



# ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

**Friends of the Countryside- Meta asbl  
Young Friends of the Countryside aisbl**

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# Foreword

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2019



Dear Young Friends,

What a delight it is to write the foreword as the new president of the YFCS. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Carl-Philipp VON CROÏ, who asked me to take the lead last year. Carl-Philipp VON CROÏ guided the YFCS through some very transformative years, with many developments such as: the Forum for the Countryside Entrepreneurship (FCE); the Famigro Award (a prize of €5,000 for the most promising and successful rural start-up), and for many very successful events during his time as a board member and president.

With Carl-Philipp's handing over of the presidency, our secretary general Francesco KINSKY DAL BORGIO and our Head of Countryside Entrepreneurship Geoffroy DE CANNIÈRE also decided to hand over their posts to a younger generation. Francesco KINSKY DAL BORGIO has been the life

and soul of the Young Friends; with his incredible organizational skills he hosted many successful events. Geoffroy DE CANNIÈRE, our entrepreneurial board member, led the FCE to the successful version it is today. In addition, he carefully sourced many of the successful applicants and winners of the Famigro Award.

Now the time has come to start a new episode with our new and most diverse board yet. It was founded on 19th October 2019 in Montjardin, Belgium and represents seven nations. The board members were full of novel ideas and the day flew past with plenty of mind-mapping, lively discussions and learning about the historic role of the YFCS, FCS and ELO.

Our new board is incredibly excited to start work on several new projects to guide the Young Friends through the next few years. One of our first steps is the development of a new website

that serves all our members in the best possible way. Also, we are looking forward to announcing the winner of this year's Famigro award. Additionally, we are excited to host our first event in autumn this year, so keep your eyes peeled. Furthermore, an ambassador's network will be built up, strengthening the YFCS' ties across Europe. Most importantly, we are looking forward to welcoming many new members to our association.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time – we are very much looking forward to hearing from you!

All the best,

**Marie-Christine Schönborn**  
**President**

# About

The YFCS is a non-profit organization which aims to:

- Promote interconnectivity between young people across Europe aged between 18 to 35 years who have a longstanding personal or professional interest in rural matters, entrepreneurship, land ownership and management of the countryside.
- Raise awareness amongst members of changes to European environmental policies.
- Prepare young landowners to manage the prosperity and future of the rural economy through responsible stewardship.
- Improve access to rural networks, educational and employment opportunities.

First founded in 2006, the YFCS continues to be supported by its parent organization the Friends of the Countryside (FCS), as well as the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Historic Houses Associations (EHHA). Whilst at the European Union level it is represented by the European Landowners' Organization.

In the wake of 'Brexit' the YFCS continues to encourage the transmission of knowledge across Europe, thus UK members will be unaffected by these political changes.

Looking into 2020 and beyond, the new YFCS Board will be focussing on digitalisation of our vast resources to provide relevant and improved services to our members. Additionally, we will be organizing a series of events across Europe at both local and international level.

**Anna Zahedi, Vice President**

## YFCS Board

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### **PRESIDENT**

Marie Christine Schönborn (Germany)

### **VICE PRESIDENTS**

Anna Zahedi (United Kingdom)

Heinrich von Croÿ (Germany)

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Heinrich XXIX Reuss (Austria)

Leonor Cesar das Neves (Portugal)

Joana Sotto-Mayor (Portugal)

Stephanie Bruun de Neergaard (Denmark)

Antoine Larmache (Belgium)

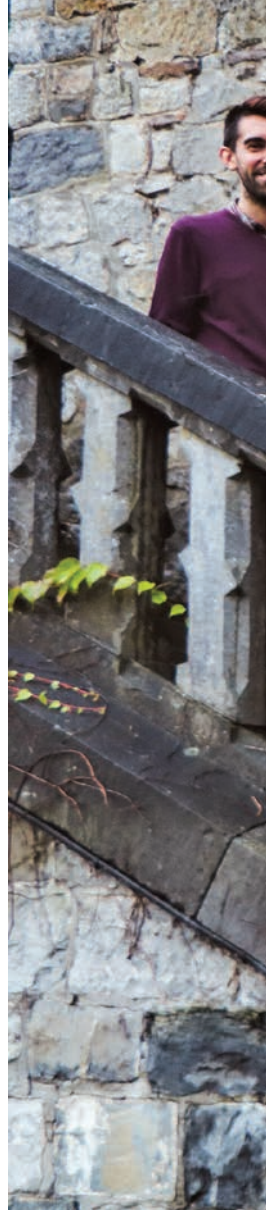
Jean d'Aspremont Lynden (Belgium)

Antoine de Theux (Belgium)

### **SECRETARY GENERAL**

Alberto Hermosel (Spain)

[www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)





# Join the YFCS



**After meeting for the first time in October 2019, the new Board of the Young Friends of the Countryside decided that the value of the YFCS' network should be made more accessible to members. Consequently, we are in the process of digitising and expanding our database and have introduced an Ambassador System to better connect members.**

The role of the Ambassador is to help members actively engage with the YFCS throughout the year by strengthening our ties with agricultural universities and connecting members who live geographically close to one another (instead of by country or lin-

guistic regions). More frequent, local events are also encouraged as well as coordinated journeys to the general YFCS events.

