

Foreword

ACTIVITY REPORT 2016

Dear Young Friends,

Over the last year YFCS has begun a process of reorganising itself. The aim is to re-fresh YFCS with new enthusiasm and new and younger members, ensuring that it keeps up with our high expectations of this organisation of such a great potential. While we certainly enjoyed another successful year full of interesting events and new members, we do see a need to amend and adapt over time. Such processes are always better started early than late, and we would very much appreciate all of your thoughts and comments!

To begin with, you will have noticed that our very successful *Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship* left Belgium for the first time and took place in the beautiful region of Anjou, France. We were kindly hosted by the Duke and Duchess de COSSÉ-BRISSAC at their famous Château de Brissac and later Château de Durtal, by the Mr and Mrs de HEIM de BALSAC. For the first time, we will now merge our GA with the much larger GA of the Friends of Countryside (FCS) at Hex Castle

amongst other places in the beginning of June 2017. We are very much looking forward to joining forces, as we will greatly benefit from the fantastic talks and visits the FCS organise and learn from the Friends. The board is also in transition, as William HILLGARTH left us after years of great support on the board of YFCS. Fortunately, we have found great new board members in Alix HEIM de BALSAC and Louis-Victor de FRANSSU-DOUVILLE, who organised the aforementioned FCE with great success. We are looking forward to officially welcoming them to the board during our GA.

Further board changes are on the cards and we are keen to get a new generation of enthusiastic YFCS members onto the board. Please do come forward and contact us if you would be interested or have other suggestions. I am delighted to announce that LGT Private Banking will become the sponsor of the YFCS and the FCS in 2017. We are all very much looking forward to getting to know this bank better and to work with them in the future. We are deeply grateful and honored to have found the support of the excellent and prestigious LGT Private Banking.

As you see there is much change and improve-

ment underway, and it doesn't stop here. YFCS is a members' organisation and its success entirely depends on the participation of its members – you! Therefore, I invite you once again to get involved and contact us with any thoughts you may have. The board is nothing more than the steward of this organisation and are more than keen to hear from you and to integrate your ideas, as we have in the past.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Yours,

Carl-Philipp von Cröy
President of YFCS

About

The Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) is a European membership organization for rural business people, rural entrepreneurs, future and young private landowners aged between 20 and 35 years old. It is a relatively young Not for Profit Association. It was created in 2006 with the support of its parent organization Friends of the Countryside (FCS), the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the Union of European Historic Houses Associations (UEHHA).

The main idea was to focus on younger business people, rural entrepreneurs and landowners as they represent the next generation who will be in charge of the prosperity of our future rural economy. Their objective is to raise awareness amongst YFCS members about European environmental policies, European rural business opportunities and estates and historic inheritance and management processes. Also, they promote educational philanthropy in the countryside. Another objective is to leverage on members' innovative countryside management related experiences. YFCS is represented and channeled at EU level through the European Landowners' Organization (ELO).

In the context of its environmental activities, YFCS actively promotes European citizenship, bridging the gap between young rural people and the European Union and stimulates its members to develop a sense of belonging and European identity.

YFCS Board

PRESIDENT

Carl-Philipp Prinz von CROY

VICE PRESIDENT

Countess Agnès de LIEDEKERKE BEAUFORT

SECRETARY GENERAL

Francesco KINSKY dal BORGIO

BOARD MEMBERS

Alix HEIM de BALSAC (France)

Geoffroy DE CANNIERE (Belgium)

Louis-Victor de FRANSSU-DOUVILLE (France)

Marie-Christine Graf von SCHONBORN (Germany)

SECRETARIAT

Ana CANOMANUEL, Coordination

Leonides GUTIERREZ, YFCS accountancy



Events 2016

General Assembly

In 2016 the Young Friends hosted their General Assembly (GA) in Vienna, Austria. The GAs take place annually as a dedicated meeting for the YFCS to discuss relevant topics and shared interests, gather information about EU policies and strategies. It is an opportunity for the members to interact, shape their views, ideas and experiences.

The GA Conference opened with the speech of Felix Graf MONTECUCCOLI, who delivered a lecture about sustainable land-use. First he outlined that Austria finds itself at the top of sustainability in Europe. On top of that he explained his concept of sustainable land-use, defining it in terms of managing the land in order to produce the demanded food whilst keeping a balance with biodiversity. He emphasized that risk management is



a crucial topic in Austria especially regarding the given natural hazards and risks in the mountain area and it might explain why there is such a high awareness for sustainable land-use. Finally, MONTECUCCOLI concluded that Europe needs to redesign its sustainability – a healthy balance between supporting the economic needs of the producers and at the same time with a strong focus on biodiversity would be worth striving for.

