



# ***EU policies for wood pastures: what's right? what's wrong?***

**European Parliament 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

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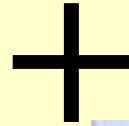
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**Natura 2000 habitats  
and sites, semi-natural  
ecosystems =  
Biodiversity 2020,  
Targets 1, 2 and 3**

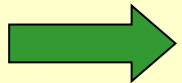


**Actively farmed  
permanent pastures =  
CAP Pillar 1 direct  
payments and Pillar 2  
measures**



# Two key areas of policy:

- **Biodiversity 2020 + Natura 2000**
- **Common Agricultural Policy (Pillars 1+2)**



*They should work together for wood pastures...*

*on paper AND in practice on the ground*

*but they don't*



# Biodiversity 2020 Target 1 – conservation status of Natura 2000 habitats and species

- Natura 2000 recognises 2 types of wood pasture (Boreal wooded meadows and Mediterranean *dehesas* with evergreen oaks)
- But NOT the many other types, including the many Natura forests with tradition of grazing
- More explicit guidance is needed on Natura forest habitats that benefit from grazing
- Very limited data on the conservation status of wood pastures e.g. no monitoring of *dehesas* (our most extensive wood pasture)



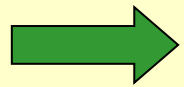
# Biodiversity 2020 Target 2 – restoration of ecosystems and their services

- What does this Target mean for the millions of hectares of wood pastures?
- There are no quantified objectives for wood pastures in relation to Target 2
- Insufficient data on extent and condition of these ecosystems (as for semi-natural pastures generally)
- So how will we know if Biodiversity 2020 Targets are achieved?



# Lack of comprehensive data, but reports from Member States make clear the main threats to Natura 2000 farmland habitats

- Decline of extensive pastoral systems
- Inappropriate pastoral management



*Fortunately to address such problems we have the CAP (now “green”, focused on natural resources...)*

*Pillar 1 direct payments + Pillar 2 measures to influence management practices*



# CAP Pillar 1 Direct Payments

- Before 2005, no problems for wood pastures as CAP support was for livestock on all types of pasture
- Now we have direct payments per hectare for all farmers, with 3 basic conditions:
  - **Land must be eligible (permanent grassland, arable land, or permanent crop land)**
  - **Land must be either in farm production or under suitable maintenance activity**
  - **Compliance with rules e.g. cross-compliance**



# Without direct payments, pastures with trees and shrubs will be abandoned. They should be a priority for the “green” CAP

- Since 2014, Permanent Grasslands (PG) can include any amount of trees and shrubs if these are accessible to grazing – good.
- So wood pastures are PG and automatically eligible for direct payments, if there is proven farming or maintenance activity?
- **NO, THEY FACE BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS AND DISCRIMINATION**





# In theory all trees and shrubs CAN be counted as part of the pasture's eligible area

- BUT they must be “accessible for grazing for their full area” – is this rule *practical*?
- And AGRI says that leaves or fruits not eaten *directly* from the tree do not count as “accessible for grazing”



# If trees are not ALL fully accessible to grazing, then there are limits or deductions

- A maximum number of 100 trees per hectare. If there are 101 trees, the pasture is not eligible
- Or a “pro-rata” reduction in the pasture’s eligibility, in proportion to the coverage of trees
- What policy aims do these limits serve IF there is proven farming or maintenance activity?
- ...and IF the trees and shrubs have clear agronomic and environmental functions, and do not *impede* farming?



**If trees/shrubs cover more than 50% (??) of a pasture's area, the only way the land can be eligible for direct payments is:**

- **Special category of Permanent Grassland with Established Local Practices PG-ELP**
- Natura 2000 habitats can be designated as PG-ELP to ensure their eligibility
- And other wood pastures with traditional uses
- They must be justified to the Commission and identified on the Land Parcel Identification System
- Why this “special” treatment? So they can be targeted with higher payments? No...



**If a wood pasture is in active farming use, why apply more restrictions and rules than to grass pastures, or to arable land?**



## CAP Pillar 2

- Agri-environment-climate + Natura 2000 payments
  - Very inconsistent use
- Payments for establishing agro-forestry systems
  - Ironical that new systems are grant-aided but existing systems are penalised
- Afforestation of farmland
  - Highly subsidised AND receives Pillar 1 payments. It is clearly the preferred option for marginal pastoral land

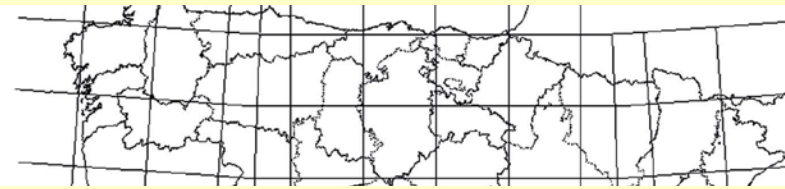


# Biodiversity 2020 Target 3 – maximise farmland under CAP biodiversity measures

- Greening is irrelevant for wood pastures
- Pillar 2 implementation is inconsistent
- ...and weak reporting makes it impossible to know how much land is under such measures
- No data specifically for wood pastures, or even for semi-natural pastures in general
- CAP monitoring indicators tell us almost nothing about trends in habitats and ecosystems and their use



# Andalusian blue butterfly



## Main threats:

- Abandonment
- Afforestation



# Conclusions

- Massive bureaucratic effort and **cost** to “**micro-control**” numbers of trees/shrubs on each parcel of land, and to reduce eligibility of wood pastures
- Totally **inadequate resources** for monitoring and evaluation of the **macro effects** of CAP policy instruments on wood pastures
- ...and of trends in wood pastures and other semi-natural pastures from perspective of habitats and ecosystems
- **EU policy “cannot see the wood for the trees”**

