

# WILDLIFE ESTATES LABEL

*WE act for biodiversity*



## Editorial

During the past few months, I had the pleasure to chair the 7th WE Steering Committee and to participate in the meetings of the WE Scientific Committee and of the 1st European WE Evaluator Training Session. We had a very fruitful debate on issues of high importance for the functioning and the future operation of the program, such as on the WE Label methodology and its regional adaption, on the principles for the renewal of the label or on the creation of a fund raising strategy tailored to the project needs. I would here like to extend our thanks to the members of the Scientific Committee for their involvement and guidance on how to best adapt the label award methodology to take into account the specificities of the various European biogeographical regions. I should also underline the importance of the training session for our WE label evaluators which is a necessary tool for the coherent functioning and the credibility of the WE program.

An invitation from the European Commission offered me the opportunity to present to the EU's Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature the WE program and to propose a closer link between our national offices and the representatives of the EU Member States in the above Committee. I also underlined that information which will be obtained through the Nature 2000 Annex we have recently

added to the questionnaire for the WE Label can be very useful as an indicator of the implementation of the EU nature protection policy, especially at a time that this policy is under review ([Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme](#), generally referred to as REFIT).

The dynamism of the debates, the interest that the WE Label has generated not only amongst farmers and land managers but also at the level of international institutions, and the ever increasing number of labelled estates augur well for the future of the program.

Following the recent award of the label to new estates we can now proudly say that the WE Label is present from the Mediterranean bioregion up to the Boreal, and from the Atlantic to the Continental region.

Konstantin Kostopoulos  
COO, Wildlife Estates

*Welcoming  
Estates  
Website*

A pallet of leisure activities on European estates. Initiated by [Friends of the Countryside](#) and the [European Historic Houses Association](#) the website collects European estates that offers a wide range of activities to its visitors.

[www.welcomingestateswebsite.com](http://www.welcomingestateswebsite.com)

## 7th WE Steering Committee discussing the renewal of labels

On April 1, 2015 the 7th WE Steering Committee took place in the ELO's Brussels office. As part of the objectives for 2015 the label renewal procedure was introduced by the EU Secretariat. Each WE Label needs to be renewed after every 5 years by the national delegations. Currently there are several estates for which the label requires renewal (32 estates in Spain and 3 estates in Finland).

The Committee encouraged the National Delegations to continue the adaptation of the WE methodology in cooperation with the respective Scientific Committee members.

As a result of a long discussion the idea of training European WE Evaluators was introduced to the project. The project's aim is to train independent evaluators to enable them to assess and score objectively the WE applications. It was stressed that an objective assessment, based on scientific criteria, strengthens the credibility of the WE methodology.

## European Evaluators were trained at EU level for the first time!

The first WE Label Evaluator Training Course took place on April 1-2, 2015 in the ELO office in Brussels. The European training session was led by **Carlos Otero** and **Maria Ledesma** from the Polytechnic University of Madrid and more than 10 people joined the training session mainly representing different National Delegations to obtain more insights

of the WE assessment methodology and the requirement for the European Evaluator Diploma.

At the end three delegates, who had already acquired experience in the evaluation of the estates, received their official diploma: **Ahti Putalaa** from Finland, **Francesco Kinsky dal Borgo** from Czech Republic and **Alvaro Martínez Serrada** from Romania.



The WE European Official Evaluator title is given upon the completion of the training course given under the auspices of the Wildlife Estate European Secretariat and the Superior Technical School of the Engineers de Montes (The Polytechnic University of Madrid). The title will be renewed every year.

Previous training sessions were organized at national level in Spain and Portugal. The European training session invites national delegations to delegate future evaluators in order to be able to realize a unified assessment methodology.

**The WE team is committed to find volunteers to become official evaluators in each country!**

Apply by sending an email to [julianna.nagy@elo.org](mailto:julianna.nagy@elo.org)

## Recently awarded labels

Four Belgian estates received the WE Label in the context of the Agriland conference entitled “Terre agricoles, aujourd’hui” organized on March 30, at the Château Sainte-Anne in Brussels. The land managers received their WE Label from **Konstantin Kostopoulos**, COO of the WE Label. To set the scene for the ceremony, **Patrick Miel**, coordinator of the WE Label in Wallonia, presented the Label to the participants. He emphasized its purpose and benefits for lands manager and inviting them to join the project.