Venzel CZERNIN introduced us into the business of managing a golf club by demonstrating how his approach is running the golf club. Ferdinand TRAUTMANNSDORF presented the variety of fishes he breeds in different ponds on his estates. Also, he explained his unique business concept, which includes retailer in the whole city of Vienna. Both are parade examples for innovative and successful ways to diversify an estate.

Ana ROCHA, liaison between ELO and the British landowner organization, gave the Young Friends an exclusive first-hand update about Brexit. She passionately pointed out both sides of the “Stay IN” and “Stay Out” debates and explained how

Events 2016



and why the Brexit could have happened. She stated that “nothing has changed yet” and remains curious in how the Brexit will change European and British law.

Afterwards, YFCS ambassador Alix HEIM de BALSAC introduced us to the youth organization “Forum Forêt”, which she founded and which is designed to answer more forestry-specific questions to young people in France.

The following day, the Young Friends were visiting the mushroom farm of the EDLINGER family. The Young Friends could gather an insight into how mushrooms are produced! We were shown to the different stages of growth of the mushrooms and were impressed by the complexity of breeding mushrooms.

In 2017 the Young Friends will hold, for the first time, their General Assembly together with the General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside (FCS) in Maastricht, Belgium, on June 2nd.



Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship

The 2016 Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship (FCE) under the slogan “Marketing: A Cornerstone for Young Entrepreneurs” took place in Doyon, Belgium, from the 18th to the 20th of March 2016, hosted by YFCS member Quentin d’HUART.

This edition line-up speakers, Charles Louis DE

POTESTA, founder of ARMOGANT, Baudouin DE CHABOT-TRAMECOURT, founder of CINEMATIR and Benedetta SOLARO DEL BORGO, owner and managing director of EUR TRADE CENTER (ETC) introducing the YFCS members to their approach of marketing in entrepreneurship and shared their personal experience.

In addition, the YFCS board, together with Karl GROTFELT, rewarded this year’s new winner of the FAMIGRO Entrepreneurship Award. Edouard de MERODE start-up “WIGNAC Cidre Naturel” came out as a winner through its successful business model producing cider from apples from the Ardennes in France.

“First of all, I would like to thank the Young Friends of the Countryside for the wonderful weekend we had in Doyon. It was the first time for me, but certainly not the last one. It was really interesting to meet people from all over Europe with a common passion.

In addition to that “WIGNAC cidre Naturel” received the FAMIGRO Entrepreneurship Award, this price means a lot for us, because Wignac is at its beginning and we are really thrilled that members from YFCS, ELO, and M. Karl Grotenfelt believe in it.

Moreover, as young start-up, the 5000 EUR prize is really useful and will help us to develop our marketing which is really important in this kind of product.”

Edouard de MERODE

Famigro Award

Created by Mr Karl GROTENFELT in 2013, the FAMIGRO Award aims to reward the best European rural entrepreneurship project of the year.

Through this Award and thanks to the initiative of Mr GROTENFELT, the YFCS can support every year a start-up project that addresses the current challenges of the rural sector bringing innovations and fresh ideas. At the YFCS, we are convinced that Entrepreneurial projects are one of the corner stone of the rural countryside evolution.

The aim of the FAMIGRO Award is to increase the chances of this kind of valuable projects to succeed and grow, letting them benefit from the support of the network of the Friends and Young Friends of the Countryside.

The winner of the 2016 edition was Wignac, a young company who decided to use the Champagne technics to produce cider. Edouard and Thierry de MERODE, the founders of the company explained us that they decided to launch this project to bring an additional value source of their estate in France. That kind of project perfectly fits with the spirit of the award, using the know-how of a region to create a new source of value, new production, bringing direct benefits to the local economy. On the top of this, their product is delicious!

2017 has already kept its promises, with several very exciting applications in various areas. The Jury's decision will be a tough one. We are looking forward to discover the winner, and to showcase the participating projects during the events in 2017.

This year, the joined GA will be a great opportunity for us to strengthen our contacts with the friends and benefits from their advices and experience. We also looking forward to hear about all kind of entrepreneurial projects, which could apply to the award. If you know young countryside entrepreneur, do not hesitate to put them in contact with us!

