

Project: study visit: HNV areas, extensive farming and pastoralism.

Organized by the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism ([www.efncp.org](http://www.efncp.org))

In collaboration with Fundatia ADEPT ([www.fundatia-adept.org](http://www.fundatia-adept.org)) and Pogany Havas ([www.poganyhavas.hu](http://www.poganyhavas.hu))

**Navarra, País Vasco and Castilla y León.**

**18-24 October 2010**



## VISIT REPORT

People involved in the trip:

EFNCP: Concha Salguero, Gwyn Jones

ADEPT: Lenke Balint, Cristi Gherghiceanu, Nat Page, Razvan Popa, Ben Mehedin

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Mosaic project: Inge Paulini.

The trip offered three Romanian HNV projects to study Spain's HNV areas, extensive farming and pastoralism systems. It was very useful because it covered a wide range of interests; from theory to practice; it linked High Nature Value concepts and management to practical and tangible outputs: food!

The visit programme covered the wide range of visitors' interests, from policies, regulations, education, monitoring and evaluation to practical examples in producing and marketing food, and selling it in the EU framework.

The team not only got a rich experience in good practice examples but also got to know Spain through the eyes of the locals. A special thank for all of those who made this trip possible!

Tuesday 19 October.

Day 1 Pamplona / Navarra

**Place:** The Ministry of Environment in Navarra / Department of Planning and Subsidies

**Host:** Salome Hernando

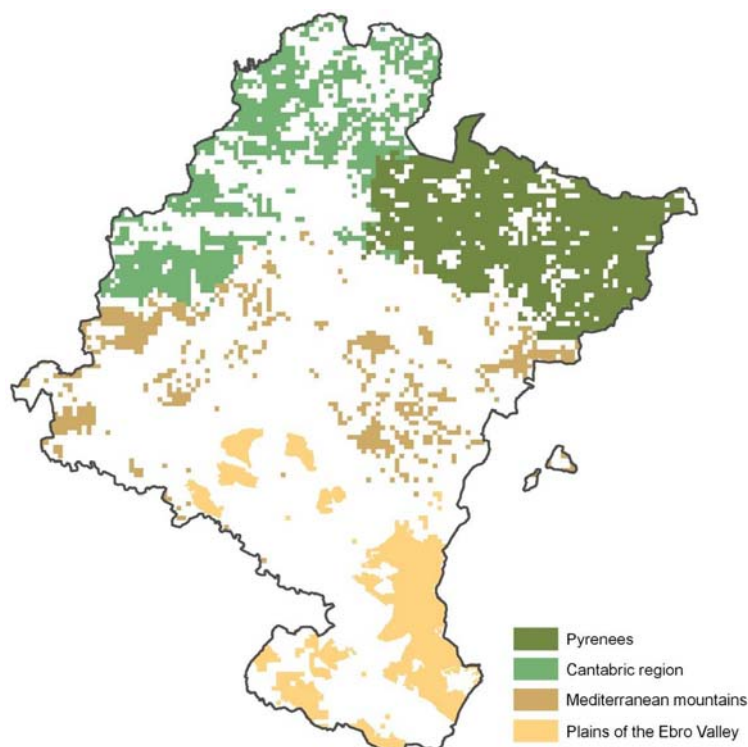
**Topic:** “ Natura 2000 payments in Navarra”, “ Forestry management in mountain pastures in Natura 2000 areas”. Dpt. of Forestry Management.



At the Ministry of Environment in Navarra

Region of Navarra – **Navarra is one of the 17 Autonomous Regions of Spain**, in the north of the country. Navarra has 42 SCI 5 SAC (2010), covering 2.500 Km<sup>2</sup>, 24% of the territory of Navarra.

Navarra is the only Spanish región with three Euro-regions with various climates. Rainfall level varies from 2000mm/year in the North to 200mm/year in South (within 100 km).



Navarra is an autonomous region and therefore can make many of the decisions at the local level.

Most of the rules and regulation are set up in such manner. The Rural National Development Program was designed with “bottom-up” approach. In this program there is a measure for Natura 2000 compensatory payments – Measure 213, “**Mountain pastures and pastures in the Protected Areas of South of Navarra**”. A set of rules was established including stocking rates and grazing times of year. A Natura 2000 minimum compensation payment of € 31 / ha per year was calculated according to calculations accepted by the EU and they accepted it. Under another measure, in another part of the region, hatmeadows can receive up to 180 € / ha per year.

