

REPORT

“Agroforestry: Trees for a Sustainable European Agriculture”

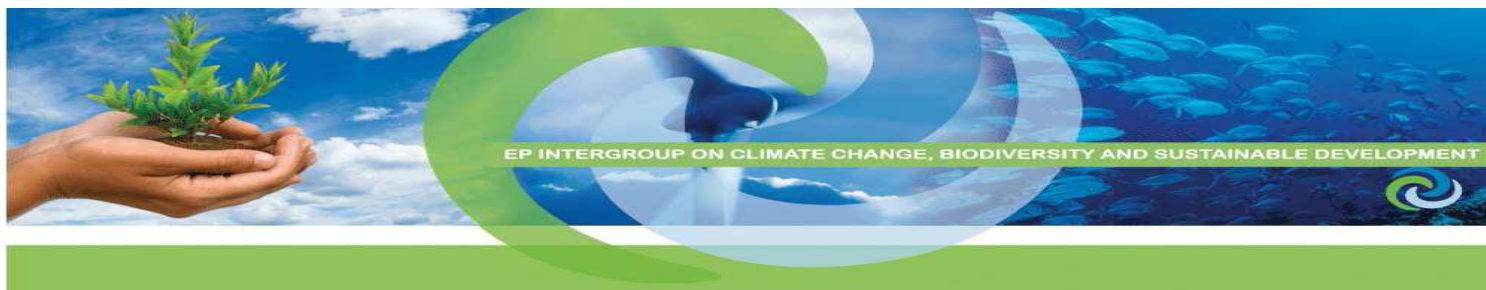
*Chaired by Gaston Franco, Member of the European Parliament and
Chair of the “Forestry” Group of the EP Intergroup
“Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”*

**Wednesday 10th October 2012
European Parliament, Brussels**

Bringing together over 80 participants including policy makers, farmer’s representatives, NGOs and renowned scientists, the event provided solutions to boost the potential of agroforestry in Europe under a greener and more competitive Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Now is the opportune time to put this new farming system at the heart of the discussion on the CAP reform.

“In the face of the food security, environmental and economic challenges, agroforestry makes us rethink the place of trees under an integrated high nature value farming,” stated Gaston Franco, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the conference. Mrs Benitez Salas, Director in DG Agriculture – European Commission - voiced strong support for agroforestry.

Strong EU recognition of the multiple assets of agroforestry is essential. The on-going CAP reform should pave the way to enshrined and spread agroforestry practices in Europe.



Opening Session

Welcoming words and introduction by MEP Gaston Franco, Chair of the “Forestry” Group of the EP Intergroup “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”

“Agroforestry allows making the link between agriculture and forestry,” stated Mr Franco. Farmers and forest owners are sometimes seen as being competing to see their specificities recognised and to get financial support from the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). “I am the first accusing farmers of taking all the money at the expense of forest owners,” acknowledged Mr Franco. In his view, agroforestry is a way of reconciling these diverging interests.

Furthermore, he recalled that agroforestry is not a new activity. In the Greek and Roman Antiquity, olive trees contributed to the culture of wine, cereals and legume. However, traditional agroforestry has progressively been replaced by more simplified production systems. Agroforestry has been modernised over the last years. It is no longer focused on single species plantation. It is now a side by side cohabitation of local field and forest species.

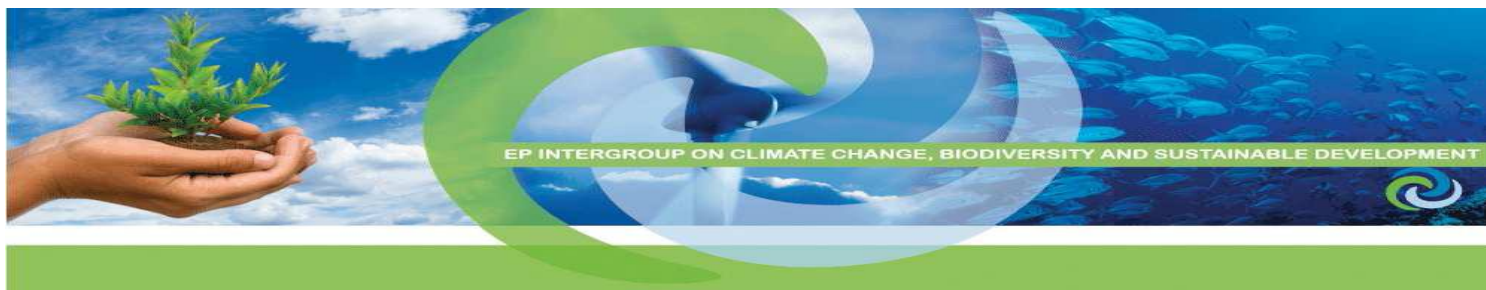
In the face of the food security, environmental and economic challenges, agroforestry makes us rethink the place of trees under integrated high nature value farming. Trees provide many ecosystem services. They protect crops against the detrimental impacts of climate change, improve soil quality and water retention, store carbon, impact positively pollinators and play a role in combating pests. Besides all these benefits, agroforestry produces timber products that farmers can sell. Mr Franco added that agroforestry contributes significantly to creating beautiful landscapes by reconnecting spaces and establishing ecological corridors.

