

INVITATION

First Announcement

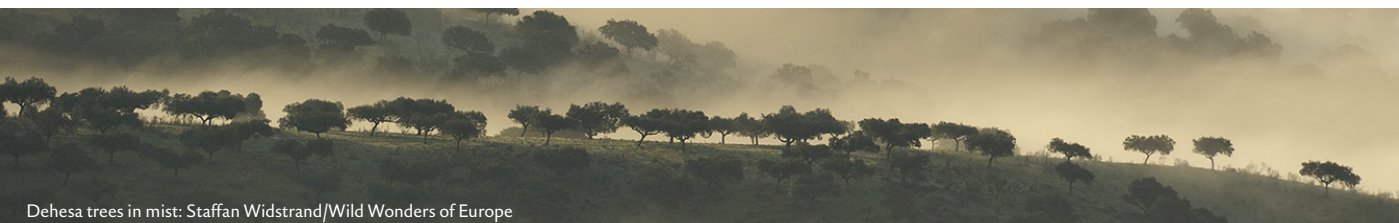


River bend landscape: Milan Radisics/Wild Wonders of Europe

Re-wilding Europe

Key to ecological and economic development

18 November 2010, 10 – 13 hrs, Brussels



Dehesa trees in mist: Staffan Widstrand/Wild Wonders of Europe

Rural Europe finds itself at a turning point in history. Many millions of hectares of European land are being abandoned. Youths are seeking refuge in the cities. Older people attempt to survive in nearly empty villages. Economic collapse, social disintegration, forest growth and loss of biodiversity are interacting with disastrous consequences.

However, could depopulation be at the heart of this problem, and at the same time be the

key to the solution? Can we imagine new, spectacular natural areas turning the tide? Could the re-wilding of nature lay the foundation for a socially and economically sustainable, rural Europe, in its remote parts?

To hear the answers to these questions, we kindly invite you to attend the official Launch of The Wild Europe Field Programme. Princess Laurentien van Oranje of the Netherlands will be the facilitator of the event.



wnf.nl



ark.eu



freenature.eu



eurosites.org



wild-wonders.com

The Wild Europe Field Programme

DATE 18 November 2010

TIME 10 - 13 hrs

VENUE Flagey in Brussels

PROGRAMME DETAILS will be send
Mid-October

Olive trees: Peter Lilja/Wild Wonders of Europe

REGISTRATION? If you are interested, please indicate on www.rewildingeurope.com/launch by 8 October 2010 your initial possibility to attend. Password for the registration form is 'wild'. If you are not available to participate, but want to stay informed about The Wild Europe Field Programme, we invite you to leave your name and contact on our website.

Bison: Stefano Unterthiner/Wild Wonders of Europe

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please contact Marieke Reisinger, ARK Foundation, The Netherlands, marieke.reisinger@ark.eu, Phone: +31-6-28 27 24 73

Abandoned farm: Twan Teunissen/ARK Nature

Ambition

The beauty of nature can provide Europe with a new, common identity and pride. For large parts of Europe, investing in nature might also be the basis for an economic revival. To address this challenge, 'Re-wilding Europe' was first presented at the 'Conference on Wilderness and Large Natural Habitat Areas' in May 2009. The overall aim of the programme is:

- to re-wild at least one million hectares of Europe by 2020
- consisting of ten areas
- each of at least 100,000 ha.

Every area should host complete and natural functional ecosystems specific to the region. The new land use should be economically viable and competitive with other alternatives and the area should be embedded in the social and cultural fabric of each respective region. The ten areas should also serve as the front-runners – or models – for a larger-shift in land use across Europe towards 'nature-based economies'.

Five model projects

The Prague conference participants were invited to submit nominations for joining the initiative. Based on twenty applications from all over Europe, five areas have now been selected to serve as the first model projects to show how the vision can be put into practice. The areas chosen are situated in:

- Western Iberia (*Spain/Portugal*)
- Velebit (*Croatia*)
- Danube Delta (*Romania*)
- Southern Carpathians (*Romania*)
- Eastern Carpathians (*border between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine*).

On the 18th of November representatives of the projects, funding institutions, politicians, communities, NGO's and administrators from all over Europe, will jointly call for action to support and up-scale Re-wilding Europe.