What seemed very interesting to us was that the local governments are managing the payments. The funds are consisting in 55% from EU and 45% from the Spanish government. In the beginning the EU refused to accept this way of managing the funds because the appearance was as State Aid (since all the money was coming from the local government). EU wanted the money to go straight to the farmers.

It seems that there were also rules established for how the money was spent; only certain expenditure is eligible (investments in infrastructure; compensations for remote lands, hiring guards, fences, protein fodders).

**Similarities** with Tarnava Mare, where ADEPT Transylvania has the activities:

- Natura 2000 sites;
- Semi-natural landscape;
- The pastures are on communal land;
- People reluctant to Nature 2000 (on the restrictions brought by Natura 2000 )

**Differences**

- The Tarnava Mare area is much smaller;
- Because of lack of management plan, there are no N2000 compensatory payments in TM
- Even after the Management Plan will be ready, it is unlikely that the payments will be managed at the local level.
- The involvement of the authorities in Spain is focusing on practicality, helping farmers, while in TM area authorities are bureaucratic and paperwork oriented.

**Learning**

- Practical ideas in working with the farmers to interest them in changing their perspective about Natura 2000;
- The fact that the land belongs to the community could be a key element in managing it, according to measures developed by group consultation.

*Afternoon*

**Place:** Viveros y Repoblaciones de Navarra S.A. Offices (Government of Navarra public agency).

**Host:** Uxue Iragui, (GAVRNa) and Carlos Armendariz (GAVRNa).

**Topics:** “HNV indicators in Navarra”, and “Technical bases in Natura 2000 Management Plans”

Viveros y Repoblaciones de Navarra S.A is a public agency to which Government of Navarra has sub-contracted management of protected areas.

## HNV indicators in Navarra

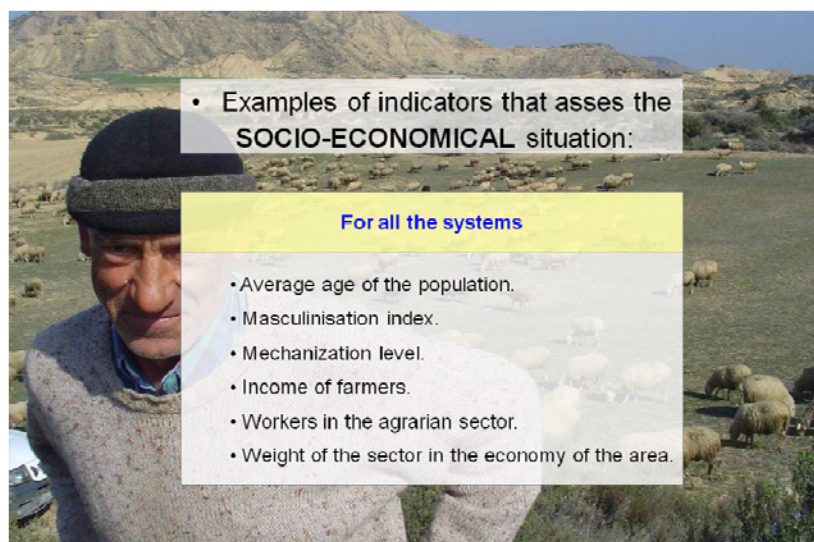
The first presentation covered, in a very practical way how HNV indicators for Natura 2000 sites were established. HNV Farmland was considered according to criteria in the *European Evaluation Network for Rural Development*.

- TYPE 1: areas with a high proportion of semi-natural vegetation.
- TYPE 2: areas in a mosaic structure with low level of intensification.
- TYPE 3: other areas often arable that support rare species or a high proportion of European or World populations.

The GAVRNa has set up criteria for Natura 2000 areas linked to the three types. So two sets of indicators have been established

- Regional indicators:
  - Calculated in all the territory.
  - Few indicators.
  - Relatively easy to calculate.
  - Accessible data for all the territory.
  - Measurable every year.
  - Comparable to a national or a European level.
- System indicators:
  - Calculated only in the defined systems.
  - As many indicators as considered useful.
  - Specific for every system, so not comparable at a national or European level.
  - Not necessarily easy to calculate.
  - Data not always available since more specific data could be needed. Therefore official statistical data should be completed with specific studies in the area, fieldwork, surveys, samples, interviews...
  - Periodicity depends on the availability of the data.
  - Useful to design future management plans or programmes in the area where a system is found.

