



An event of the European Committee of the Regions' NAT Commission with the support of Yolda Initiative, Euromontana and Regional IYRP Support Group for Europe

Pastoralism: a crucial way to tackle sustainability challenges in EU and beyond
14 June 2021 (9:30–13:00)
Webinar

Pastoralism is a time-honoured practice of extensive livestock husbandry on rangelands such as in mountains, dry plains, savannahs, steppes and tundra. This form of livestock husbandry makes economic use of areas that are not suitable for mechanised crop farming and/or are difficult to access. Rangelands and pastoralists support the livelihoods and food security of millions of people around the globe. They also provide significant benefits for climate-change adaptation and mitigation, conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services such as maintaining open landscapes. Especially in Europe, pastoralism is vital to keep rural areas alive.

Because of these benefits provided to the whole society, maintaining pastoralism is crucial for achieving the EU's objectives on environment, climate and biodiversity protection within the EU Green Deal, such as territorial cohesion of the Lisbon's Treaty. More widely, pastoralism contributes to several of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, the continuation of pastoralism is facing various threats: difficulties related to the economic context, constraints in finding sufficient land to maintain herds or to access land in some regions, obstacles in effectively and consistently organising the pastureland in the context of its seasonal use with pressure exerted by other users of the land, and additional pressures related to climate change.

Therefore, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) calls on the European Commission to develop an Action Plan to promote and better support European pastoralism.

At global level, the United Nations (UN) are being encouraged to officially designate 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) to further support these ecosystems and livelihoods. Led by the Government of Mongolia, an international coalition of actors is supporting this initiative.

Already at the 27th session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture and the 165th session of the FAO Council, the EU and EU Member States as a bloc endorsed the Government of Mongolia's proposal to the UN to designate an IYRP. This proposal is to be adopted by the 42nd session of the FAO Conference in July 2021 and will be submitted to the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2021.

In this context, it is of utmost importance that the EU maintains its support and that Member States vote as a bloc in favour of the proposal at the UNGA in September. Also, the political leadership of the EU at the global level towards ensuring the support of other countries will be crucial.

What are the contributions of pastoralism to achieving the EU Green Deal?

How does it support food security and encourage the resilience of rural communities?

What is the impact of EU policies on pastoralism in countries in the Global South?

Organised around the echo of the questions above, this event aims at providing a platform for a well-informed dialogue and for raising suggestions on the content of a future EU Action Plan for Pastoralism, including actions to support the UN designation of an IYRP.

PROGRAMME

9:30 Introduction

- Ulrika Landergren (SE/renew E.), Chair of the NAT Commission of the Committee of the Regions

9:35 Roundtable – What is the key contribution of pastoralism in tackling biodiversity and climate crises in the EU?

Moderator: Pablo Manzano, Global Change and Conservation and Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science

Engin Yılmaz, Yolda Initiative & IYRP

Jérémie Crespin, European commission, DG ENVE

Isabel Carvalhais (PT/S&D), Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 for the AGRI Committee

Discussion

10:15 Roundtable – What is the key contribution of pastoralism to support food security and resilient rural communities in the EU?

Moderator: Michele Nori, PASTRES & European University Institute

Concha Salguero, Trashumancia y Naturaleza & Common Land Network

Olivier Maurin, European Shepherds Network

Antonia Luettken, European Commission, DG AGRI

Herbert Dorfmann (IT/EPP), Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on Farm to Fork

Discussion

11:00 Break

11:30 Roundtable – How do the international policies of the EU have an impact on pastoralism around the world?

Moderator: Margareta Amy Lelea, German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture & CELEP (Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism)

Ken Otieno, Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE), Kenya

Hindatou Amadou, APESS (Association for the livestock promotion in the Sahel), Burkina Faso

Philippe Thomas, European Commission, DG INTPA

Michèle Rivasi (FR/Greens), Member of the European Parliament, Com DEVE

Discussion

12:10 Roundtable – How can we strengthen the EU and international efforts towards an EU Action Plan for Pastoralism and a United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists?

Moderator: Marie Clotteau, Euromontana Director

H.E. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of the Government of Mongolia (video recording)

Rui Martinho, Secretary of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Representative of the Portuguese presidency of the Council (video recording)

Maria Helena M.Q. Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General (video recording)

Discussion with

Representative of the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of the Government of Mongolia

Gregorio Juan Velasco Gil, Coordinator of the FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub

Pedro Vieira, Portuguese General Directorate of Food and Veterinary

12:50 Conclusions

- Juan Andrés Gutiérrez, President of Euromontana

Practical arrangements

Simultaneous interpretation from and into French–English–Spanish

Simultaneous interpretation from Swedish

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