To learn more, download the application guide at yfcs.eu



Join the YFCS

Supporting and working for the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) requires some extra time, but as with all work given to non-profit organizations it pays back in different and unexpected ways. As a members' organization, YFCS organizes seminars and events twice per year in different European countries and has a strong link to the European Land-owners' Organization (ELO) and its sister organization, the Friends of the Countryside (FCS).



First of all, as a members' organization the Young Friends provide you with a very reliable and safe network of friends and contacts across Europe. In this way, I have met new people from across Europe, which are all fascinated about the European countryside – often from different perspectives. Learning from this exchange can provide eye-opening experiences. Through the FCS, we have access to great network providing us with long-standing experiences and great support.

Secondly, within the Young Friends we have a fantastic platform to help you make your first steps in your career. To start with, you can gain a great insight into the workings of the EU in Brussels through being able to perform an internship at the ELO!

Some members have become very successful entrepreneurs and have even started their businesses through having met at one of the events of the Young Friends. In addition, through having strong links to our sponsors we have been very fortunate to meet some leading banking advisors to family business. This way we are fortunate to gain insights into very different jobs in the European economy and to have a contact base to rely upon.

Last, but not least, being allowed to gain exclusive insight into European family businesses through field visits, is of incredible value. We are very grateful to all our hosts who opened their doors and shared their knowledge with us. You will learn and see how the respective entrepreneurs successfully deal with the different issues arising not only from different political legislations and different geography, but also from the unique challenges within each family business.

To conclude, getting involved in the Young Friends of the Countryside is a very rewarding experience. From being a member, being exposed to different ideas first, to getting more involved into the organization, you will learn a lot. It is an incredible opportunity to try your hand on an organization and to get acquainted with the different phases an organization goes through. Thus, I do encourage you to become a member. Even though you have now heard about all the different benefits arising from the Young Friends, you will never know what comes out of it for you – in my experience some unexpected and great experiences grew out of it and proved to be of great value.

Marie-Christine Schönborn
Board Member

Perspectives

2016 has been an interesting and challenging year for our organization. Interesting in terms of the activities we have organized and the new people we have recruited on the Board, and challenging because of the planned restructuring of the organization, as well as the usual drive for rejuvenation and involvement of our membership-base.

2017 will see our organization focusing on the following topics:

Restructuring of the YFCS

The year ahead of us will see a big effort by the Board in restructuring the YFCS, starting from the National Ambassadors, the structure and timing of our events, to the composition of the Board. We are extremely grateful to Geoffroy DE CANNIERE for taking the lead with this initiative and I look forward to reporting positive progress in the next edition of the Activity Report.

Renewal of the YFCS Board

As some of the Board members have held their position for several years, and are reaching the limit-age for our organization (35), the need for renewal cannot be long postponed. We, on the YFCS Board are planning our succession in order to ensure the smoothest possible transition, which in turn will guarantee



the successful continuity of the organization. It is therefore with great pleasure that I welcome two new YFCS Board members: Alix DE BALSAC and Louis-Victor DOUVILLE DE FRANSSU. After successfully organizing the last Forum for Coun-

tryside Entrepreneurship they have been unanimously accepted on the Board and we are very grateful for their commitment to the YFCS!

Recruitment and strengthening the links with the FCS

This remains an important topic for our organization, therefore I would like to encourage all YFCS members who are approaching the age of 35, to consider **moving on to the FCS** in order to continue together the journey we started already many years ago.

Also, I would like to remind you all that we need your effort in recruiting new members, therefore we encourage you to **invite a friend** to our events, whom you think shares our values and common interest in entrepreneurship and a prosperous European countryside.

I also take this opportunity to remind you that the very existence and scope of the YFCS depends on your active involvement and yearly financial contributions.

Since 2016 we have introduced an additional, faster method of payment of the annual membership fee - you can now subscribe to our new **Automatic Payment Form** by sending an email to assistant@elo.org

However, we still very much depend on your commitment and involvement, this means we need, and welcome, your ideas, opinions, concerns, and of course your presence to our events. The goal of our organization still remains that of providing information and assistance to its members, especially with the aim of helping current and future countryside entrepreneurs such as yourselves. So please do not hesitate to get involved and keep in touch with us through the **YFCS secured intranet and Facebook page**, and keep bring-

ing your voice and ideas to us in order to better shape the future of the European Countryside!

Francesco Kinský dal Borgo
YFCS Secretary General