He wondered whether we could consider using the 7% of environmental measures to finance tree planting. Equally important is the question of how best to integrate agroforestry in other relevant EU policies such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the upcoming EU Forestry Strategy.

Mr Franco concluded by quoting the French writer Jean Giono who wished “to make planting trees lovable”.

Statement by Maria Angeles Benitez Salas, Director “Sustainability and Quality of agriculture and rural development”, DG Agriculture, European Commission

Ms Benitez Salas stated that agroforestry is part of the EU culture. This system can play a key role in meeting today’s needs such as food security, climate change mitigation, water storage and purification as well as biodiversity preservation etc.



“Agroforestry is a rediscovered form of sustainable and creative agriculture, which gives a new role to trees. They become workers of nature. They allow getting the best of the land,” argued Ms Benitez Salas.

Despite its numerous benefits, agroforestry was only recognised in 2006 in the CAP. Under the existing rules, 19 programmes of rural development with agroforestry measures are implemented in 7 Member States, namely Cyprus, Italy, UK, Spain, Hungary, Portugal and France. The allocated budget amounts to 25 million Euros. Although few farmers have used these funds, there is room for improvement.

At the time of the discussion on the CAP reform, Mrs Benitez Salas is quite optimistic about the increased support to be given to agroforestry. The introduction of trees into crops could be financed through various mechanisms foreseen by the Rural Development regulations. . She explained that we have to be aware that public goods delivering by the system will result in medium term benefits, which therefore might not be immediately profitable.

In her view, developing agroforestry requires taking action on training and on research, knowledge sharing and exchanges of best practices. The European Innovation Partnership on “*Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability*”, recently launched by the European Commission, will be highly beneficial in this regard.

Ms Benitez Salas voiced strong support for agroforestry. By creating win-win situations, this flexible tool is able to be adapted rapidly to many situations and implemented from Northern to Southern Europe. She called on stakeholders to maintain the pressure on regional and national players so that available support for agroforestry is fully uptaken.

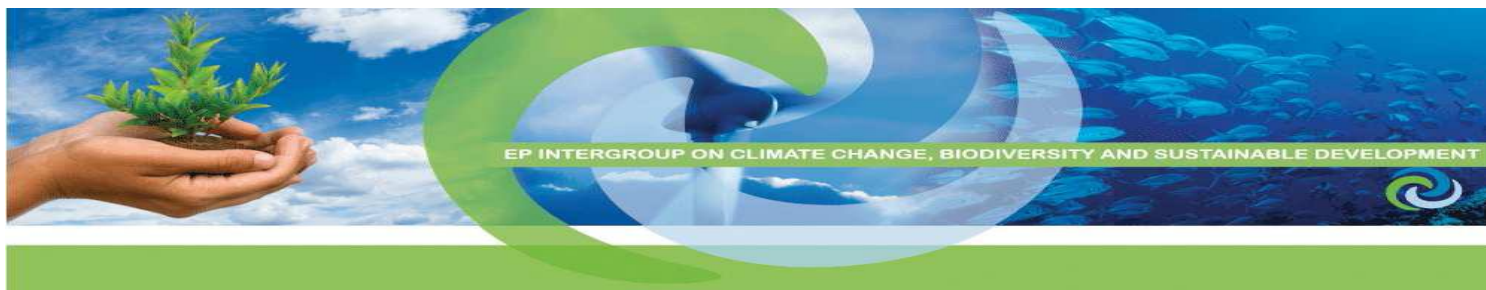
Mrs Benitez Salas concluded by hoping that agroforestry will have the recognition it deserves in the reformed CAP.

Presentations

European research on agroforestry: achievements and ways forward

Christian Dupraz, Researcher, French National Institute for agricultural research, President of the European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)

European scientists have been involved in agroforestry research for the last 10 years, thanks to several European and national projects. The emphasis is more specifically on modernised systems. In these systems, trees are deliberately grown in close mixture with crops and/or pastures. Agroforestry systems are adaptable to most European farming systems, and farmers are more and more motivated in implementing them. Furthermore, demonstration sites are essential for farmers who need to see



how it works in the field. It is worth underlining that farmers work hand in hand with scientists through the participatory research approach.

