

Conclusions from the meeting of EU Nature and Biodiversity Directors

5-6 June 2018, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

The EU Nature and Biodiversity Directors, based on discussions held during the meeting that took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, conclude the following:

1. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors note and welcome the progress made in implementing the Nature action plan and the Biodiversity roadmap and recall the need to further strengthen efforts in order to achieve the objectives and implement the actions included therein by 2020.
2. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors warmly welcome the Commission Communication on a EU Pollinators Initiative and commit to work closely with the Commission and other stakeholders to achieve the longer term objectives and implement the short term actions contained therein and stress the importance of reform of CAP in this context.
3. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors also welcome the regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration approved by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), in Medellín, Colombia, at the 6th session of its Plenary. As these reports demonstrate the need for a high level of ambition and urgent action for a post-2020 global biodiversity framework the Nature and Biodiversity Directors will continue to endeavour in relevant international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity to work towards getting international political attention and public awareness on the global biodiversity loss that is at least as high as the political attention and public awareness for climate change.
4. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors look forward to the upcoming EU guidance on integrating ecosystems and their services into decision-making, as an opportunity to further raise the visibility of biodiversity and its role for human well-being and to support mainstreaming of ecosystems and their services into national, regional and local planning and decision-making.
5. They underline that the upcoming Commission Report on progress in implementing the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy could be an opportunity to highlight the benefits of green infrastructure and they also look forward to the upcoming guidance on EU-level green and blue infrastructure projects. This can contribute to a more strategic approach and the best use of EU funding instruments to support green infrastructure as an interconnected network across rural and urban areas.
6. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors took note with interest of the progress made on testing green listing approaches and of the best practices on the management of large carnivores aimed at co-existence as presented at the meeting.
7. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors took note with interest of the proposals for a new EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the future Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), LIFE and Invest EU presented by the European Commission. The following key points were highlighted by some participants in the course of the discussions:

- 7.1. a substantial increase in LIFE in the context of overall reduction of a number of funds;
 - 7.2. the need to increase the overall funding for nature compared to the previous EU MFF period, and to ring-fence specific funds in other financing instruments to ensure adequate funding for nature;
 - 7.3. the need to establish a mechanism to support the nature protection policy in a way that the national area covered by Natura 2000 sites as a percent from the national territory, number of species and habitat types for which conservation measures are needed, are taken into account;
 - 7.4. the need to enhance the level of environmental and climate ambition in the future Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and to shift towards a more sustainable farming model in Europe. Concern was raised that the enhanced subsidiarity could lead to a distortion of competition and to a race to the bottom as regards environmental outcomes;
 - 7.5. the need to ensure that an important role is given to environmental authorities in designing CAP Strategic Plans and their effective involvement should also be secured in the implementation phase of the Plan;
 - 7.6. concerns about the significant reduction of the funds available under the second pillar of the CAP and the lack of earmarking of funds under the first pillar of CAP for biodiversity objectives;
 - 7.7. the need to include adequate safeguards (targets and indicators based on the Nature and Biodiversity policy and legislation) so as to ensure the environmental effectiveness under the new delivery model of the CAP based on increased subsidiarity.
8. The Nature and Biodiversity Directors stressed that the Prioritized Action Frameworks should play an important role in ensuring the adequate mainstreaming of nature priorities within the CAP strategic plans and across other relevant EU funds.