Through the Ambassador System we hope to acquire young and motivated members. People who

are interested in becoming Ambassadors or joining the Young Friends can reach out to the YFCS Board\* for more information and to submit a proposal for their area.


The second change in process is the setup of a new Website with an appealing Mobile Interface. The Website will include a log-in section to the existing FCS Intranet for all YFCS Members. Once the IT infrastructure is ready, we will send out an email with the details. Ideas on how to revive the Intranet as a fruitful platform of exchange and mutual help in matters of politics, expertise and career will be presented at the next FCS General Assembly by YFCS Board Members.

\*Head of Ambassadors Heinrich Reuss, heinrichxxix.reuss@yfcs.eu

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 [info@yfcs.eu](mailto:info@yfcs.eu)

 <https://de-de.facebook.com/young-friendsofthecountryside/>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs/>

 [@yfcs.official](https://www.instagram.com/yfcs.official)

# Events 2019

This year, the YFCS hosted and took part in several exciting events. In February 2019, the Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship (FCE) took place in Belgium and the Young Friends were very generously welcomed by Charles Edouard JOLLY and the FUMAL family. It was a very sunny Saturday full of inspiring discussions that ended up with a gorgeous Gala Dinner at the NH Brussels EU Berlaymont.

A few weeks later, in April, the Young Friends joined the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) in Brussels and had the privilege to listen to some of the most world-renowned experts addressing the most pressing issues concerning the next generations.

In June 2019, the Young Friends joined the Friends of the Countryside at their General Assembly in Angers (France) and held their own GA at the Château de l'Epinay. On the Friday, the YFCS were privileged to listen to several relevant experts at the General Assembly of the FCS which took place at the Château de Serrant. The conference addressed the topic "Facing the Challenges of a Changing World – a French Perspective". In the evening, the Young

Friends then joined the FCS for the Gala Dinner at the Château de Brissac, hosted by Marquis and Marquise Charles-André DE BRISSAC. The evening was enjoyed by a wonderfully large group of members who relished the opportunity to engage with and learn from the FCS.

The following day the Young Friends were generously hosted by Athéna MONTUORO at the Château de l'Epinay, where their General Assembly took place. Developed into a small luxury hotel-spa in the heart of the Loire, the Young Friends learnt about the challenges of establishing a new successful family business. The theme of this conference was "Young Entrepreneurship". Kindly introduced by Alix DE PUINEUF, the Young Friends learnt about two very different business models with Paul DE LEZARDIERE introducing his fascinating start-up VALOVERT and Arnaud DE PUINEUF presenting his family business: POMANJOU. The General Assembly was then followed by a guided tour and wine-tasting in Domaine du Closel at the Château des Vaults. It was a very interesting visit with a lot of new knowledge on the management of vineyards in Anjou and the challenges they face. Overall, the

event in Angers proved to be a fantastic success, with a good number of new and young members coming through. The same weekend Francesco KINSKY DAL BORGIO introduced recent changes to the board: Carl-Philipp VON CRÖY, Geoffroy DE CANNIÈRE and Francesco KINSKY DAL BORGIO himself decided to step back from the organization in order to give the younger generation the opportunity to shape its future.

In October 2019, the new YFCS board was formed and presented after its first meeting in October 2019 at the Château de Montjardin (Belgium). In 2021, after the COVID-19 crisis, the General Assembly of the Young Friends will take place in Córdoba (Spain) from the 3rd-6th of June, together with the General Assembly of the Friends.

**To stay tuned about our events, follow us on our website, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn pages.**

**Alberto HERMOSEL**  
**Secretary General**



## FCE BELGIUM







**GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019**



# Perspectives



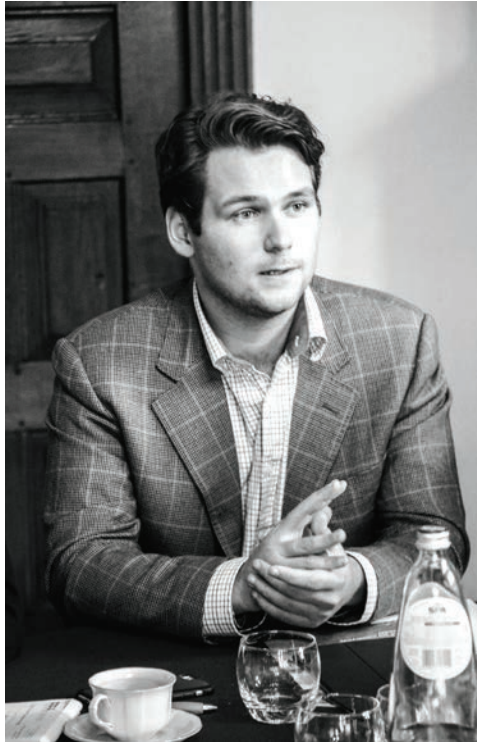
This past year was an eventful one for the YFCS. We have a new team of Board Members and are excited to see our new goals come to fruition in the coming years. Our new Board represents many different nationalities, cultures, and in-