“Agroforestry is a production system in itself and not a mixture of agriculture and forestry,” said Mr Dupraz. Interestingly, agroforestry enables to bring solutions to different issues such as income diversification, unemployment and ecological services. According to him, all these years of research have demonstrated that agroforestry yields encouraging results. It is a profitable activity bearing in mind that it delivers medium and long term benefits based on the intergenerational solidarity.

Mr Dupraz underlined that agroforestry increases productivity. We evidenced that productivity has risen between 20 and 40%, which is more important than any other types of innovation in agriculture. In other words, 100 hectares of agroforestry produce as much as 140 hectares divided into agriculture and forestry.

Moreover, we are now able to provide technical guidelines such as the appropriate space we need between trees in order to develop sustainable crops.

Mr Dupraz confessed that much remains to be done in terms of research about environmental services provided by agroforestry. It was noted that agroforestry is well accepted by the population and contributes to improving farmers’ image. With regard to climate change adaption, trees protect crops against heat waves, thus enabling them to resist better. There is ongoing research on the role of trees as carbon sinks. Equally important is the fact that they are able to infiltrate rainfalls and reduce floods. In addition, their deep roots reduce pollution by catching different elements such as nitrates. What remains to be further explored is the impact of trees on the reduction of the use of pesticides and fertilizers. On biodiversity, agroforestry can contribute to putting an end to landscape fragmentation thanks to the reconnection of the different natural elements.

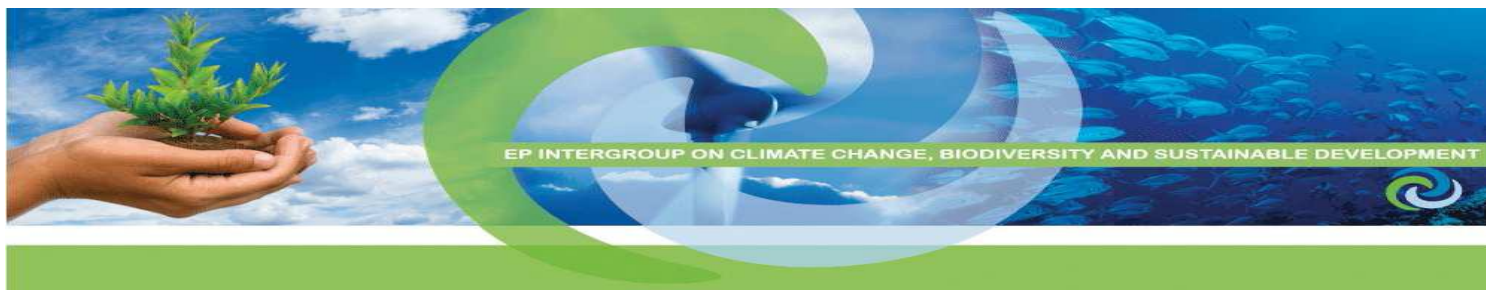
“Agroforestry is an investment that will help future generations,” concluded Mr Dupraz.

Trees in fields for a competitive and sustainable European agriculture

Stephen Briggs, Farmer in Cambridgeshire, Director of Abacus Organic Associates

Mr Briggs rents one hundred and four hectares of lands out of which 52 hectares are dedicated to agroforestry. The reason why he decided to invest in agroforestry is to shift from a monoculture system to a multi-functional land use system. He planted trees on a large scale so that farmers can realise that it is possible to use normal farm machinery and apply normal farm modern practice.

Cropping diversity reduces financial risks, contributes to conservation activities and diversified landscapes. Mr Briggs added that agroforestry is a more climate smart agriculture, enabling also to preserve biodiversity and increase pollinators. More specifically, trees are important to climate change adaptation. In the UK, 12% of the territory is covered by trees. According to Mr Briggs, it is



unlikely that his country manages to fight efficiently against climate change by only planting large areas of forest. Besides, agroforestry increases nutrient recycling and reduces soil degradation.

Mr Briggs planted apple trees. Unlike timber crops, apple trees allow getting quick economic return within fifteen years. He stated that it is difficult for farmers who rent lands to make long term investment in agroforestry. Furthermore, apples are eligible under the pillar 1 of the CAP. With timber products, his owner would have run the risk of receiving penalties.

Mr Briggs mentioned a report titled “*Agroforestry on a global scale*”, showing that many countries and parts of the world such as Canada, China, New Zealand and North America look at agroforestry seriously.

Agroforestry in Europe: big potential, relevant and optimistic solutions

Alain Canet, President of the French Agroforestry Association (AFAF)

“We are exhausting our resources,” said Mr Canet. Agroforestry allows optimising the use of natural resources and produces biomass as well as biodiversity while boosting productivity. It is about creating and protecting landscapes. Before starting talking about money, agroforestry needs recognition.

