



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on biodiversity post-2010

- EU and global vision and targets and international access and burden sharing regime -

*3002nd ENVIRONMENT Council meeting
Brussels, 15 March 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

“THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- a) CONVINCED that the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 provides a unique opportunity to mobilise the necessary political commitment and to take policy actions at all levels to address the global biodiversity crisis;
- b) RECALLING its conclusions of 22 December 2009, HIGHLIGHTING the importance of maintaining biodiversity and avoiding irreversible damage to ecosystems and their functions, both for ethical reasons, respecting the recognition of the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and to secure social and economic stability, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and reach the Millennium Development Goals, and FULLY AWARE that biodiversity is essential to the existence of human life on Earth and societies' wellbeing, both directly and indirectly through the ecosystem services it provides; RECOGNISING that everyone is entitled to enjoy a healthy and sustainable environment, which requires the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; RECOGNISING the central role of biological diversity in the global fight against hunger and in favour of food security;

P R E S S

- c) NOTING that, according to the TEEB study (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity)¹, the annual loss of ecosystem services under a business-as-usual scenario is estimated to be equivalent to around €50 billion, while by 2050 the accumulated welfare losses could be equivalent to 7% of annual consumption; UNDERLINING that inaction represents an unbearable cost; RECOGNISING furthermore the key contribution of biodiversity in delivering prosperity and in reducing poverty;
- d) STRESSING the important contribution of biodiversity as a driving force to combat the economic crisis, to promote job creation and to generate long-term, economic benefits, as illustrated by the finding of the TEEB study² that up to 2.6% of those working in Europe have jobs mostly based on natural assets and that up to 16.6% of European jobs are indirectly linked to those natural assets; and AWARE that in most developing countries the link between ecosystems and employment, income and livelihoods is even stronger;
- e) SERIOUSLY CONCERNED that both the EU and the global biodiversity 2010 targets have not been met, that biodiversity loss continues at an unacceptable rate entailing very serious ecological, economic and social consequences, while STRESSING that these targets have however been essential in generating useful actions in favour of biodiversity;
- f) WELCOMING the presentation by the Commission of its communication "Options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010" as a step forward in shaping the EU's future biodiversity policy; NOTING that the suggested means, measures and baseline scenarios, including in relation to restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, will continue to be further considered, and in this context LOOKING FORWARD to the Commission's forthcoming further detailed assessments;
- g) AWARE that the main reasons for not achieving the EU target are: incomplete implementation of certain legal instruments, incomplete and poor integration into sectoral policies, insufficient scientific knowledge and data gaps, insufficient funding, lack of additional efficiently-targeted instruments to tackle specific problems (such as on invasive alien species (IAS)), and shortcomings in communication and education to enhance awareness; therefore CONVINCED that the means have not matched the targets and that urgent and effective action is needed on all the above-mentioned aspects in order to avoid going beyond the limits of nature and causing serious additional pressure on European welfare;
- h) RECOGNISING that habitat destruction, fragmentation and degradation caused by detrimental land-use change, over-exploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources, invasive alien species, illegal trade in endangered species, ocean acidification, pollution, and increasingly climate change are the strongest pressures on biodiversity, and that unavoidable climate change could even aggravate some effects, such as the proportion of species facing extinction;

¹ TEEB (2008) - Interim report to COP 9 of CBD.
The value of ecosystem services in tropical forests is estimated at between 6.000 and 16.000 USD per hectare/year and the value of ecosystem services in coral reefs is estimated at between 115.000 and 1.140.000 USD per year (TEEB- Climate issues update).

² TEEB (2009) for policy makers.

- i) **CONVINCED** that the EU needs to lead by example and to take urgent measures to preserve its own biodiversity, which is also of global importance, while reducing its negative impact on biodiversity beyond its borders, and, in parallel, to show that high levels of economic development and social welfare can be compatible with, and even be increased by, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and contribute to global efforts towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- j) **UNDERLINING** that the development and transfer of best practices and technologies will be essential to achieve a coordinated response and the cost-effective use of resources in coping with biodiversity loss, climate change and desertification;

