

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

Progress Report: February 2010

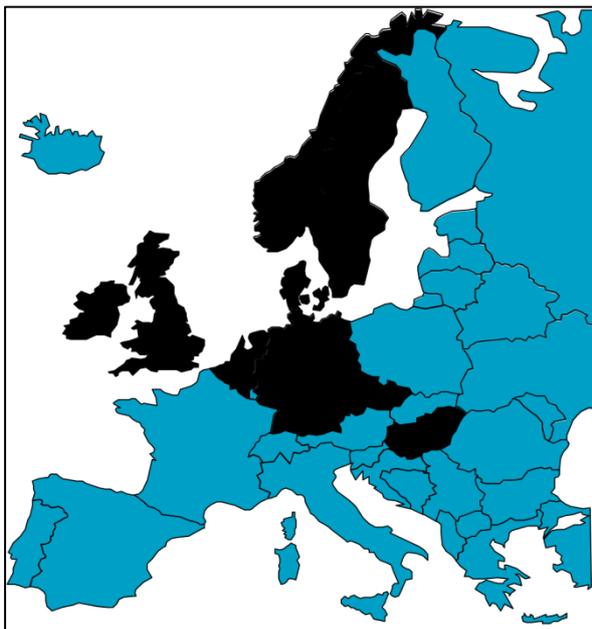
The Working Group, formerly organised under the aegis of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) became a joint Working Group of EAC and EAA in March 2009. This report covers the first year's work of the joint group.

General

The Working Party 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 impact assessment, avoidance or mitigation.

Membership

Group membership has now reached nearly 30 participants or correspondents, representing 13 countries. Importantly, in 2009, colleagues from the Czech Republic and Hungary joined the group giving it a perspective of the situation in central/eastern Europe for the first time.



Map showing European countries represented on the Working Group (shaded)

The Working Group continues to seek additional members, particularly from Southern and Eastern Europe.

The Working Group's Terms of Reference are provided in Appendix 1.

Web site

In November 2009 the Working Group refreshed its pages on the EAA web site <http://www.e-a-a.org/wg2.htm> and arranged a hyperlink to them from the EAC web site.

Conference session

Vince Holyoak and Stephen Trow, on behalf of the Working Group, organised a conference session “Rural land use and the management of the archaeological historical landscape: a European perspective” at the 15th Annual EAA meeting, held at Riva del Garda, in September 2009. Many Working Group members participated in the session.

The group also held a business meeting during the EAA event, at which the main topic of discussion was reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and its potential implications for the European cultural heritage.

At the meeting the Working Group resolved to (a) find ways of lobbying for the better recognition of cultural heritage in the future direction of the CAP, while noting the serious challenges this poses and (b) to pursue a means of publishing papers from various conference sessions it had organised.

Lobbying activity in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy

Following its business meeting the Working Group has begun to find ways of raising the profile of cultural heritage in discussions taking place on the future of the CAP from 2013. Subsequently this has included actions by members from Belgium, England and Scotland:

- Influencing a report on “public goods through agriculture” commissioned by EU DG Agri from the Institute of European Environmental Policy, to ensure mention of cultural heritage
- Holding an informal meeting with Thierry de l’Escaille, the Secretary General of the European Landowners Organisation to discuss areas of common interest in relation to the CAP
- Holding a meeting (as a delegation of environmental bodies) with George Lyon, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on the future of the CAP for the Parliament’s Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
- Preparation of a briefing for George Lyon and others on the situation in England to illustrate the role of the historic environment in the “public goods through agriculture” argument
- A meeting with Europa Nostra (March 2010) and others on possible joint advocacy on CAP reform

EAC Occasional Paper

At its business meeting the Working Group agreed to pursue the publication of papers arising from conference sessions it organised in 2004 and 2009 and at the 2008 World Archaeological Congress in Dublin.

The group is delighted that EAC has agreed to jointly fund the publication of these papers, as a volume in its Occasional Papers Series, together with English Heritage, and the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and National Monuments Service of Ireland.