After a few years, trees grow and they are partially harvested. 2.5 meters on each side of a river of a mile is about a hectare of forest growth. Mr Canet is in favour of planting trees along river banks. Regrettably, 50% of the streams in the department of Gers (France) do not have trees.

He added that modern agroforestry is adaptable to the existing machinery. Planting the right trees at the right place with the right techniques are prerequisites to get the best of this agricultural system.

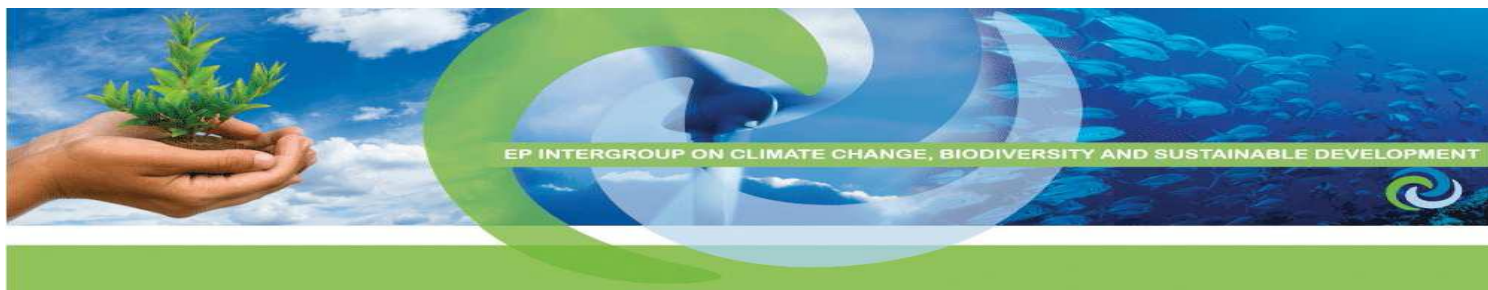
In conclusion, Mr Canet pointed out that at the time when Europe imports massive amounts of wood, agroforestry has a considerable potential.

Trees and farmers

Antonia Andúgar, Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental issues, Copa-Cogeca

Copa represents European farmers while Cogeca brings together European cooperatives. Gathering 70 member organisations at EU level, Copa Cogeca has established closed links with non EU countries.

Mrs Andúgar explained that agroforestry goes beyond agriculture and forestry. This agricultural system provides a wide range of services, enabling to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth, to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to the delivery of raw materials. Most importantly,



agroforestry helps achieve the goals of the CAP, namely the shift towards a low carbon and resilient economy in agriculture. Furthermore, agroforestry leads to diversify income and increase productivity.

Mrs Andúgar insisted on the strong heterogeneity of agroforestry practices in Europe. The different agro-climatic conditions impact directly on the existence and development of agroforestry. For instance, there are forest pastures in the north, dehesa under Mediterranean conditions and silvoarable agroforestry in central Europe.

Mrs Andúgar assured that nowadays many farmers are keen to plant again trees in fields or to maintain this system. To encourage them, farmers need legal certainty and financial support. The eligibility criteria for the CAP direct payments should be clarified. With regard to the proposal for a regulation on support for rural development (so-called the “second pillar” of the CAP), the definition of agroforestry is linked to “extensive agriculture”, which might hinder the development of diverse agroforestry systems.

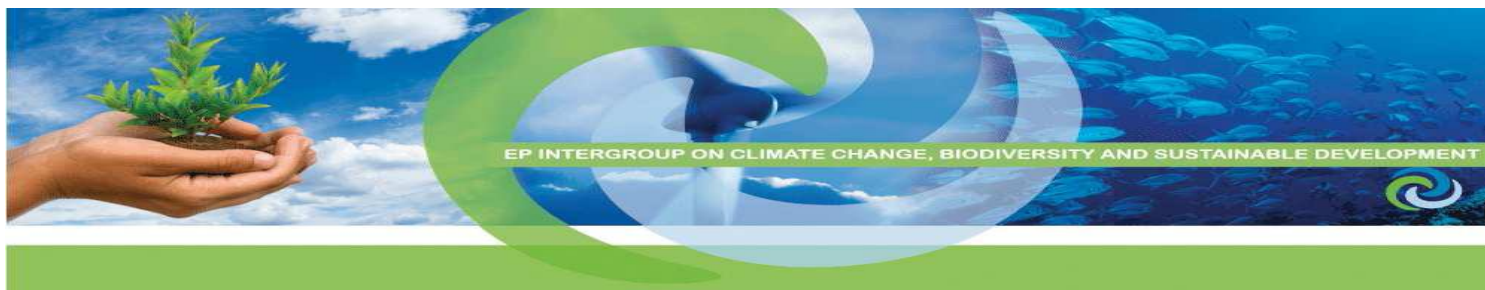
Although agroforestry has proven to be an effective agricultural system, some questions remain opened: how to get farmers engaged?, how to make best use of research?, how to ensure that new business opportunities arising from agroforestry and providing environmental benefits are fostered by rural development support?, how to finance/reinforce necessary investments (e.g. purchase of trees and planting) through rural development funds?