sights; all led by Marie-Christine as our new President. Marie-Christine has been an essential board member for many years, and her contribution to the YFCS has been vital to its growth. Marie-Christine is an exceptional candidate and successor, and

we feel very fortunate to have her guidance and leadership.

As many of our long-term members know and new members will soon find out, Alberto continues to play an indispensable role in the YFCS, FCS, and even in the FFA. As the backbone of our communication, organization and administration. Alberto has proven himself irreplaceable in the past and we continue to admire his drive and passion. As such, we value his continued presence as a continuing board member for the YFCS.

We want to provide an organization that not only sparks interest in countryside matters and the many topics related to it but one that also provides answers, knowledge, and support to anyone in the field; as a collective that shares the same devotion to the countryside. Our organization hopes to embrace and welcome anyone connected to our vision, ranging from those with strong agricultural backgrounds, to those passionate about addressing environmental concerns and innovation and even non-related persons that simply want to be a part of the movement and who share our ideals. Our goal is to bring our members together each



and every year, with our established annual events such as the General Assembly and the FFA, but also to bring in new and curated entrepreneurship conferences, weekends and many more exciting ventures.

In order for everyone to enjoy and benefit from these events, ensuring the growth and success of our membership remains essential. We continue to encourage members to invite their friends along to our events and would be delighted to introduce them to the YFCS. Your own personal experience of the YFCS is invaluable, whilst we always strive to provide a fun, exciting and educational perspective to our events.

We are also thrilled to announce an improved digitalisation of the YFCS, with a new website, logo and active social media channels to represent this new face and direction, so keep an eye out for these changes! This will include online forms for new applicants and a restructuring of the payment system to facilitate and simplify membership fees.

Last but not least, our board is not a secret club, we are happy, friendly, and we don't bite! Feel free

to speak to us if you or anyone is interested, has questions, queries, or if you're just looking to get to know us! We are excited to meet everyone and would like to become familiar with our members. Connection, friendship and even networking is part of the YFCS, and we pride ourselves in keeping this organization open and united. If you have suggestions, ideas, interesting topics or would like to host an event, please reach out! We value interaction and input from members is always welcomed, the YFCS is made for you!

We are very much looking forward to seeing the members who have been with us for many years as well as new members, in the near future.

**Heinrich von Croÿ**  
**Vice President**

# 2020 Famigro Award for Entrepreneurship



Karl Grotenfeld - creator of the FAMIGRO award

The Grotenfelt family represents more than 350 years of diversified landowning in Finland. Famigro is a private company founded by Karl Grotenfelt in 1985. In 2013, he created the Famigro Award, which is granted annually to a young European entrepreneur (between 18-40 years old) that has made or is making a special contribution to the rural economy and environment.

Thanks to the initiative of Mr. Grotenfelt, each year the YFCS is able to support a start-up project that provides answers to the current challenges of the rural sector. These new projects contribute to the evolution of our rural countryside, whilst respect for the environment and social responsibility is endorsed by each rural entrepreneur. The aim of the Famigro Award is to increase the chances of these kinds of valuable projects to succeed, grow, and give them more visibility, allowing them to benefit from the



Geoffroy de Cannière - Previous board member

support of the network of the Friends and Young Friends of the Countryside.

The award also includes prize money of €5,000; an article in the Countryside Magazine and the opportunity to join the YFCS during their FCS & YFCS General Assembly that takes place every year in a different location in Europe.

The 2020 edition is now closed and we have received 8 excellent applications, with the winner to be announced after the summer.

Last year we decided to award five diplomas for Outstanding Development to all the applicants: Baron Island Falconry Experience, Finca Rincón del Rosario, Fumal, SeedForward GmbH and SirPlus GmbH.

Previous winners include: Wignac Cidre Naturel (<https://www.wignac.com/>), Wildernest Tiny House (<https://wildernest.be/>) and Coucoo (<https://www.coucoo.com/>).

**For more information on the Famigro award please contact [alberto.hermosel@yfcs.eu](mailto:alberto.hermosel@yfcs.eu) / [jean.daspremont@yfcs.eu](mailto:jean.daspremont@yfcs.eu), or visit <http://yfcs.eu/famigro/>.**