Biodiversity within the EU

1. **AGREES** on a long-term vision that by 2050 European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its natural capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored for biodiversity's intrinsic value and for their essential contribution to human wellbeing and economic prosperity, and so that catastrophic changes caused by the loss of biodiversity are avoided;
2. For this vision to be achieved **AGREES** further on a headline target of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss;
3. **HOLDS** that, given the essential contribution of biodiversity and its sustainable use and management to human wellbeing, economic prosperity and growth, the 2050 vision and the 2020 headline target have an important role to play and should also be fully reflected in the main cross-cutting EU policies and strategies, such as the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Strategy for Growth and Jobs (the future EU 2020 strategy), in order to maximise coherence and mutual supportiveness at the highest political level;
4. **STRESSES** that the European Union will only achieve this vision and headline target if the means match the objectives; therefore **HOLDS** that it is essential to set ambitious, realistic, achievable and measurable sub-targets for different ecosystems, driving forces, pressures and responses, to ensure their integration into relevant internal and external EU sectoral policies and to promote the use of best practices and the use of flexible approaches in line with existing legislation; **RECOGNISES** the importance of setting a clear baseline outlining the criteria against which achievements are to be assessed, while taking into account that in some cases, restoration may also consist of natural regeneration; **REITERATES** the need for that purpose to strengthen the evaluation tools and indicators; **EMPHASISES** the relevance of the results of the CBD and international negotiations on a global target and framework for tackling biodiversity loss in setting EU action; therefore **CALLS UPON** the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to submit this year, as soon as possible after the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, taking account of its results, an EU post-2010 Biodiversity Strategy, including an impact assessment, which should establish the baseline for measuring the halt of biodiversity loss and its restoration, propose sub-targets and also identify the necessary, feasible and cost-effective measures and actions for reaching them;

5. UNDERLINES that the protection of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services requires cost-efficient policies and actions and goes well beyond protected areas and ecological networks; however, REAFFIRMING that protected areas and ecological networks are a cornerstone of efforts to preserve biodiversity, STRESSES the need to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives, to speed up the completion of the Natura 2000 Network, both on land and at sea, and to put in place adequate finance, taking into account also that biodiversity is unevenly spread throughout the EU, and effective management and restoration measures;
6. UNDERSCORES the necessity of stepping up efforts to integrate biodiversity into the development and implementation of other policies, taking into account the objectives of all policies concerned, in particular those national and EU policies related to natural resources management, such as agriculture, food security, forestry, fisheries, and energy, as well as spatial planning, transport, tourism, trade, and development; RECOGNISES that further benefits could be reaped from better coordination and, in accordance, where applicable, with the subsidiarity principle, from the establishment of “Green Infrastructure”³ as an important contribution to integrating biodiversity considerations into these other policies; EMPHASISES the contribution of “Green Infrastructure” to climate adaptation and mitigation objectives, to prevent habitat fragmentation, to increase connectivity and to maintain species evolution processes; CALLS ON the Commission to further develop on this concept;
7. RECOGNISES that the frequent undervaluation of ecosystem services is a significant cause underlying today’s biodiversity crisis; UNDERSCORES the need to advance work on the economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services and to incorporate it into policy making and implementation; furthermore CONSIDERS it essential to facilitate the integration of this valuation into conventional accounting procedures such as the universal "System of Standard National Accounts"; HOLDS THE VIEW that this assessment should also contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services to be further integrated into future EU financial instruments;
8. INSISTS that the EU action allow for the full involvement of all stakeholders at local and national levels in the development of policies and initiatives; and TRUSTS that such participatory approaches will in return generate necessary and complementary “bottom up” initiatives from those who directly participate in land and sea use management, and in particular local communities;

Global biodiversity

9. RECOGNISES the need to keep human activity within safe ecological limits and to avoid human-induced loss of biodiversity through extinctions and passing other ecological points of no return; ACKNOWLEDGES that the EU, like others, is called upon to address its global ecological footprint effectively;
10. EMPHASISES the utmost importance of bringing about the much-needed integration and mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into all relevant sectors and thus addressing the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss;

³ “Green infrastructure” is an interconnected network of natural areas, including agricultural land, greenways, wetlands, parks, forest reserves, native plant communities and marine areas that naturally regulate storm flows, temperatures, flood risk and water, air and ecosystem quality.