Supporting farmers’ agroforestry projects: the French example

Dominique Chalumeaux, Farmer, In charge of the agroforestry issue at the Office of the French Agricultural Chambers

Bringing together 8000 collaborators, the French Agricultural Chambers advise and help the development of agroforestry. They are members of a European network which brings together the Agricultural Chambers of 14 countries.

To promote agroforestry among farmers, the French Agricultural Chambers have worked in collaboration with INRA and through various projects such as SAFE on the profitability of the system and the multiple uses of agroforestry. Besides, there are two French projects on agroforestry aiming to put forward operational tools and to develop a network of pilot plots. In France, progress has also been made on the eligibility of direct payments and the legal clarification of the agroforestry status. The measure supporting agroforestry systems included in the rural development regulation was activated in France in 2009, allowing local authorities to co finance projects. Regrettably, the French State did not co finance the measure, which then could not be financed in every region.



Since 2000, much has been done, i.e creation of reference plots, awareness raising, elaboration of plantation projects and monitoring, knowledge sharing among farmers and participation in research and development activities.

Mr Chalumeaux gave some examples of success stories in France. In the Poitou Charente Region, a network of 16 experimental plots of over 80 hectares has been created and there are 50 projects in total on 327 ha. Three working axes have been defined:

- awareness raising
- individual support
- research and development activities.

Another significant example is in the Sarthe Department where chickens grow under specific conditions laid down by the Loué label. 4500 farmers apply agroforestry. The Agricultural Chamber gives direct support to farmers and helps them achieve better coordination. In the Hérault Department, studies in several territories have shown that on average, 40% of farmers are not willing to engage in agroforestry activities, 30% are undecided and 30% are keen to invest in this system. We can conclude that the potential of farmers interested in agroforestry is important.

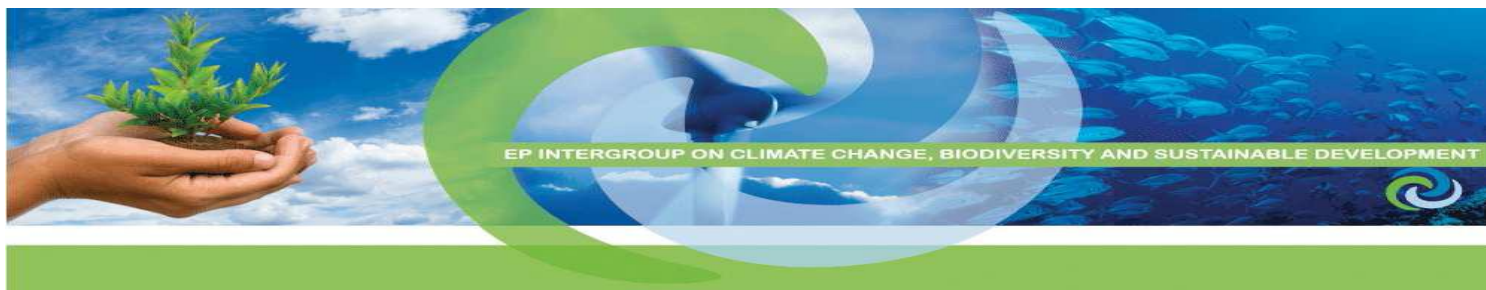
Mr Chalumeaux insisted on the importance of providing personalized and technical support to farmers on the spot. Unlocking the potential of agroforestry also requires removing all technical and legal obstacles and receiving strong support from the EU.

What support for agroforestry under a greener CAP?

Jana Polakova, Senior Policy Analyst on agriculture and rural development, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

Mrs Polakova emphasized the multiple benefits provided by extensive agroforestry systems for soil protection, climate change mitigation and biodiversity preservation etc. “Supporting these systems through the pillar 2 of the CAP is of vital importance,” she argued. In her view, ensuring the maintenance of semi-natural features including trees, hedges, wooded areas, scrubland under pillar 1 is a prerequisite for agroforestry support.

