



## Agroforestry for the Transition to an Agroecological Europe

### Policy co-design, the background

Europe has a deep heritage of traditional agroforestry, therefore the practice represents a great opportunity for the future of European sustainable farming, with biodiversity and soil health at its core. Agroforestry is understood as the integration of woody vegetation with either crops and/or livestock in the same parcel of land but it can also be represented by windbreaks, hedgerows and riparian buffers. It can be practiced by introducing trees to agricultural land or through the introduction of agriculture through woodland.

Currently, agroforestry represents about 20 million hectares of land in Europe, 90% of which is dedicated to silvopastoral practices (LUCAS). The majority of silvopasture is found in Southern Europe, while 7.67 million hectares of silvopasture in woodlands is primarily found in Northern and Southern countries, with a much lower percentage in Central Europe. Silvoarable practices, on the other hand, occupy only around 360,000 hectares, which is under 1% of those 20 million hectares (LUCAS).

Europe has pledged its support of agroforestry through policy and financing. These can be found both in state and European Union (EU) policies, for example through each country's CAP strategic plan. Below are some examples of the commitments made to support the expansion of agroforestry throughout the EU:

<b>CAP</b>	Pillar I	Direct payments per hectare are given through greening and cross compliance measures (SMR's and GAEC's in the 2007-2013, 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 periods). Direct payments are available through the agroforestry Eco-schemes (2023-2027): Establishment and maintenance of landscape features above conditionality Management and cutting plan of landscape features Establishment and maintenance of high-biodiversity silvo-pastoral systems
	Pillar II	Rural Development support is found for the Establishment (2007-2013), Maintenance (2014-2020), Regeneration and Renovation (Omibus Expansion, 2018) of agroforestry.
<b>European Green Deal</b>	Farm to Fork	Agroforestry maintains support as a tool to increase biodiversity, climate health, forest growth, as well its ability to create resilient jobs. Landscape features are also mentioned a handful of times within the documents, which are part of agroforestry.
	Biodiversity Strategy	
<b>EU Forestry Strategy</b>		Complements the measures set out in the European Green Deal and recognises the role agroforestry can play in achieving the 3 billion trees by 2030 target.
<b>Nature Restoration Law</b>		Asserts the need for sustainable, resilient and biodiverse, agricultures and supports agroforestry to achieve such resilient agricultural ecosystems. It also declares the need to increase and maintain pesticide and fertiliser free high-diversity landscape features on agricultural land including buffer strips, rotational or non-rotational fallow land, hedgerows, individual or groups of trees, tree rows, field margins, patches, ditches, streams, small wetlands, terraces, cairns, stonewalls, small ponds and cultural features – all relevant to agroforestry – to provide ecosystem services for humans, wildlife, soil, water and climate.

## The importance of an agroecological framework

As shown, wide policy support does exist in Europe, yet the expansion of land devoted to agroforestry has been slow and incremental. Further, the ecosystem services derived from such systems have been inconsistent since agroforestry can be practiced in an industrial manner. It is important for agroforestry to be part of a food system transformation, where capacity building and effective monitoring is prioritised, along with an agroecological agriculture that focuses on the cultural and environmental realities of each landscape. Such a food systems approach must focus on 13 Agroecological Principles by HLPE on Food Security (The High Level Panel of Experts, 2019), along with frameworks such as the one created by the 'Global Alliance for the Future of Food' to provide a deeper systemic understanding of policy making, with a multi-level approach both to the mission of transformation and how to achieve it in an inclusive and cohesive way (Global Alliance for the Future of Food, 2022).

## Policy priorities and recommendations

Rural Development support is found for the Establishment (2007-2013), Maintenance (2014-2020), Regeneration and Renovation (Omibus Expansion, 2018) of agroforestry.

1. Review all current and planned legislations to amend them towards a common food systems approach (creating complementing strategies in agriculture, rural development, fisheries, food safety, international trade, transport, energy, environment, health and humanitarian assistance, instead of different departments focusing on single issues individually, with fragmented objectives and varied perspectives which often contradict one another)
2. Cease the importation of plant protein feed products
3. Strengthen the synergy and interactions between different elements of agroecosystems
4. Aim for optimum yields rather than maximum yields
5. Phase-out synthetic pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides) and fertilisers (through symbiotic fixation from leguminous crops, nitrogen transfers from livestock, long and diverse crop rotations, intercropping, and constant soil cover and catch crops, including between trees and other permanent crops)
6. Increase mixed crop-livestock systems (including regional cooperation amongst farms)
7. Enhance animal welfare and extensively manage livestock
8. Restore and enlarge permanent grasslands (including agroecological infrastructure)
9. Return trees to agricultural landscapes
10. Diversify the types and number of crops grown on a single farm
11. Enhance and preserve the genetic diversity of livestock
12. Increase diversity of habitats (including high-diversity landscape features)
13. Increase the adoption of organic farming
14. Increase research on best practices at the local and regional scale for all aspects of the food system including for climate, soil, land management, and crop and animal diversity
15. Promote participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches in knowledge generation (including gender equity, cultural representation and racial justice)
16. Improve soil condition (organic matter and biological activity)
17. Transition to healthy diets for all (fewer animal products and sugar, more fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts)
18. Re-establish common land for grazing
19. Establish more community supported agroforestry systems in urban and peri-urban areas (e.g., allotments, parks, micro forests, public spaces with fruit trees)
20. Legislate for agroecological green belts (e.g., 15% of all food for cities coming from agroecological green belts)
21. Transition to agroecology and a 'bio-circular economy' on a food and farming system level
22. Address tenancy to incentivise long-term agreements for multi-use agreements with the potential to support new entrants, open access to land with land reform and transparency of land ownership
23. Increase training (train advisors), financing and practical support for farmers and landowners wishing to implement agroforestry systems, as well as peer to peer mentoring
24. Develop regional supply chains for agroforestry products
25. Develop policies that see food as a common good, rather than a consumer good



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AGROMIX brings together farmers, researchers and policymakers to explore agroecological solutions for more resilient land use in Europe, developing tools to implement these practices.

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