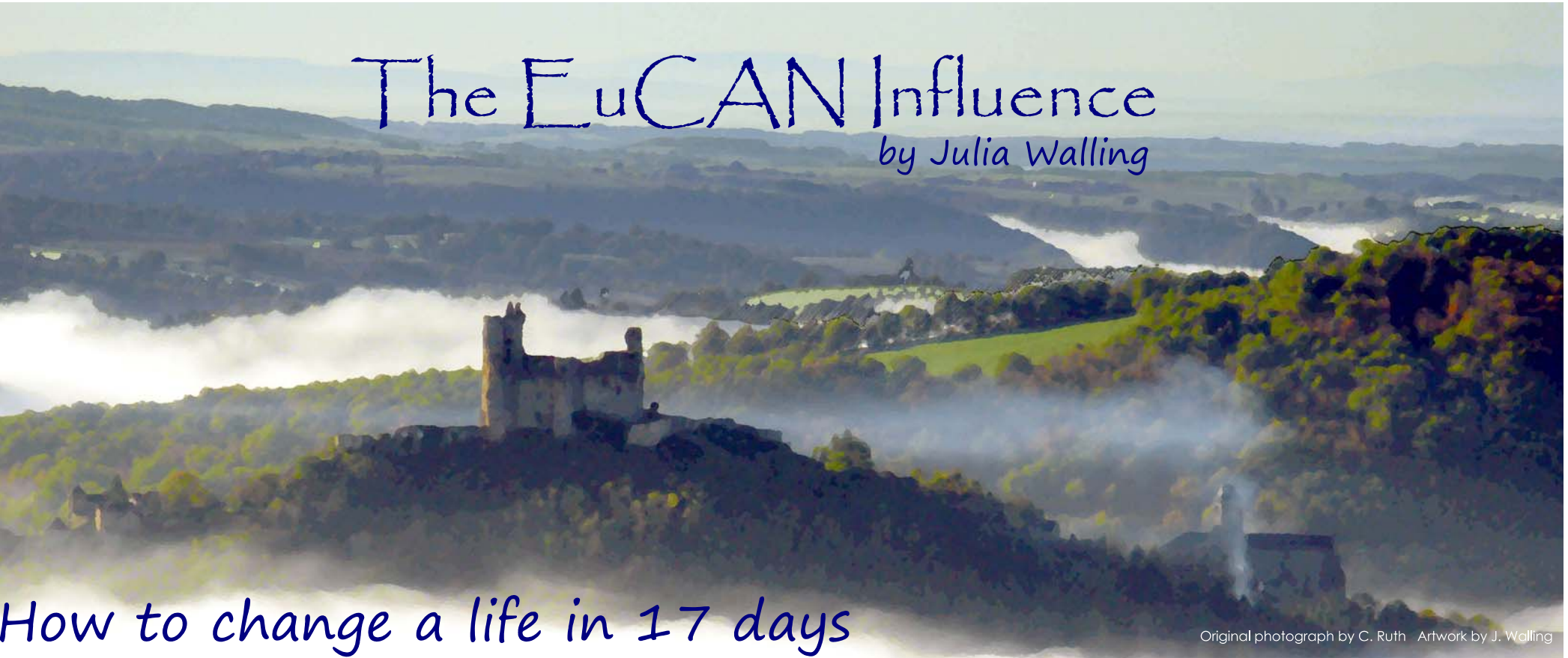


The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape photograph. It shows a castle with two towers perched on a dark, forested hill. Below the hill, a thick layer of white mist or low clouds fills the valleys. In the distance, rolling hills and a winding river are visible under a soft, hazy sky. The overall tone is peaceful and atmospheric.

The EuCAN Influence

by Julia Walling

How to change a life in 17 days

Original photograph by C. Ruth Artwork by J. Walling

I was looking to change my career from 20 successful years in private practice in counselling to one working with eco-centred values. With an open mind I signed up with the European Conservation Action Network for one weekend in Dorset and two weeks near Najac in the beautiful Aveyron region in the Midi Pyrenees in France to discover whether working with traditional farms and orchards could start me off on a path into nature and biodiversity. It was a wonderfully rich experience steeped in all the values and practices which, to me, had become an ideal. We worked with organic farmers who, using traditional farming methods had found a way to live and work in perfect harmony with their natural environment, creating beautiful landscapes on their farms and producing delicious organic food. The meeting of minds and values between us as volunteers, the farmers and Solagro, the regional organisation who were supporting the farmers, was deeply satisfying as we worked together and shared meals together. Any barriers or prejudices that might have existed between us as nations simply dissolved in the organic wine! The whole experience gave me confidence and huge motivation to move my life forward in the direction of working with natural environments and on my return I booked in to train as a Forest School leader and signed up for a university course in Biological Recording and Identification of Species. I now have a diary full of dates with nature and my exciting new life is underway.