Mrs Polakova acknowledged the economic and climate change challenges underpinning agroforestry use. However, she explained that public support to land management is justified only in cases where such management provides public goods. According to the study developed by IEEP for DG Agriculture in 2009, public goods predominantly encompass the environmental benefits of land management and social benefits such as rural vitality. The provisioning of timber, energy and food are not public goods per se.

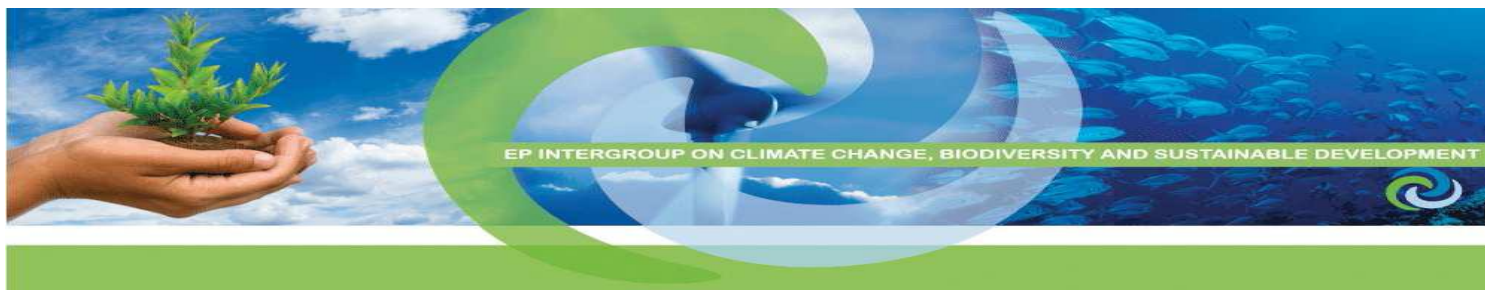


With regard to the support provided by the current CAP, decoupled payments under pillar 1 are important for maintaining stability of incomes to farmers which is of particular importance in extensively farmed areas challenged by low economic viability of agriculture.. Although having eligibility criteria for these payments is necessary, they need to be interpreted well, to avoid damage to trees and biodiversity that happened in the past. Another relevant CAP policy measure is a quantitative obligation to maintain the share of permanent pasture. Under pillar 2, the support provided to the first establishment of agroforestry is a good measure. However, Mrs Polakova regretted that this option has not been sufficiently used in the 2007-2013 period. According to her, developing knowledge about the environmental outcomes of the current schemes could help inform further implementation of agroforestry systems. She also insisted on the crucial role played by agri-environmental support to maintaining traditional agroforestry systems on some of the most valuable European grasslands. For instance, Sweden and Estonia have invested in schemes for the management and restoration of traditional wooded pastures.

At the time of the policy debate on the CAP after 2013, Mrs Polakova welcomed some elements in the European Commission's proposals for future pillar 1 and 2. The second pillar makes a provision for a single measure for forestry, including specific support to "creation of agroforestry systems combining extensive agriculture with forestry." Given the tight CAP budget, the prioritisation of public goods will be key. Equally important is the proposed recognition of the benefits of collaborative actions at the landscape scale. This possibility to provide a bonus in the payment formula would be an interesting step forward. Under cross compliance measures, Mrs Polakova applauded the continued quantitative obligation on Member States to maintain the share of permanent pasture and noted the benefits of the proposed ban on cutting trees and hedges during the bird breeding and rearing season.

Despite these positive elements, much remains to be solved. First of all, there is a need for a clear recognition of the benefits of trees and woodland features in pillar 1 in order to avoid conflicts with agroforestry measures in pillar 2. Trees and woodlands should also be clearly recognised in the definition of agricultural area and permanent grassland. Mrs Polakova criticised the fact that under pillar 2, the current wording of agroforestry does not include the safeguard existing in the current regulation against the fast growing species. As far as the CAP implementation is concerned, she stressed the importance of raising awareness at national level about the benefits of extensive and traditional agroforestry systems and the importance of working towards strengthening institutional capacity relevant to these types of measures. At EU level, for implementing basic payments, the rules on the extent to which trees, hedges and wooded areas count will matter a lot.

To conclude, Mrs Polakova advocated the implementation of biodiversity and climate proofing of CAP expenditure at national/ regional/EU level in order to achieve policy coherence.



Discussion with the audience

MEP Gaston Franco considers that there is a clear link between agriculture and forestry. In his view, France is lagging behind regarding the co-financing.

Someone from the audience asked whether agroforestry leads to reduced use of pesticides.

Mr Dupraz replied cautiously by explaining that the number of pests and invasive species makes a general answer impossible. However, he confirmed that we are moving towards reducing pesticides.

Mr Canet added that using living soils deliver encouraging results. Much is being done through farmers networks and by carrying out traditional and modern research activities.

