



PRESS RELEASE

February 28th 2019

Including biodiversity protection in our socio-economic development

On February 28th in Brussels, following 5 years of study and multi-partner experimentations about the European Hamster's preservation in France, [the stakeholders of the LIFE Alistер](#), namely **the Grand Est Region**, **the Chambre d'agriculture Alsace** (the Alsace Chamber of Agriculture), **the ONCFS** (National Hunting and Wildlife Bureau), **the CNRS** (National Center for scientific Research), **the GEPMA** (Association for the Alsace mammals' study and protection) **and ACTeон** (consulting and research company specialised in environmental strategies and policies), will hold a European workshop to share, exchange and discuss different possible options to preserve biodiversity by better including it in Europe's socio-economic policies.

Despite national, European and international regulations, biodiversity is today greatly impacted and deteriorated by human activity. The conditions of our ecosystems stay fragile. Species and habitats still disappear every day due to the intensification of agricultural practices, the development of transport infrastructures, urban development, tourism, climate change... Biodiversity's deterioration is a big concern for Europe, who has earned [430 million euros in the end of 2018 to fund 142 new LIFE programs](#) for environmental protection and against climate change.

But what biodiversity protection policies can we enforce? 2 approaches are possible:

- The creation of "protected areas" where human activities are greatly regulated (or prohibited)
- Including the needs of biodiversity protection into practices, investments and human activities to preserve adequate functioning of ecosystems, thus guaranteeing the species' safety.

The LIFE stakeholders chose the second option to experiment on the Alsatian plains. As everyone may know, Alsace is a greatly urbanised region with its agriculture dominated by monoculture. This approach, potentially harder to achieve on the short-term since it requires some "changes in perception / practices / behaviours" on relevant territorial scales, could nevertheless be the most promising in the medium and long term.

The European workshop, held by the LIFE Alistер, stretches the textbook case that is the European Hamster's protection to think about applicable actions on European biodiversity in general (species and habitats). It offers **an operational and practical focus**, intending to share previously tested, implemented and assessed solutions and approaches.

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> Which LIFE Alister conclusions have already inspired the new Plan National d'Actions (National Plan of Actions) for the European Hamster and small Alsatian fauna? (Contributions of the Grand Est Region and DREAL Grand Est)

> What LIFE Alister conclusions can we make at a European level on the integration of biodiversity in our socio-economic development? (Contribution of **Maja Mikosinska**, European Commission, EASME)

> Furthermore, what connection can we make with other experiments conducted by other LIFE programs for instance (contribution of **Cynthia Llas**, coordinator of LIFE Habitats Calanques (France)) or other European countries (contribution of **Simone Sterly**, Institut für Ländliche Strukturforchung an der J.W. Goethe-Universität (Germany)).

The objective of this European workshop, organized in plenary sessions and interactive group work, is **to identify actions we can to recreate, not only in the case of the European Hamster, but also for biodiversity protection in general** at a regional and European level.

Are welcome to our discussion:

- **Operational players** in charge of rural territories involved in local planning and in the development of strategies and projects and/or in the protection of species and habitats
- Professionals (agriculture, urban development etc...)
- Board members of nature protection, of governmental and local services, and of civil society organizations, etc...
- **Researchers** – natural sciences, geographers, agronomists, sociologists, economists, etc...
- **Decision-makers** at different scales (local, regional, national and European) in charge of the development and implementation of policies related to biodiversity and sectoral policies

The workshop takes place from 10:00 to 16:30 / February 28th

Representatives of the Bureau Europe de la Région Grand Est in Brussels

The stakeholders of the LIFE Alister

The Grand Est Region, partner and project coordinator

The Chambre d'agriculture Alsace (Alsace Chamber of Agriculture)

The Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (National Hunting and Wildlife Bureau)

The CNRS (National Center for scientific Research)

The GEPMA (Association for the Alsace mammals' study and protection)

ACTeon (consulting and research company specialised in environmental strategies and policies)

[More information about the European hamster](#)

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