

Conference

Halting the loss of pollinators: the role of the EU agricultural and regional development policies

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Committee of the Regions, Brussels



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Taking stock of the programming period 2014-2020

Pollinators in the EU Common Agricultural Policy – Pillar 1 and Rural Development Programmes

David Mottershead, IEEP, 21 February 2020

Halting the loss of pollinators: the role of the EU agricultural, regional development and cohesion policies

Content

- Pollinator habitats and the CAP
- MS choices (available for the 2014-2020 CAP) and their impact on pollinators
- Case studies
- Lessons learned



Key ways the CAP can influence pollinators

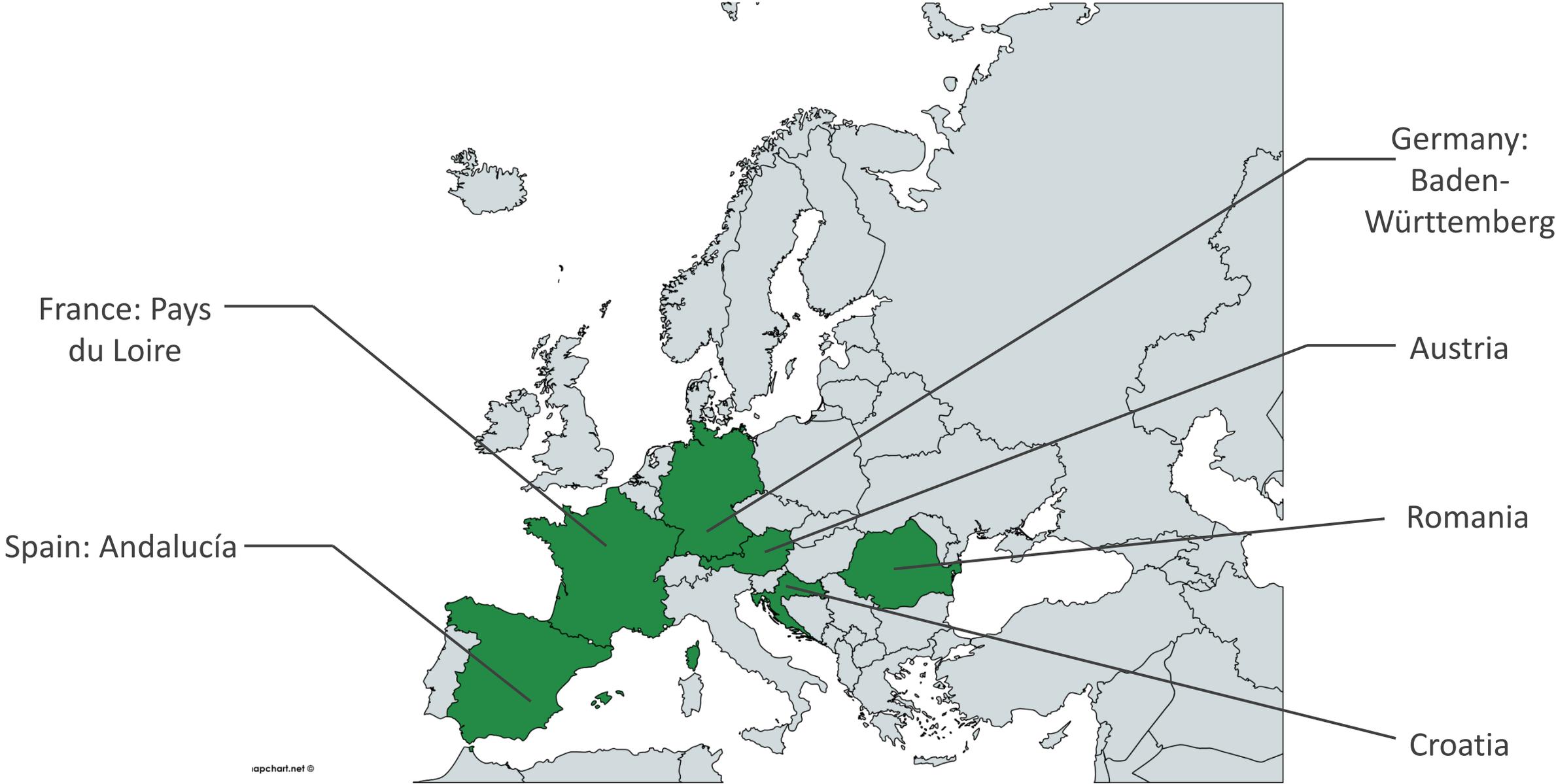
- Preserve HNV features including those on “ordinary” farmland
- On cropped land, less (more precise) pesticide and fertiliser, more tolerance of weeds, wildflowers, more fallow, more crop rotation
- Improve economic viability of extensive grazing systems needed to maintain habitat