MEP Eric Andrieu wondered about the existence of certification of agroforestry systems.

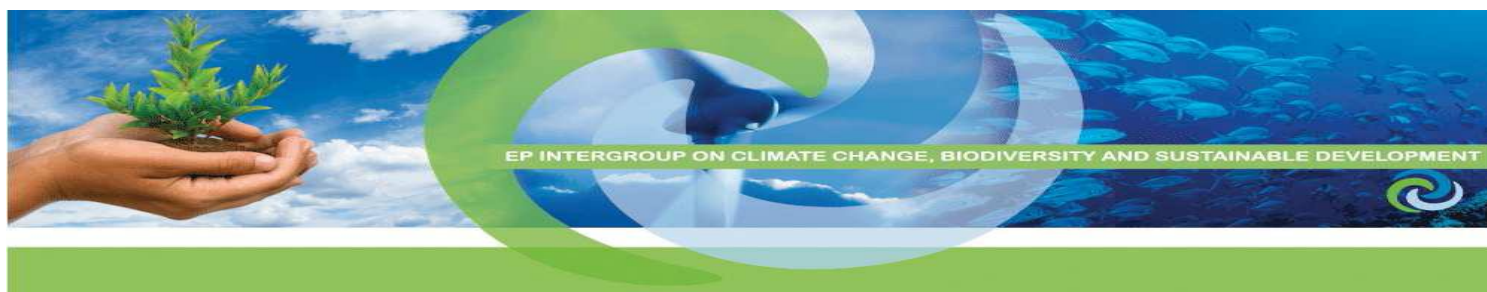
Mr Canet informed that planting trees will be labelled for the first time in France beginning of November. The French Agroforestry Association is working towards creating the profession of agroforestry experts with a cross cutting vision of the challenges at stake.

“Do research activities carry out in pilot farms?,” asked **a participant** who also wondered who are the most active in agroforestry: traditional or organic farmers.

Mr Dupraz pointed out that research activities in France have been carrying out on farmer sites. In response to the second question, he insisted on the fact that agroforestry can be applied by the different agricultural systems. “We don’t want to impose a certain type of agriculture,” he said.

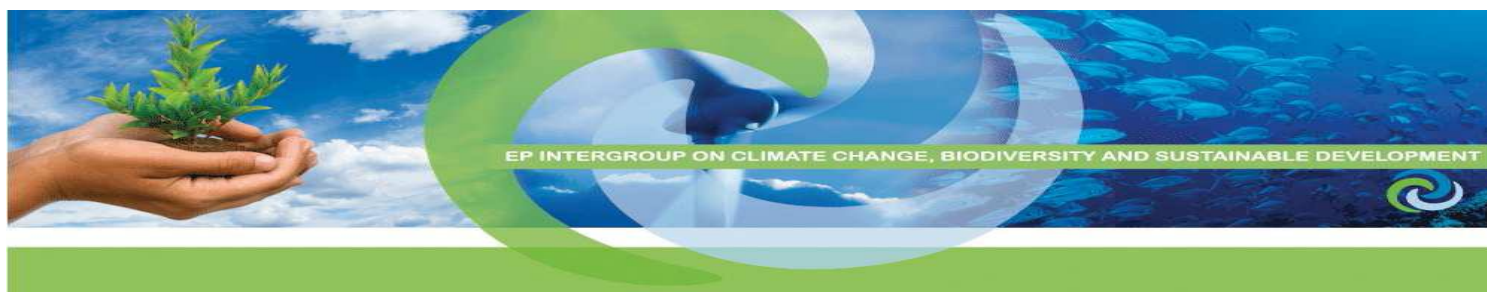
Mr Chalumeaux explained that organic farmers have a predisposition for agroforestry. However, there are also traditional farmers interested in the multiple benefits provided by agroforestry.

Mr Canet concluded that organic and conventional farmers work together and share best practices.



