



Landcare Europe



Deutscher Verband für
Landschaftspflege

I. Background

In recent decades in some European countries non-governmental organizations were established to retain traditional cultural landscapes and their flora and fauna in close cooperation between **nature conservation, agriculture and municipalities**.

In Germany the first Landcare associations (LCAs) were founded in the Mid-1980ths. Conservation groups, farmers and local politicians initiated the formation of local LCAs. This approach, which was then referred as Landcare was found successful, because each group has an equal voice (parity)--**No group is stronger than the other**. Thus, by 2012, 151 regional LCAs have been formed across Germany. Today, these organizations are implementing integrated and sustainable land management practices in many rural areas of Germany. The LCA's, bridge the gap between and among diverse land use interests, bringing regional stakeholders together to coordinate their various interests. For instance, farmers want to earn money from their hard work, the tourism industry wants to sell a magnificent landscape, while conservationists are concerned about the security of plant and animal habitats. Subsequently, Landcare groups support the idea of linking farmers' interests with aspects of sustainable land use and biodiversity.

Also in other European countries, more and more often, farmers and conservationists cooperate in providing an attractive countryside. In the **Netherlands**, farmer's cooperatives for nature conservation have succeeded in building new local social networks of trust and are re-integrating dairy farming, nature conservation and landscape management. In **Spain**, the Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori –xct- (Land Stewardship Network) is a not-for-profit organization working to foster land stewardship as a conservation strategy for the natural, cultural and landscape resources and values of Catalonia. They try to generate responsibility in landowners and land users on conservation and sustainable use of natural, cultural and landscape resources

In order to give more weight to the common objectives at the European level a unified, European-wide alliance of involved NGOs will be established in the near future:
"Landcare Europe".

To achieve this, representatives of SICONA (**Luxembourg**), Veelzijdig Boerenland (**The Netherlands**), The Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group - FWAG (**UK**), Xarxa de Custodia del Territori (**Spain**), the Czech Union for Nature Conservation – CSOP (**Czech Republic**) and the German Association for Landcare – DVL met several times in the last 15 Months to prepare the next steps towards a legal formation.

II. Objectives

In the 6th European Action Plan on biodiversity there will be 10 goals pointed out to curb the loss of biological diversity. An emphasis is placed on providing enough funds to support coun-

try-specific measures for biodiversity. Additionally the involvement of the society with all its sectors is needed.

A new challenge is the 'tailoring' of European and national policies to local and regional situations - in interaction with the regional parties involved. Accompanying measures should therefore be

- to strengthen the coordination between the Community and the Member States in view of biodiversity-activities,
- to set up the cooperation of all biodiversity groups across the EU,
- to encourage public participation for biodiversity initiatives.

Within a European network the landscape associations in Germany and their European partner organizations can provide valuable experiences from their working years to the European Union.

Landcare Europe should

- **contribute the exchange of practical experiences in order to implement the objectives of the Action Plan,**
- **anchor the participation of different interest groups to integrate biodiversity considerations into all areas of society.**

Our practical work to promote biodiversity in our cultivated landscape is highly dependent on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The DVL-Partners in **Landcare Europe** have warmly welcomed the European Commission's proposals of 18 November 2010 (COM (2010) 672 final) and have called for the CAP to be aligned with the European challenges. The European Biodiversity Strategy and the Water Framework Directive can only be implemented using instruments which function in practice.

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