The indicators set up are assessing the size and the extension of the farm (how many hectares, % of the common land, etc. ) or the characteristics and practices at the farm (i.e. the number of animals, if the animals are autochthonous or not, etc.) The quantitative analysis techniques to monitor mosaic landscape status and evolution was particularly impressive.



## **Technical bases of Natura 2000 Management Plans.**

The presentation was linked to 92/43/ CEE Directive which has to do with the obligation for the EU member countries to designate the special areas of conservation and to set up a management plan for the area. The plan has to be integrated into the other existing development plans of the area.

For the Management Plan the local government considered the following steps:

1. Delimitation of the area
2. Diagnosis - setting up and organising a database (about the habitats, species inventories, activities with impact on the conservation, etc.)
3. Action plan
4. Monitoring Program
5. Economic Program

**Similarities** with Tarnava Mare, where ADEPT Transylvania has the activities:

- Natura 2000 sites;
- Semi-natural landscape;
- Lack of knowledge of the Nature 2000 importance among local people
- Communal pastures
- Need to set up a system of HNV indicators

### **Differences**

- TM Natura 2000 site is much smaller;
- A private business is acting like a Public Agency in Navarra;
- TM does not have such an efficient system of mapping ;
- TM has very small plots of land belonging to many farmers – mapping and management problems
- In TM, meadows are privately owned, while the forest and the pasture belongs to the State or community

### **Learning**

- Maybe a good idea to have a private (even a NGO) acting like a Public Agency, along the lines of Viveros y Repoblaciones de Navarra S.A. – this could lead to increased efficiency compared to a State Agency;
- Navarra model very relevant as a practical example in creating set of HNV indicators for TM area
- Navarra offers practical ideas in elaboration of Management Plan for TM
- The fact that the land belongs to the community could be a key element in managing it.



## Wednesday 20 October.

Day 2 Erro / Navarra, visiting Natura 2000 mountain pastures in the Navarra Pyrenees area.

**Place:** The Touristic Information Centre in Sorogain

**Host:** Goyo Oyaregui (from Navarra Government) a group of people from the region

**Topic:** The socio-economic situation of the region



Blonda cow

We visited Erro, an isolated community on the border with France; we discussed their fascinating history with a few of the local people: the Burguete and Valle de Erro Maiors, local farmers, and rangers from the protected area. The pastures on these lands show evidence of human use since Neolithic times. But the areas suffers depopulation. In the 1960's people emigrated to the USA. In the last 22 years, there has only been one birth (in 2010) in Erro.



With the locals at Sorogain / Erro

The locals were very happy to share with us some of their experiences

- They tried to implement some touristic projects in the area, but they still have a problem with the sewage system;
- After the 1960s emigration there were no people to raise sheep anymore. They attempted to raise French cow breeds, but this was not successful as they are not suited to the climate and management
- Erro commune then populated the area with Blonda a cow for meat production. They are a hardy breed and good mothers - a very important requirement for the specific of farming in open areas.

- The production of meat was brought under PGI (Product of Geographical Indication) protection

### Grazing management

The local graziers carried out a programme of improving the pastures which were in a degraded state after the sheep farming stopped, with invasion of Ulex. However, this led to improvement of a few accessible areas, and abandonment of less accessible/more degraded areas. This proved to be a typical negative process of intensification (the graziers limed and fertilized the accessible areas) and abandonment. This negative management process has been improved with the encouragement of the protected area staff: new areas are being cleared, and (having previously been avoided by graziers) are now sought after for grazing.



Ulex clearance: the most sustainable clearance is by grazing. If mechanical clearance carried out, essential to follow by grazing. Horses, for meat, are raised here: they are the most resistant grazing species: the Erro people check their sheep one a week, their cattle once a month, and their horses spent the whole summer, including foaling, unchecked and are gathered only at summer's end.

Discussion continued over lunch at the restaurant "Txikipolit" in Burguete, with Burguete and Valle de Erro Maiors José Irigaray and Enrique Garralda, and with a technician from the "Cederna – Garalur Asociation", in charge of the LEADER+ Local Action Group Montaña de Navarra.



