



Subject: Call to the Ministers: your support for an ambitious Nature Restoration Law

Brussels, 11 July 2022

Dear Minister,

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission published the long-awaited legal proposal for a Regulation on nature restoration (Nature Restoration Law), which was already announced in the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 two years ago.

We are writing to you ahead of the informal meeting of Environment Ministers in Prague on 13-14 July, to **call for (1) your strong support for the Nature Restoration Law and (2) your commitment to a robust process in the Environment Council**. The aim should be to agree upon a general approach as quickly as possible without undermining the level of ambition that scientists, businesses, civil society, Parliamentarians, and citizens have called for.

The legal proposal for a Nature Restoration Law is a huge opportunity to bring nature back to Europe, benefiting biodiversity, climate, and people alike. The restoration of ecosystems such as peatlands, forests, and seagrass meadows can help reduce emissions and sequester millions of tonnes of carbon each year. Nature restoration is our best insurance policy for climate adaptation as it will increase our resilience to droughts, flooding and other extreme weather events. Consequently, it also contributes to [long-term food security](#)¹. Furthermore, restoring and preserving nature can bring many socio-economic benefits such as sustainable jobs, recreation opportunities, and broader human health benefits. Therefore, nature restoration is undoubtedly one of the best investments we can make. The European Commission's impact assessment concluded that investing in nature restoration adds between €8 and €38 in economic value for each €1 spent. This remarkable finding can be attributed to ecosystem services which play an invaluable role in supporting food security, ecosystem and climate resilience and mitigation, and human health.

Given the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises, it is important that the legal proposal receives your support and is adopted as quickly as possible, so that we can turn the focus towards the timely implementation. Thus, all efforts should be made to reach an agreement during this Presidency to avoid complicating the process with changing Presidency priorities.

¹ Birdlife, EEB, Client Earth, WWF: [Nature restoration and food security: Why bringing back nature cannot wait](#) (June 2022)

We fully support the proposed nature restoration Regulation as it is a huge milestone with the potential to reverse the tide of biodiversity loss and climate change at the scale needed. However, the proposal will also need to be strengthened on a few key points to fully grasp its potential:

- All EU Member States need to do their fair share to achieve the overarching objective of having effective and area-based restoration measures in place on at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, supported by proper monitoring and enforcement;
- It is important that an essential part of the restoration action starts happening before 2030, to not once again postpone urgently needed action to 2040 or 2050;
- While it is positive that there is a separate article on river and floodplain restoration, the law should contain quantified and time-bound targets to restore rivers. Member States should be required to restore 15% of river length (178,000 km) into free-flowing rivers by 2030 as well as restore floodplains;
- The targets on rewetting peatlands should be strengthened to ensure that a higher share of peatlands under agricultural use is rewetted without loopholes. Since drained peatlands account for 5% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions, the nature restoration law needs to contain strong targets on rewetting peatlands to ensure carbon is stored instead of emitted;
- The highly ineffective "joint recommendations" procedure for adoption of marine conservation measures of the Common Fisheries Policy needs to be properly addressed, otherwise Member States will be unable to meet the marine restoration targets;
- To ensure the seamless and effective implementation of the regulation, the legislative act should open the path to explore and establish dedicated funding for nature restoration pursuant to the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

In close collaboration with our national partners and member organisations, we are looking forward to working further with you and your administrations on this important legal proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick ten Brink, Secretary General, European Environmental Bureau

on behalf of

Birdlife Europe and Central Asia

European Environmental Bureau

Client Earth

WWF European Policy Office