## The new labeled estates are:

- **Vivier Estate** – the estates’ land management objectives focusing on increasing soil biodiversity, are supported by the agriculture, forestry, and family hunting activities that take place on the estate. The estate is also partially integrated into Europe’s Natura 2000 Network.
- **Château d’Anvaing Estate** – the estate preserves and enhances biodiversity by planting hedges and alternating fields and meadows. Through such measures, the estate has been vastly improved.
- **Scy Sanssouci Estate** – the estate carefully balances resources use and biodiversity. Through creating ponds and sustainable forest management practices that mixes coniferous and deciduous trees, biodiversity has taken off on the estate.
- **Graux Estate** – the estate seeks the right balance for all the activities on its territory; organic agriculture, sustainable hunting management and the elimination of invasive alien species are all part of their strategy.

For pictures of the ceremony please visit our [photo gallery](#).

## And 3 additional labels were awarded by the WE Steering Committee

- **Bois Landry Estate** – this French estate managed to achieve the balance between forestry, tourism and game management.
- **Blarney Castle Estate** – this Irish estate has an excellent communication program and an exemplary management plan for the preservation of habitats and cultural heritage.
- **Pugerups Gods Estate** – this Swedish estate represents the perfect balance between woodland and arable land.

## The 3rd Wildlife Estates Scientific Committee

The WE Scientific Committee gathered together for the third time in Paris on March 10 at the Fondation Sommer to discuss and debate about the WE methodology and Natura 2000 annex. The Committee currently involving 10 experts from all over Europe, was asked to address the question of adaptation of the methodology for the WE label depending on the region. The objective is to have a common but regionally adapted questionnaire for all 17 countries involved in Europe.

The Scientific Committee was formed 3 years ago as a scientific board of the label advising national delegations on the way to use the WE application form. The Committee is composed of 7 experts from the different bio geographical regions of the EU. Their tasks are to establish the scientific criteria and principles which are the base of the WE label.

## **WE Label was presented to EU member-state officials at the EC's last Co-ordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature**

The European Commission's Co-ordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature took place on March 12, in Brussels. Konstantin Kostopoulos, COO of the WE Label, had the chance to present objectives and the state of play of WE Label to the group.

The Co-ordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature is a special body assisting the Commission in the preparation of legislation or in policy definition related to environment. The mission of this group, chaired by DG ENV (Unit B.2 "Biodiversity" and Unit B.3 "Nature"), is to bring together the European Commission, Member States' representatives and various stakeholders (mainly NGOs) as well as the European Environment Agency. It aims at fostering an exchange of views and to coordinate on issues related to the implementation of the Nature Directives (Birds Directive and Habitats Directive) and the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy in particular the targets and actions therein.

The presentation was well received by the participants especially by the UK representatives who expressed their interest in the project.

## **Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" - Inaugural workshop on Natural Capital on April 14**

The ELO organised the first thematic meeting in the framework of the Intergroup and under the patronage of MEP, Karl-Heinz Florenz. The workshop entitled "Our Natural Capital- Strengthening the link between business and biodiversity" gathered together MEPs, the EC DG ENVI and several stakeholders from NGOs and industries. Pia Bucella, Director of Natural Capital Unit in DG ENV gave an insight on the "circular economy" initiative with a specific focus on raw material cycle. Chantal van Ham from IUCN pointed out the need to turn nature-based solutions into wide-scale use. Finally, Christoph Büren, ELO President, concluded in explaining that we need to make sure that our financial capital is invested in our natural capital, but that cannot come from farmers alone; that is a job for the whole of society.

The presentations were followed by a lively debate and gave a positive impulse for the work of the Intergroup in the year to come.

Should you wish to receive more information or become part of the discussion please get in contact with Delphine Dupeux.

## **Upcoming events**

- **3-6/06/2015**  
**Green Week, "Our health, Our wealth", Brussels**
- **01/07/2015 - tbc**  
**WE Workshop, Poland**
- **2/06/2015**  
**Conference on Large Carnivores, Brussels**
- **14-16/09/2015**  
**WE Plenary Session, Extremadura, Trujillo, Spain**

[www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)

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