France seen from Erro. There are no formal boundaries and cross-border grazing is a long-established tradition



Concha Salguero  
our intrepid guide

**Similarities** with Tarnava Mare, where ADEPT Transylvania has the activities:

- The population in our villages is aging and most of the young are leaving;
- There is a trend for using other breeds than the local ones;
- The risk of the best lands to be used and the poorer ones to be deserted;
- The possibility of developing PGI projects

**Differences** comparing to Tarnava Mare area

- TM people are reluctant to form associations – a process which has been very successful for Erro population;
- The Erro authorities are acting more as partners and less as controlling and punishment institutions;
- The animals are living by themselves in Erro, while in our area there are threats (from carnivores, and theft) so the animals have to be looked after by people;

**Learning**

- Cultivating a good relationship with the authorities for a shift of mentalities;
- We could use this practical example in order to create a PGI if there is some interest;
- The possibility of getting the youngsters interested in farming by adding value to their products
- Good management practices on degraded land
- Use of beef cattle may be a model for TM area.



Thursday 21 October.

**Day 3 Arantzazu**

**Place:** Gomiztegi Shepherd School

**Host:** Batis Otaegi

**Topic:** Gomiztegi – Shepherd School project: aims and contents; Sector structure; Quality and origin denomination labels and product commercialization.



The farmer's school is a vocational facility more focused on practical than theoretical education. The Shepherd school is situated in a specific area:

- About 700 farmers (500 with about 50 sheep each and other 200 owning about 3500 in total);
- The land here was claimed by farmers and charcoal burners for about 100 years
- Some of the farmers are selling their milk at the milk collection point for 1 € / liter.
- The other farmers got associated and make their own cheese under the Protected Designation of Origin – PDO – Idiazabal. Then there is a quality mark on the labeling “queso de pastor” and then is the name of the farm which makes the cheese (for example Azrape or Arantzazu Gomiztegi Baskerriko Gazta)



All distinctive elements are on the label

A few milestones for the school:

- 1980 and they were producing 50 l milk per day
- 1984 center for male selection (breeding);
- 1885 the women started to make the cheese;
- 1987 there was a need for a brand – in the label they linked the mountain/shepherd and product
- 1994 the school was established
- 1997 the farmers have sent their children to the school;
- 2002 Artzain Mund;
- 2008 eCommerce has started and exporting the cheese



Maturing cheese



Map of area with individual producers



At the Gomiztegi Shepherd school



### **Afternoon**

**Place:** Gomiztegi Shepherd School

**Speaker:** by **Xavier Arruti** from **Etorlur** (Diputación of Guipuzkoa public agency).

**Topics:** “Land Bank in Guipuzkoa”



The public agency described the land bank: the Basque Region funds the purchase of land, which is then sold to prospective farmers. This has freed up the land market, allowing consolidation. Previously it was frozen by lack of confidence in the prices offered: the public agency acts as a trusted disinterested middleman. Ben had a good sleep.

#### **Similarities:**

- To us this school was something new; maybe to a very small scale we could find little similarities with the school from Topa (biodynamic farm).

#### **Differences:**

- The education focused on practice (Gomiztegi) instead of theoretical accumulation (as is the case in agricultural schooling in Romania, unfortunately);
- Many young people interested in farming (Spain) compared to TM where farming is not “trendy” anymore;
- People wanted to get associated and they found a very interesting compromise in using the label and differentiating the different producers selling under the same PDO.

#### **Learning:**

- We could use the idea of having the same PDO (Tarnava Mare) then different products, different producers selling under similar labels;
- Would be a good idea to disseminate the information about the school to farms like Topa and the good ideas to be used;

Friday 22 October.

#### Day 4 Visiting farmers and producers in Basque area

*Field trip:* visiting some projects such as:

- intensive cow farm;
- a fruits and vegetables processing unit;
- 2 sheep farms with dairy;
- A mixed farm (sheep and cows for meat production)

##### 1. Intensive dairy farm

**This farm was a good negative example. Animal health and welfare was poor: av. Number of lactations per cow was 2.5, which is well below cow productive life in the UK even on more intensive, conventional farms. The farm had problems with disposal of slurry, which caused local ill-feeling when spread on grassland. The farm relied on bought-in high-protein feed, which makes the farm unprofitable in spite of having 30 cows.**

**This farm suffered from the typical financial problems of conventional dairy farms across Europe: ever-increasing capital investment to try to reach a profitable size, but based on borrowed money and so each year the farmer works harder to pay of bank debts and in pursuit of ever-diminishing returns from a commodity product to which to local value has been added: exacerbated by unsustainable land use requiring greater bought-in inputs each year. You could see on the farmer's face how little satisfaction the job gave him.**

##### 2. Fruit and vegetable bottling plant

This was an inspiring village-scale project. Small-scale producers bring their products either for sale under their own label, or under the factory's label.