List of participants

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Reinhard	Rebernick	Office of MEP Elisabeth Kostinger
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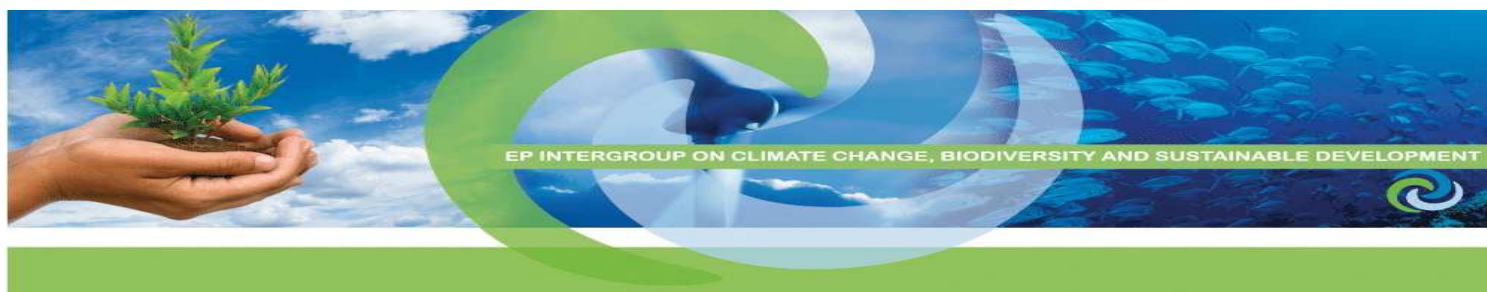
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Markus	Leonhardt	Permanent Mission of Germany
Mike	Strachan	Foresrty Commission Scotland
Minata	Sanganoko	Embassy of Ivory Coast
Snežana	Knežević	Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the EU

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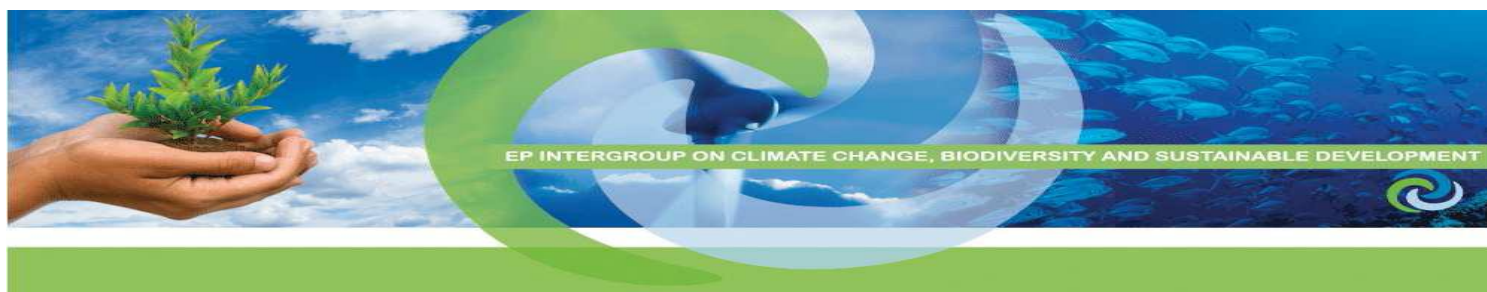
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Amélie	Chauvelle	French Agricultural Chambers
Benjamin	Pallard	PACA Region
Christelle	Angeniol	French Agricultural Chambers
Dominique	Chalumeaux	French Agricultural Chambers
Estelle	Guillaume	Delegation of the Basque Country to the EU
François	Chemin	Espaces naturels régionaux - Nord Pas de Calais
Jörg	Meyer	Bavarian Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry
Stefan	Beierl	Permanent Representation of the Free State of Bavaria
Xavier	Clopes Alemany	Representation of Catalonia

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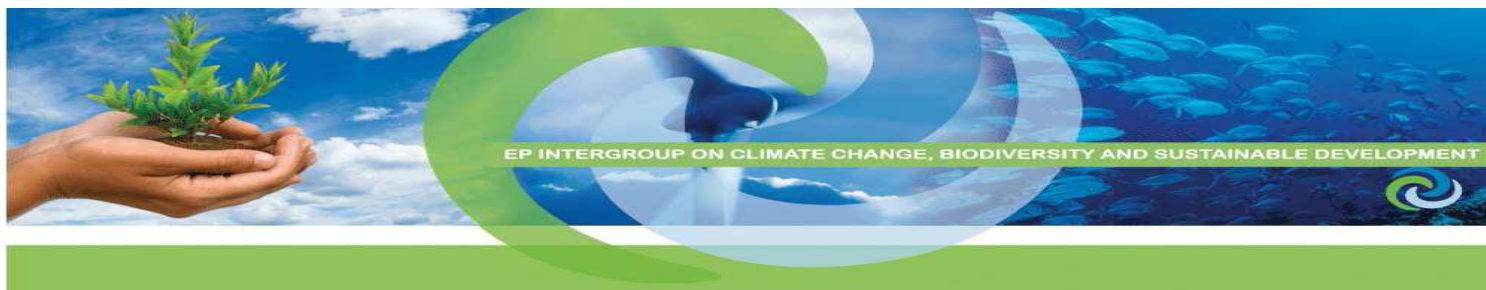
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Agnès	Fayet	CARI asbl



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Martina	Bauer	EURAF- Switzerland
Michael	Jacobson	EURAF USA
Norbert	Lamersdorf	EURAF Germany
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