
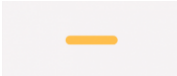



EEB assessment of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

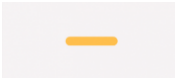


<i>Area of focus</i>	<i>The Commission's commitments</i>	<i>The EEB's comment</i>	<i>Rating</i>
<p>Protecting Europe's nature</p>	<p>"Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU land area and 30% of the EU sea area and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans European Nature Network."</p> <p>"Strictly protect at least a third of the EU protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests."</p> <p>"Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately."</p> <p>Habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status by 2030. At least 30% of those which are not in favourable conservation status will reach such status or show a positive trend.</p>	<p>The 30% protection target is in line with the worldwide target currently discussed under the global post-2020 biodiversity framework. The increase in effectively protected marine areas is critically needed. A well connected and coherent Trans European Nature Network is more resilient, allowing species to better adapt and cope with climate change impacts and effects. Furthermore, it is crucial that existing and newly protected areas are managed properly and the EU Nature Directives are properly implemented and enforced.</p> <p>A 10% strict protection target is welcome, as recognition of the importance of leaving natural processes undisturbed for the benefit of protected species and habitats such as no-take zones in marine protected areas. The strict protection of old-growth forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems will bring important carbon storage benefits, helping us address the climate crisis. Further, it will be important to enhance protected area governance that engages landowners and - users.</p> <p>Using the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy to agree deadlines and speed up implementation of the Nature Directives is welcome, however, the Nature Directives require all species and habitats to be brought to favorable conservation status. 30% of species and habitats to be in favorable conservation status by 2030 does not reflect the real urgency of the action needed.</p>	

<p>Restoring crucial ecosystems for biodiversity and climate</p>	<p>Setting up a new EU Nature Restoration Plan supported by €20 bn per year from EU funds including €15 bn for management of the Natura 2000 areas.</p> <p>“Legally binding EU nature restoration targets to be proposed in 2021, subject to an impact assessment. By 2030, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored”</p> <p>“Three billion new trees are planted in the EU, in full respect with ecological principles.”</p>	<p>Restoring ecosystems is crucial to improve the state of nature across the EU and to provide natural carbon sinks. Permanent land- and sea-use change to restore peatlands, wetlands, floodplains, biodiversity-rich grasslands, old-growth forests as well as free-flowing rivers and biodiverse and carbon-storing marine ecosystems such as reefs, seagrass meadows or kelp forests is necessary. Stopping harmful activities and taking active restoration measures will also provide other benefits such as improving connectivity between protected areas, flood mitigation and climate adaptation and should include 15% of EU’s land and sea to be set as legally binding restoration targets. Given the fast-paced degradation, the Commission must move swiftly to propose the new legally binding restoration targets.</p> <p>Tree-planting needs to be done in full respect of ecological principles and can provide particular benefits in urban areas. Particularly where tree-planting is used to restore and create natural forests, these must be strictly protected to ensure the long-term biodiversity and carbon benefits of the initiative.</p>	
<p>Bringing nature back to agricultural land</p>	<p>At least 10% of agricultural area is under high-diversity landscape features, such as buffer strips, rotational or non-rotational fallow land, hedges, non-productive trees, terrace walls and ponds, but subject to future adjustments.</p> <p>“The risk and use of chemical pesticides is reduced by 50% and the use of more hazardous pesticides is reduced by 50%.”</p> <p>“The losses of nutrients from fertilisers are reduced by 50%, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20%.”</p>	<p>Bringing nature back into agricultural land and reducing pollution is a crucial step to address agricultural land-use as one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. However, it is important that the 10% target of green infrastructure occurs at a scale that is meaningful for functional biodiversity and that any future adjustment of the target is not used to undermine it.</p> <p>Farmland birds and insects, particularly pollinators, are key indicators of the health of agro-ecosystems. They are vital for agricultural production and food security. Their alarming decline must be stopped and reversed. To this end, the Commission commitment to reduce by 50% the use and risk of pesticides is welcome. However, those targets will need to be made more ambitious during the implementation of</p>	

	<p>"At least 25% of agricultural land is under organic farming management, and the uptake of agro-ecological practices is significantly increased."</p>	<p>the Strategy.</p> <p>The commitment for cutting pollution from fertilisers is welcome but does not go far enough. Stronger action is needed to end the nitrogen overload from fertilisers and manure and to phase out the use of synthetic fertilisers.</p> <p>Increasing the uptake of agro-ecological practices is vital to enhance the resilience of agro-ecosystems and a necessary step to farm with nature, not against it, making farming future-proof for generations to come.</p>	
<p>Restoring freshwater ecosystems</p>	<p>"At least 25,000 km of rivers will be restored into free-flowing rivers by 2030 through the removal of primarily obsolete barriers and the restoration of floodplains and wetlands."</p>	<p>The commitment to restore 25,000km of rivers into free-flowing rivers through removal of barriers and restoration of floodplains and wetlands is a step in the right direction and must be delivered in ambitious River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive as well as be part of the new nature restoration law. Unfortunately, the European Commission missed the opportunity to recognise the role of the WFD in achieving this commitment and failed to conclude that the WFD will not be amended following the conclusions of its own fitness check evaluation of the WFD and related water directives.</p>	
<p>Restoring seas and oceans</p>	<p>The Commission will develop a new action plan in 2021 to protect marine ecosystems and conserve fisheries resources.</p> <p>"The negative impacts on sensitive species and habitats, including on seabed through fishing and extraction activities are reduced to achieve good environmental status."</p>	<p>As it is already a legal requirement to reach good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) by 2020, ambition needs to be stepped up to improve the protection of marine ecosystems.</p> <p>An action plan for the protection of marine ecosystems is promising. The focus should be on harmful fishing practices, such as bottom-trawling, and should include concrete actions to stop them entirely in protected areas, by 2022 the latest, as a first step to phase out such practices in EU waters and by EU vessels globally by 2030.</p>	