Progress with the volume to date has been good and the Working Party’s aim is to publish it before the end of 2010.

Additional activity

Group members are closely engaged in delivering the broad objectives of the group within their individual countries and are making significant progress. Examples for 2009-10 include:

- Germany: A second meeting of the “Commission for Archaeology and Agriculture” within the German Association of State Archaeologists was held at Lohne (Lower Saxony) in spring 2009, including members of the Working Party.
- Ireland: Irish group members were active ensuring submissions on the importance of protecting the cultural heritage were made to the public consultation process on the shape of the CAP 2013; in advance of a new Agri-Environment Scheme due for roll-out by the Irish Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in 2010; and to a consultation on the “2020 Strategy”, the national long-term strategy for the agri-food, forestry and fisheries sectors.
- England: English group members negotiated and helped design a new agri-environment scheme for England’s uplands, which replaces a system of less favoured area payments, and requires greater commitment to environmental land management including maintenance of historic/archaeological features. Members were also involved in producing a new publication for farmers: “Farming for the historic environment”
<http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Stewardship.pdf?1265813638>
- Wales: Welsh group members were involved in consultation and negotiations relating to the inclusion of the Historic Environment within the Welsh Assembly Government's new agri-environment scheme - Glastir. This will see protection afforded to all mapped historic environment features and traditional farm buildings within landholdings entered into the scheme and prescriptions to encourage active management of historic features. Glastir will ultimately replace all of the other existing Welsh agri-environment schemes.

However, some members have also reported serious problems encountered with the profile of archaeological site management in relation to various European Union rural development initiatives.

Members of the Working Group continue to informally exchange information, advice and expertise in order to facilitate advances or to counter problems.

Looking forward to 2010

Continuing advocacy work on the future of the CAP is likely to be the main activity of the Working Group in 2010, together with the work required to publish the proposed Occasional Paper. However, the group also wishes to consider further how it can facilitate the exchange of practical information on the issues of archaeological site management and will address this in the year ahead.

In addition, our member Cees van Rooijen, of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency, has successfully proposed a Round Table session “Archaeology and managing change in economically marginal and semi-natural land in Europe” at the 2010 EAA annual meeting in the Netherlands. We also propose to hold our annual business meeting in the margins of this conference.

We will also continue to monitor progress with the EU Commission proposal for a Soil Framework Directive. Several years ago the Working Group successfully lobbied for this draft Directive to recognise the archaeological archival role of soils as one of their protected environmental,

economic, social and cultural functions. Progress with the draft Directive has been stalled since 2007 but may be freed up by the arrangements delivered by the Lisbon Treaty.

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Appendix 1: Terms of reference

The EAA/EAC Working Group on farming, forestry and rural land management, working closely with other relevant EAA/EAC Standing Committees and Working Groups, will:

- 1a. Monitor the implications for the conservation of the historic environment of developments in farming, forestry and rural land management and related environmental policy and organization in Europe;
 - 1b. Collate information on the activities of international organizations and nation states which will have an impact on the historic environment component (including buried archaeological remains) of farmed and forested landscapes;
 - 1c. By encouraging the development of specific projects, contribute to assessing the impacts of agriculture, forestry and rural land management on the historic environment in Europe, and the responses to these impacts by archaeologists and other managers of the historic environment;
 - 1d. Seek to inform and influence international agendas and organizations (eg the European Union, Council of Europe, UNESCO) in order to promote enhanced conservation of the historic environment within farmed and forested landscapes, with the approval of the Board;
 - 1e. Encourage European governments to establish or support arrangements to engage farmers and other land managers in the positive management of the historic environment; with the approval of the Board and
 - 1f. Identify and disseminate guidance on research and best practice.
2. Advise and assist the EAA and EAC Executive Boards on these matters.
 3. Establish an e-mail discussion group and convene an appropriate forum at least once a year.
 4. Brief the EAA/EAC membership on issues discussed at the working group forums and also on other relevant matters.