



Europe and Middle East Workshop on the Commons:

**Establishing a Common Strategy for the support
and recognition of common governance of natural
resources in Europe and the Middle East**

Granada (Spain), 23-25th October 2017

The ICCA
Consortium

INTERNATIONAL
**LAND
COALITION**



MEDITERRANEAN
MOUNTAINOUS
LANDSCAPES



European Forum on
Nature Conservation
and Pastoralism



UNIVERSIDAD
DE GRANADA



Introduction:

European and Middle East landscapes, biodiversity and natural and semi-natural ecosystems have been shaped by local communities for centuries, through their own governance systems, usually in the form of commons (common managed forests, grasslands, irrigation systems, hunting societies, etc.). Current figures indicate that common management and governance of natural and semi-natural ecosystems in Europe and the Middle East (by legal common rights or *de facto*) is still a very relevant phenomenon providing key socio-economic and environmental values to society in general. Nonetheless, the role of these communities in the governance and management of natural resources in Europe, and its conservation, has been largely unrecognized and their support neglected. In addition, the social and economic role of these governance systems, although crucial for the communities, has been disregarded as a result of judging it by a pure short-term market value approach. Furthermore, some policies, such as the EU Common Agricultural Policy, are detrimental for these collective, participative, local and sustainable governance and management systems, conversely promoting highly intensified, unsustainable and high carbon footprint exploitation systems. Nonetheless, in the last few decades, local communities and indigenous peoples' organisations, with the support of some NGOs and academics, have increasingly raised the issue of common governance values, achieving very relevant goals, not only at local level but also regarding legal recognition at national and international level, as well as increasing public awareness on issues such as direct democracy, sustainability, participation and responsibility.

Background:

On September 2011, the ICCA Consortium gathered over thirty-five people in Gerace (Italy), for a workshop entitled "Understanding community conservation in Europe". The result of the workshop was to provide a focused opportunity for assessing the current state of community conservation in Europe and to examine how local communities contribute to managing and governing their own natural environments.

In October 2013, local communities governing commons in Spain gathered in Valdeavellano de Tera (Spain), along with members of the ICCA Consortium, to coordinate the support and recognition of commons governance in Spain. As result “The Valdeavellano de Tera Declaration on the Recognition and defence of the Commons and ICCAs in Spain” was issued and a working group was established, which continue linking communities during the following years and eventually became what is today the national association of commons in Spain called “Iniciativa Comunales” (www.icomunales.org).

More recently, on 18th November 2016 in Brussels, at a workshop organised by the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) and the ICCA Consortium, more than thirty commoner organisation representatives from nine countries met to analyse the detrimental impact of EU policies on common farming and its governance institutions. One of the main conclusions was the need to network at European level with other affected commons institutions to promote a more sustainable approach to European agricultural policies, including the consideration of the existence of common rights along with private and public rights.

Finally, on 10th May 2016, in Bern, the first meeting of the “European and Middle East Working Group on Commons and Common Land Rights” of the International Land Coalition (ILC) was held. One of the conclusions was the need for data at a European level on figures and current legislation on common governance, including a preliminary common approach to the socio-economic value of common governance at European level. To achieve this, the need for a meeting with representatives of a minimum of fifteen European countries –including both practitioners’ leaders and other representatives of civil society and NGOs- was identified.

Currently, at European and Middle East level, several national and regional organizations supporting and representing communities governing commons are starting to networking, learn from each other work and finding out that there is much to be done at supra-national level, both in terms of community conservation of natural resources, but also regarding the survival of the common governance systems and rights that makes this collective approach possible, providing in addition very important added values as direct democracy and participation, social justice and cohesion, transparency, access to livelihoods, sustainable use and a healthy environment (among many others). This meeting is intended also as the needed stepping stone to consolidate a fluent and resilient European Network on Commons.

Most communities governing commons are working almost exclusively at a local or regional level. Nonetheless, this is greatly changing, as they get conscience on how much is at stake (including their own future) in supra-national arenas. At the same time society in general, NGOs, governments and academics are beginning to recognise their beneficial social, economic and environmental role, including an increasing

recognition in policies and regulations. As consequence of this awakening, communities are increasing their level of self-awareness, organisation and networking outside their natural boundaries, and many of them are now joining national and regional networks, federations and associations in order to pursue common environmental, social and economic goals.

Goals of the workshop:

- Improve the common knowledge, networking capacity and communication tools between organizations working on the support and recognition of common governance of natural resources in European and the Middle East
- Identify key threats and opportunities for the commons in Europe and the Middle East
- Develop a Strategic Plan to prioritize and tackle the identified threats and respond to the identified opportunities at supra-national level
- Share tools, responsibilities, approaches and means for the implementation of the Strategic Plan





Venue of the Workshop:

Granada, Spain. Granada is located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, declared National Park in 1999. The greatest artistic wealth of Granada is its Spanish-Islamic art — in particular, the compound of the Alhambra and the Generalife, which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984. The area is also rich in common governance systems, namely on traditional irrigation systems, common grazing mountainous areas and common Mediterranean forests.

Its nearest airport is Federico García Lorca Granada Airport, and is 1.5 hours by car/bus from Malaga Airport one of the most important airports of Spain.

Venue: The workshop will be held in the “Corrala de Santiago” University residence in Granada. Calle Santiago, 5. 18009 – Granada. <http://corraladesantiago.ugr.es/?lang=en>

Accommodation: All attendants will be hosted also in the “Corrala de Santiago” (except those informed differently), in single or double rooms.

No. of participants: around 30 representatives of organizations representing or supporting the commons in Europe and the Middle East.

