



KingME MANIFESTO

EUROPEAN BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

The verdict of the Frisian citizens' jury King of the Meadows: "The meadows birds and their songs fill us with joy and are part of our cultural identity. Due to the continued decline of biodiversity in farmers' fields, a silent spring threatens to become a reality. This tricky process seems to speed up lately. We, citizens, find it difficult to get a grip on this process. In the past decades, farmers produce cheap food of a relatively good quality. But the declining biodiversity is the price we pay for cheap food. As concerned and engaged citizens, we want to be engaged in new forms of governance, reward farmers who conserve biodiversity. Governments and private sector parties have to stimulate new business models" (April 2013).

26 communities, federations of communities and NGOs signed the Valdeavellano de Tera Declaration on the recognition and defense of the commons and indigenous communities conserved areas (ICCAs) in Spain state: "It must be a priority for communities, the various authorities and society as a whole to ensure the protection and recognition of commons as a collective heritage based on principles of inalienability, indivisibility, imprescriptibility and unseizability, as well as to ensure respect for the written and customary laws of communities, their full legal capacity in the defense and management of their resources and the appropriate involvement of their governing bodies in any decision affecting this heritage" (October 2013).





We, members of the Frisian citizens' initiative King of the Meadows and Spanish Iniciativa Comunales met in 2015 and appeal to different stakeholders engaged in building the Participative European Union:

1 **Participatory democracy.** Welcome a European Biocultural Diversity Manifesto in which different communities state their historical and present rights and responsibilities, along with their future commitment to conserve and govern the commons. Such participatory democracy models can also inspire the Participative EU. Jointly organize a meeting in Brussels in 2018 as part of Leeuwarden-Fryslân European Cultural Capital to evolve the Manifesto into successful expression of enhancing EU communities' participation in decision making of EU institutions.

2 **Landscape Commons.** Accept that landscape, biodiversity, water, soils and communal lands are natural resources and a heritage that should be responsibly enjoyed by landowners, local communities and subsequently by the whole citizenship. The conservation of the commons has evolved from history and still constitutes a common, successful and widespread form of governance that can inspire the Participative EU.

3 **Heritage for Future Generations.** Respect, strengthen and revitalize the participatory management of the commons and their associated rights in order to ensure the transmission of this heritage for the enjoyment of future generations without in any way impairing its economic, social and environmental values.

4 **KingME&U Commons Lab.** Participate in exchange programmes of different European communities active in conserving biodiversity and governing commons. Use new open source online platforms and approaches such as the Theory U to bridge to social, ecological and inspirational divides in current Europe.

5 **Market Failures.** Assist KingME, Iniciativa Comunales and European rural communities to better spread arguments why the new EU agricultural policy (CAP) after 2020 should be linked more strongly to health, sustainability, wellbeing and quality of life of people living in the rural areas and consumers. Let's value communities' stewardship and the governance of the commons and nature-inclusive farming. Let's recognize and reward their positive externalities in new economic models. Engage with us in 'True Cost Accounting' to value health, sustainability, wellbeing and quality of life emerging from the commons governance systems and biodiversity conservation.

Input for public debate 'Towards European Mienskip', Leeuwarden, 23 April 2015. To be developed further.
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