive agriculture, restructuring of rural land holdings, and forestry expansion and management, and the capacity and limitations of the more widely established mechanisms for archaeological impact assessment, avoidance or mitigation, to address these concerns. Examinations have also been made, in the context of the European Union's legal framework and financial support mechanisms for agriculture and forestry, most notably the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), of policy prioritisation and formulation mechanisms at a European level to help mainstream heritage management considerations in these areas.

### **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 20<sup>1</sup> countries. An update of the member list is planned, since (active) members are requested to join the community at the EAA-website.

### **2019 – governance issues**

Since 2019 was a very busy year in terms of domestic preparations for the new CAP and the approaching Brexit, the WG did not organise a session at EAA 2019 in Bern. No formal business meeting was held either. Contact was mostly kept by email.

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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

## **2020 - developments**

In reaction to the call for sessions for EAA 2020 a successful proposal was made by members of the WG in theme 7. *25 years after: The changing world and EAA's impact since the 1995 EAA Annual Meeting in Santiago.*

Goal is to act as a forum for archaeologists working in the area at national, regional or local levels, to present short papers on:

- Models of organisation of and co-operation between heritage agencies and other public bodies for the protection of the cultural heritage in farmed and forested landscapes;
- The protection of cultural heritage in changing rural landscapes and in areas where there is significant ongoing rural land-use change.

A total of 9 papers were proposed for our session, originating from Germany, Portugal, Flanders, Ireland, The Netherlands and England.

A business meeting will also be organised.

## **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. The current proposal of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) reflects in a 10% decrease of the CAP budget. The start of the new CAP will also depend on the approval of the MFF. CAP will not be able to start before 2022, and it is very well possible that this and related deliberations in the European Parliament on the associated legal proposals will lead to an extra delay and that CAP will only start in 2023. A delay in the new CAP will also affect agricultural and forestry programmes and measures solely financed in Member States under EU State Aid rules, as there is a cross application of CAP rules to such programmes and measures.

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 are developing 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. The expected budget cuts are making it harder to claim even a small part of this for measures related to landscape and heritage management.

Many member states are currently experimenting with result-based schemes. In most of these experiments, a whole farm assessment is taken into account and reflected in the payment. This

offers a good opportunity to include (and thus indirectly reward) heritage and landscape management practises.

Furthermore, there is much stronger support for agricultural innovations, such as the introduction of various types of precision farming techniques designed for the more efficient application of plant products. The WG has been active on this aspect since a few years, with the PHD-work of our colleague Henry Webber in England. Recently, new contacts were established with prof. Rachel Opwitz of Glasgow University, who is working on Agri-Tech and will be chairing a session on this on LAC.

Specifically, in the area of forestry policy at European level, this year will see the development by the European Commission of a new EU Forest Strategy for post 2020 and a related multi-annual implementation plan. The 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the equivalent of a Conference of Parties (COP) in the Forest Europe process, will also be held in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, with work on a new five year Forest Europe Work Programme for the years 2021 to 2020, commencing thereafter and based on resolutions adopted at the conference.

### **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.

Particular attention will be given to workings and outputs of the new European Commission expert group on cultural heritage (Cultural Heritage Forum) (E03650). The Expert Group had its first meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Brussels.

EAC Members (national bodies/agencies in a federal context) that are also public bodies in EU Member States are encouraged to make sure that domestic CAP and RDP take heritage into account.

We would like to repeat our question to the EAC board to appoint a liaison for each EAC Members to feed the working group with data on the ongoing preparations of the CAP and RDP.

In addition, in the context of the UK's departure from the EU, the Working Group is keen to pro-actively support its UK members and all UK colleagues and their institutions (whether at a national level or in devolved administrations) with the ongoing development of their cultural heritage policies and the linking of these to the principles set out in established other European frameworks, such as the EAC Amersfoort Agenda and the COE Faro and Valletta Conventions.

### **AOB**

An overview paper on CAP and its influence on heritage, presented on behalf of the WG at EAA2017 in Maastricht, was recently published online:

[http://archaeologiaexnovo.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/3\\_Cordemans\\_Byrnes\\_VanRooijen.pdf](http://archaeologiaexnovo.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/3_Cordemans_Byrnes_VanRooijen.pdf)

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