11. REITERATES the importance of protected areas and ecological networks as a cornerstone for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; hence STRESSES the need to promote all necessary measures to protect biodiversity in third countries, including the establishment and sound management of protected areas in response to their national needs, for instance through the "LifeWeb" initiative, while ensuring effective participation of all stakeholders, in particular indigenous and local communities; and also STRESSES the need to promote all necessary measures to protect biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, including through the development of an international list of ecologically and biologically significant marine areas in need of protection on a scientific basis and consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
12. UNDERSCORES the need for the EU to contribute actively and constructively to a global consensus on a vision (e.g., 2050), mission (e.g., 2020), sub-targets and milestones linked to measurable indicators, and establishing appropriate monitoring, assessment and reporting schemes; ADVOCATES that, while the vision and mission should be outcome-oriented, the milestones and sub-targets could consist of outcomes, processes and output-oriented commitments, focussing on key driving forces and policy sectors, ecosystems and pressures; REITERATES that such a vision and mission should have a high level of ambition so that they can trigger decisive and concrete policy actions and the means for their implementation;
13. ADVOCATES that the vision and mission should be adopted at the highest level and via a process that is cooperative and as broad as possible; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of integrating biodiversity goals into planning and budgeting in all relevant sectors and of strengthening effective and inclusive ways and means to enhance commitment, engagement, responsibility and active participation of these sectors and related stakeholders; APPRECIATES the involvement of the UN Environment Management Group in the process of developing the post-2010 global biodiversity policy framework; and STRESSES the need to put into place necessary practical arrangements to ensure that the vision, mission and sub-targets are embraced beyond the CBD by all institutions, organisations and processes concerned and facilitate the adoption of appropriate targets for sectors;
14. In this context UNDERLINES the need to develop processes and procedures for monitoring and assessing implementation of the sub-targets in the CBD Strategic Plan;
15. IS OF THE OPINION that the effectiveness of decision-making processes and the streamlining of the operations of the CBD bodies need to be improved after 2010 in order to support an enhanced phase of implementation;
16. HIGHLIGHTS the extraordinary opportunity, arising from the High Level Session on biodiversity at the UN General Assembly in September 2010, to mobilise the world to recognise the crisis facing global biodiversity and the need to maintain the basis of life on Earth and therefore for humankind and future generations and for launching appropriate initiatives; STRESSES that this session provides an excellent political forum to yield support for improved synergies between biodiversity-related multilateral environment agreements and between the Rio Conventions;

17. In line with the G8 "*Carta di Siracusa*" on biodiversity, HOLDS that reform of environmental governance at all levels is essential to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into all relevant policies, to turn the current weakness in economic systems into opportunities and to boost sustainable development and employment, taking particular account of the circumstances of developing countries;
18. STRESSES that effective policies in support of biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation are inextricably linked; HIGHLIGHTS that greater convergence at international and national levels is needed in efforts to address both issues in a mutually reinforcing manner, optimising opportunities in ongoing global processes within the CBD and UNFCCC and in the preparations for Rio+20;
19. RECALLS THAT implementation of an effective post-2010 policy framework and of a new Strategic Plan for the CBD will require an adequate mobilisation of resources from all possible sources and through the review of the guidance to the financial mechanism; CONSIDERS that public and private finance, including innovative forms of financing, and finance associated with the Copenhagen Accord on climate change, should - based on appropriate criteria - include scope for payments for ecosystem services, where appropriate, including for both adaptation and mitigation, and should specifically support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within REDD plus, as appropriate, through the implementation of negotiated safeguards; furthermore, IS OF THE VIEW that biodiversity-supportive financial means should be considered through the reform, elimination and reorientation of those subsidies harmful to biodiversity;
20. ADVOCATES that a third and final multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental meeting on IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), to be held in June 2010, conclude deliberations on establishing in 2010 an efficient and independent mechanism focused on governments' needs so that the best available knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystems is used to inform decision-making on all relevant policies and economic activities; HOLDS THAT robust knowledge and understanding of biodiversity needs to be channelled effectively to decision-makers and that strengthening the enabling environment at the science-policy interface should play a catalysing role in capacity development;
21. STRESSES the need to incorporate emerging knowledge and information regarding the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity in the different discussions and negotiations at SBSTTA-14, the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WG-RI) and COP 10 of the CBD, across CBD work and in other processes relevant to biodiversity; CONSIDERS that it is necessary to continue to promote the TEEB study and its findings and to develop actions in response to it, including ways of incorporating its recommendations as and where appropriate;

Access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (ABS)

22. EXPRESSES the view that the United Nations Year of Biodiversity offers the political momentum to strengthen implementation of all three objectives of the CBD;
23. RECONFIRMS the commitment of the EU to the successful conclusion of negotiations on the international ABS regime at COP 10 of the CBD and CALLS UPON all Parties to continue providing constructive contributions with the aim of reaching consensus;

24. REITERATES the need for transparency, legal certainty and predictability when accessing genetic resources and fairly and equitably sharing the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources;
 25. STRESSES therefore that the international ABS regime should establish a transparent regulatory framework through a Protocol to the CBD with legally binding and non-binding provisions; RECALLS that such a Protocol would need to include international standards on national access law and practice linked to compliance;
 26. RECOGNISES that traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources and therefore needs to be adequately addressed in the international ABS regime to implement effectively the provisions in Article 15 and Article 8 (j) of the CBD as mandated by COP decision IX/12;
 27. ACKNOWLEDGES the interdependence of countries with regard to genetic resources for food and agriculture and their importance for worldwide food security and therefore the need to take into account these genetic resources in the negotiations on the international ABS regime; STRESSES the positive contribution of the International Treaty on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture to food security and climate adaptation and mitigation through the conservation and sustainable use of these genetic resources.”
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