Pollinator habitats and the CAP

Habitat type	CAP measures	Impact
Species-rich grassland	Definition of permanent grassland; AECM grassland management support; investment; VCS	Extent of grazing/natural succession; timing and style of mowing; nutrient load
Pollinator borders	Greening, cross-compliance (water strips), AECM support for flowering strips	Availability of food (pollen); absence of pesticide
Hedges, trees, copses	Greening, cross-compliance (GAEC7), AECM support for management	Availability of trees, hedges etc and specific micro-habitats (deadwood etc)
Arable fallow	Greening, AECM	Food abundance, nesting sites (?)
Heath and scrubland	Definition of permanent grassland; VCS; AECM support for clearance	Extent of grazing/natural succession
Forests and other wooded land	Forest measure	Extent of forest habitat

CAP and pollinators: case studies of 2014-2020 period



Choices by the case study Member States

- Wild pollinators not explicitly considered at strategic level but all six CS have measures which benefit them directly or indirectly
- 4/6 use wide definition of permanent grassland to broaden access to income support to other grazed areas
- Differing approaches to cross-compliance – different features protected, different approach to links with AECM
- Similar AECM measures – extensive grassland management, flowering strips, IPM

Examples of good practice from the case studies

Compulsory training module on wild pollinators for organic farmers receiving support in HR

German EFA option for melliferous fallow takes into account length of flowering season and counts sowing as an “agricultural activity” in first year to avoid damage from practices otherwise required as “maintenance”



Pollinator-friendly legumes in the list of n-fixing crops which qualify as EFA

Demonstration days run by Farm Advisory Service (HR)

Results-based schemes which require flowers before mowing rather than a set mowing date which takes no account of the weather

..and some things which could be fine-tuned

- More explicit consideration of wild pollinators as a strategic objective with baseline, intervention logic, monitoring
- Making area-based support work on land in transition (encroaching scrub etc)
- How to support multi-annual measures (e.g. flowering strips) which are incompatible with current definitions of “agricultural activity” (needed for eligibility)
- Don’t jump to conclusions. For instance, wild pollinators around organic farms may still benefit from further support, and landscape features protected from removal may also need support for appropriate management
- Detailed scheme design e.g. grassland management AECM in one case too similar to normal intensive management; inflexible cutting dates (results-based instead?)



Examples of the use of advice and training

- HR compulsory one hour training for organic support recipients in:
 - Biology and ecology of wild pollinators
 - Ecosystem services
 - Role of wild pollinators in pollination of cultivated crops
 - How to protect them and build shelters/habitats
- DE-BW short funded site visits 50/46k farms so far
- AT – Most popular AECM measure includes compulsory training on biodiversity, and site visit by ecologist for certain AECM options
- Role of CAP varies depending on availability of NGO, Chambre d'Agriculture etc provision

Honeybees in semi-natural habitats and protected areas

- CAP funds used to support beekeepers to place honeybee hives in semi-natural habitats including Natura 2000
 - Example: Andalucía, Spain
- Honeybees can outcompete wild bees for flower resources
 - One honeybee colony month = pollen for 33,000 solitary bee larvae
- Honeybees can transmit pests and diseases to wild bees

Recommendations

- Raise awareness of protected area managers and beekeepers & start dialogue
- Competition depends on flower resources – how much and how diverse – so limit numbers of hives
- No beehives in protected areas with rare or endangered wild bee species
- Ensure best practice control of pests and diseases in hives in protected areas – control before they are brought in



Pointers to the future

- CAP strategic plans will need to show how the objective of biodiversity, including wild pollinators is addressed.
- The role of all measures must be considered by Member States – not just the obvious ones
- A topic for this afternoon's session on guidance





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David Mottershead, IEEP, dmottershead@ieep.eu

The report and guidance will be published on the EU Pollinators Initiative web platform in
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