Assistance exclusively by invitation.

If you were invited and plan to attend the workshop, please, fill in the following form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/Nsa8Rxxrm1znEZBln1>



Travel and accommodation costs:

Accommodation and main maintenance costs will be covered by the organization. Travel costs will be only covered if previously approved by the organization of the workshop. Due to budgetary reasons, we ask to check economy flight/ tickets in order to be able to cover the travel costs of all attendants.

DAY 0: Sunday 22 October

Evening

- Arrival of the participants to Granada.
- Tapas dinner from **20:00** on, at “Campo del Príncipe” Square (5 minutes walking from the “Corrala de Santiago” the venue of the workshop and lodging). In the bar: *Restaurante Mesón Tabarka*: Campo del Príncipe, 22, 18009 Granada. <https://es-es.facebook.com/MesonTabarka/>

DAY 1: Monday 23 October

Morning:

- **9:00 – 9:30:** Presentation of the workshop and welcome.
- **9:30 – 10:30:** Presentation of the attendants (2-3 minutes each).
- **10:30 – Very brief presentations on the current situation of the commons by country**
Collective presentation (preferably by PowerPoint) based on putting together common basic data and figures from each region/country.

10:30 – 10:40 Croatia: Iris Benes.
10:40 – 10:50 Romania: Monica Vasile.
10:50 – 11:00 France: Océane Biabiany.
11:00 – 11:10 Ireland: Brendan O'Malley.
11:10 – 11:20 Israel: Tareq Abu Hamed.
10:20 – 10:30 Italy: Marco Bassi/ Chiara Ansaloni.

Coffee break: 10:30 – 10: 50

10:50 – 11:00 Jordan: Lorraine Walker.
11:00 – 11:10 Portugal: Rita Serra/ Avelino Rego.
11:10 – 11:20 Republic of Moldova: Anna Moldovan.
11:20 – 11:30 Sápmi: Aslak Holmberg.
11:30 – 11:40 Scotland: Kenny MacLennan.
11:40 – 11:50 Spain: Sergio Couto.

- **11:50 – 12:30** Comments and questions.
- **12:30 – 13:30 Common solutions for common threats:** Identifying common ground for action. Participative dynamic for the identification of threats for the commons at Europe and Middle East level.

Lunch: 13:30 at “Papaupa”: Calle Molinos, 16, 18009 Granada. Just 4 minutes walking from the “Corrala de Santiago”.

Afternoon:

- **15:00 – 15:30** Participative threats prioritization.
- **15:30- 17:00 Common solutions for common threats:** Participative dynamic for the identification of the solutions and initiatives related to the identified threats.
- **17:00 – 18:00** Discussion

Dinner: 20:00, at “El Balcón de San Nicolás” C/Atarazana Vieja 4, Albaycin, 18010 Granada.
<http://www.elbalcondesannicolas.com/> (very close to the famous square “Mirador de San Nicolás”).

DAY 2: Tuesday 24 October

- **9:00 - 11:00: Strategic line examples: National/ regional initiatives for the commons:** examples of demonstrative approaches to face the identified threats. The organization selects innovative case examples on how to tackle the threats to the commons:

- **9:10 – 9:30 Transnational networking project: Comunix (Galicia, Portugal and Italy):** Rita Serra (Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal)/ Chiara Ansaloni (Partecipanza Agraria di Nonantola, Italy).
- **9:30 – 9:50 LIFE project: “COMFOREST”: Identification, characterization and sustainable management of common forests in Extremadura (Spain).** Irene Guerra (TECMENA, Spain).
- **9:50 – 10:10 Empowered communities and fairer land ownership in Scotland.** Kenny MacLennan (Community Land Scotland, UK).
- **10:10 – 10:30 MEMOLA (Mediterranean Mountain Landscapes) project: the historic and traditional common watering communities of South Spain:** José María Martín Civantos (University of Granada, Spain).
- **10:30 – 10:50 Commons network at national level: the case of Spain:** Sergio Couto (Iniciativa Comunales, Spain).
- **10:50 – 11:10 The concept of ICCA: Understanding territories and areas conserved by local communities and indigenous peoples in Europe and Middle East:** Sergio Couto (ICCA Consortium).
- **11:10 – 11:30 Comments and questions.**

Coffee break: 11:30 – 11:50

- **11:50 – 13:30** Participatory dynamic for the identification of general and specific goals for the **European and Middle East Commons Strategic Plan.**

Lunch: 13:30 at the restaurant: *Restaurante Mesón Tabarka*: Campo del Príncipe, 22, 18009 Granada. <https://es-es.facebook.com/MesonTabarka/> 5 minutes walking from the “Corrala de Santiago”.

Afternoon:

- **15:00 - 17:30** Definition of concrete initiatives and activities for the implementation of the **European and Middle East Commons Strategic Plan.**
- **17:30 – 18:00 Collective evaluation and close of the workshop.**

Dinner: 20:00, at “Peña Flamenca La Platería” Plaza de Toqueros 7. 18010 Granada. <http://www.laplateria.org.es/> (also quite close to the famous square “Mirador de San Nicolás”).



DAY 3: Wednesday 25 October

Morning fieldtrip (free) to Monachil, to visit the communal traditional irrigation systems (acequia de los Habices y acequia del Albaricoque). Meeting point at “Corrala de Santiago”.

Lunch: 13:30, at Monachil town. At this point those in need to start travelling back home will be drove back to Granada bus station.

Afternoon fieldtrip (free) to Güéjar-Sierra, to visit Güéjar-Sierra Neighbours’ Common Forest.

20:00 – Return to Granada.