There are just 2-3 ladies working at this unit, producing a high-quality product nicely packaged and branded. The capital investment is minimal.



Fruit and vegetable processing unit



Example of bottling and labeling



**3. Visit to a former Gomiztegi student ovine farm with greenhouses, milking system and cheese production.**



This was a very nice example of a former Gomiztegi student putting his skills to practical use

**4. Araia (Alava); visit to an ovine farm, meeting Mari Puy Arrieta, farmer, shepherd, cheese producer and president of Artzai Gazta/ DO “Queso de Pastor” cheese Association**



Apart for the specific for each farm (considering the place, the opportunities and farmer's experiences) there are a few common things we observed:

- most of the farmers had their own milk processing facilities;
- the area is focused more on the sheep milk production, even though we saw cows;
- In all the cases the sheep are milked between April-March to August-September;
- the milking may vary (either with machineries or by hand);
- the rennet used may be natural or artificial;
- the processing units may be close to the farm or far from the farm;



*Front of the processing unit and shop*

Even though the processing units have some individual characteristics, we noticed some common features for all the facilities:

- the circuits are well defined and clearly delimited (for raw materials, for people and for final products);
- The utensils are complying with the EU rules;
- special attention is paid to the maturing chamber where the air's temperature and moisture are carefully controlled.



Cheeses in the controlled atmosphere



The control panel

Each of the processing units we have visited could be a model for a replica in Tarnava Mare. Also a good idea would be to have a trip visit with some of the farmers and maybe some people from DSVSA for a shift in the mentality.



*The family of Idiazabal producers each with their own labels under the umbrella brand*



*Proud winner of international competitions*



Saturday 23 October.

1. Day 5 Field trip to pastures and extensive farms

**Place:** Junta de Castilla y León

**Host:** **Alvaro Picardo Nieto**, adviser in the Dpt. of Environment in the Government of Castilla y León. Visit to pastures and extensive farms. A few wood land pastures have been visited:



Our first visit to grazed forest in Spain with Alvaro, and forest rangers



Visiting the farmers with Alvaro: clear demarcation between grazed and scrubbed-up areas

"Las Campas", "La Guardia", "San Nicolas", "Cernejá", and "Lunada". According to the place were different farmers and different numbers of cows were grazing the land. The forests and the forest pastures belong to the community and the farmers are renting the land from the local governments.

The income could be earn from the trees is 3 cubic meter / year / ha which makes about 90 € / hectare / year

A better income is from grazing and from hunting.

There are 3 categories of land in Spain:

1. Forest (only trees) □
2. Pasture forest (trees are growing on the pasture)

### 3. Pasture in the forest

The generic name for all of them is forests. For centuries these forests were used for grazing. Now 75% of Spain forests is used for pastures. It is a good system (Alvaro says) because could be a good tool for fire prevention (except for the cases when the fire is set by the farmers themselves!!!)

For some categories there are subsidies from but for pine for example there are no subsidies at all.



Wind turbines can offer useful access roads to farmers



Extraordinary landscape with sharp barriers between grazed/mowed land and abandoned land





Clearance by deliberate setting of fire can be observed on hillsides: and warning notices outside the local restaurant reporting the fires and explaining the dangers, fines that can result.



Scrub control mower, using chains ... and some ladies who appreciate the scrub control



Final evening in Spain showing successful sites where scrub has been controlled and grazing of pasture has taken its place.

#### Similarities:

- the farmers are renting the land from the community;
- the farmers duty to clean the pastures;
- the farmers get the subsidies
- it is a social problem of aging – less young people are choosing to become farmers

#### Differences:

- in Spain the farmers are contributing to the expenses for improving the land (15% of the costs)
- after a while the farmers understood the system of subsidies and are using the money, while in Romania some are using the money properly and others are trying to taking the advantage of the money
- in Spain the authorities (or at least Alvaro) are very dedicated to their jobs and a forester doesn't talk only about extracting the wood.
- Because of EU constraints there is a problem with the vultures which started to attack the cows when they give birth

#### Learning:

- we saw good examples of using and cleaning the pastures with the chain machinery
- there were good hints for using the biomass