	<p>The by-catch of populations of species threatened with extinction or in bad conservation or environmental status, is eliminated or reduced to a level that allows full recovery; the by-catch of populations of other species is eliminated or, where not possible, minimised, so that it does not threaten their conservation status.</p>	<p>The commitment to eliminate bycatch is welcome but needs strong enforcement from the Commission. The vagueness of ‘where not possible, minimised’ is regrettable and risks the circumvention of the obligation.</p> <p>Lastly, it is a missed opportunity that no explicit connection has been made between the marine protection commitments and the need for corresponding commitments in the Farm to Fork Strategy on phasing out harmful fishing practices and promoting low-impact fisheries and aquaculture.</p>	
<p>Addressing Invasive Alien Species</p>	<p>There is a 50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species.</p>	<p>The specific commitment to tackle the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) through better implementation of the IAS Regulation is welcome. However, it remains to be seen how the EU will speed up the listing of potentially harmful species as determined by science.</p>	
<p>Making it happen</p>	<p>The Commission will put in place a new biodiversity governance framework, including a monitoring and review process, and will assess in 2023 whether a legally-binding approach to the EU biodiversity governance framework is needed</p> <p>The full implementation and enforcement of EU environmental legislation is at the heart of this strategy.</p> <p>“To meet the needs of this strategy including investment priorities for Natura 2000, at least €20 billion a year should be unlocked for spending on nature.”</p> <p>“The Commission will further promote tax systems and pricing that reflect real environmental costs, including biodiversity loss. ... The “user pays” and “polluter pays”</p>	<p>By proposing a new biodiversity governance framework, the Strategy recognises the major implementation problems that have hindered progress under the EU’s existing strategy. A frequent monitoring and review process would be beneficial, recognising the urgency and speed at which we need to react to halt the continued degradation. However, the governance framework will need to have proper tools in place, including via new legislation, to ensure other key stakeholders and sectoral Ministries show ownership to deliver on shared commitments.</p> <p>The full implementation and enforcement of the Nature Directives, as well as the Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive, must be prioritised. However, this will require additional staff and resources to translate the commitments into practice.</p> <p>A commitment to provide at least €20 billion annually for nature protection and restoration is positive. However, additional funding for</p>	

	<p>principles have to be applied to prevent and correct environmental degradation.”</p>	<p>restoration will be needed. This must be combined with a mechanism to ensure that all investments are biodiversity-proof and the swift phasing out of all harmful subsidies. A focus on the polluter-pays principle and taxation and pricing that reflects the true environmental costs is crucial in shifting to more sustainable uses of our nature and must inter alia also be reflected in the CAP.</p>	
<p>Tackling the global biodiversity challenge</p>	<p>Leadership at CBD COP15, pushing for an ambitious overarching long-term biodiversity targets, a stronger implementation, review and monitoring mechanisms</p> <p>The Commission will ensure full implementation and enforcement of the biodiversity provisions in all trade agreements and will better assess the impact of trade agreements on biodiversity, with follow-up action to strengthen the biodiversity provisions of existing and new agreements if relevant.</p> <p>The Commission will take a number of steps to crack down on illegal wildlife trade.</p> <p>The EU should use all of its diplomatic leverage to help broker agreement on the designation of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean including in East Antarctica and in the Weddell Sea and will support the conclusion of an ambitious legally binding agreement on marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction by the end of 2020</p> <p>The EU will advocate that exploitation of marine minerals in the international seabed Area cannot start before the</p>	<p>It is essential that the EU remains committed to take a leadership role at the CBD COP15. However, this will be much more credible if the ambition is backed by concrete actions within the EU and by taking steps to significantly reduce the global footprint of the EU. Unfortunately, the reintroduction of harmful subsidies in the next European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and harmful subsidies through the CAP are countering efforts made at international level. Similarly, the strategy has very little substance on reducing and changing consumption.</p> <p>All trade and investment policies must be climate and biodiversity-proof, integrating international and EU environmental legislation. Those that limit or slow down ambitious environmental measures must be re-negotiated or withdrawn from.</p> <p>The increased efforts to tackle illegal wildlife trade as well as using EU diplomacy to broker agreement on the largest protected areas in the Southern Ocean and a legally binding agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction are certainly welcome.</p> <p>The precautionary approach of a moratorium on deep-sea mining is positive given the importance of not harming unique marine ecosystems. In line with the European Parliament’s 2018 Resolution on</p>	

effects of deep-sea mining on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities have been studied and researched sufficiently, the risks are understood and the practices demonstrate no serious harm to the environment and biodiversity.

International Ocean Governance, the Commission should also reduce the demand for primary metals through a resource-efficient circular and sharing economy.