



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on international biodiversity beyond 2010

*2988th ENVIRONMENT Council meeting
Brussels, 22 December 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union,

ALARMED BY the increasing rate of biodiversity loss and the deterioration of ecosystem functions and services due to anthropogenic pressure, and the threat this poses to economic prosperity, social welfare and human well-being;

EMPHASISING 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;

RECOGNISING that the capacity of ecosystems to produce goods and services and to maintain biodiversity is limited, and that it is essential to better understand and identify the main drivers of biodiversity loss, ecological tipping points and threshold effects;

P R E S S

CONSCIOUS of the need to assess, preserve and recover the Earth's natural capital, meaning the true value of biodiversity, including ecosystems, and other natural resources, and more efficiently integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into all relevant policies to promote efficient and sustainable use of biological resources and achieve a sustained delivery of ecosystem goods and services for future generations;

RECOGNISING that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is one pre-requisite for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as outlined in the report from the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and thus for successfully implementing the outcome of the UNFCCC COP 15;

RECOGNISING that sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as the conservation of agricultural land are of key importance for improving food security for a growing world population, taking into account that it is expected to surpass 9 billion in 2050, as stated by the World Summit on food security in November 2009;

AWARE that effectively addressing the loss of biodiversity will require comprehensive and coordinated actions in relation to the problem of invasive alien species;

RECOGNISING also the significance of further strengthening international frameworks and agreements that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, such as the Non-legally Binding Instrument of All types of Forest adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA);

UNDERLINING the need for active participation of Member States and the Commission in celebrating the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity 2010, with a view to increasing political and public awareness of biodiversity and its functions;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the global 2010 Biodiversity target is not expected to be met; ACKNOWLEDGING, however, that this target has nevertheless positively contributed to realising effective action towards reducing the loss of biodiversity worldwide and increasing awareness of biodiversity at all levels;

DETERMINED to address conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and ecosystem services through concerted cooperative action as one of the most important challenges facing humankind, drawing on and developing further synergies between biodiversity-related international frameworks and agreements;

DETERMINED also to intensify efforts aimed at a successful conclusion at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD of the negotiations on Access and Benefit Sharing, as a key contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity beyond 2010;

RECALLING the need to establish a vision and targets beyond 2010 for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within the EU, building on and contributing to deliberations at global level on a vision and on targets for biodiversity beyond 2010; and REAFFIRMING the need for the EU to actively participate in the deliberations at global level on a vision and on targets for biodiversity beyond 2010;

LOOKING FORWARD TO the Commission's Communication on the EU post 2010 biodiversity policy, which is expected to be presented in January 2010, in time for the Madrid Conference on Post 2010 Biodiversity and the role of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe;

1. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of reenergising the political momentum to strengthen efforts to protect biodiversity and implement the CBD through, inter alia, the adoption of a revised and ambitious Strategic Plan for the Convention at COP 10;
2. EMPHASIZES that a long-term global vision for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity should take account of the links between biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, climate change, desertification, economic prosperity, food security, health, long-term human well-being and the eradication of poverty;
3. AGREES that, under future targets, ecosystem services must be used sustainably in order to conserve, enhance and where appropriate restore biodiversity, ensuring that economic and social development takes place within the capacity of healthy ecosystems, so that humanity is able to live on the returns of the natural capital through sustained delivery of ecosystem goods and services;
4. RECOGNISES the key importance of targeted research to enhance our understanding of and generate the necessary scientific knowledge base for how biodiversity should be managed to provide goods and services sustainably;
5. WELCOMES progress made through the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, in particular by recognizing the economic importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services and LOOKS FORWARD to its final report; and ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to assess the value of ecological assets and seize the opportunity to invest in the natural capital;
6. ACKNOWLEDGES that agrobiodiversity is an important element of biodiversity with significant potential for improving global food security and for climate change mitigation and adaptation, INVITES Member States and the Commission to promote research and capacity development for the sustainable use of agrobiodiversity and ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to implement and further strengthen the ITPGRFA;

7. ACKNOWLEDGES that an ambitious post-2010 vision will only be achievable and realistic if global financing for biodiversity can be improved, e.g. by a successful outcome of the ongoing negotiations on replenishing the Global Environment Facility; ENCOURAGES Member States to implement the CBD Strategy for Mobilization of Resources, to take an active part in ongoing processes to enhance innovative financing, such as the Life Web Initiative, and engage in a global discussion on the need and possible modalities for innovative systems for payments of ecosystem services, mobilising private financing, through an appropriate mechanism, and to contribute to the achievement of the EU ODA/GNI target by 2010 as set out in the European Council conclusions of June 2005;
8. RECOGNISES that financing of activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change should contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, ecosystem services and socio-economic co-benefits, based on appropriate criteria;
9. EMPHASIZES the need for targeted and strengthened actions to effectively reverse the loss of forest cover and the loss of forest biodiversity through, inter alia, action at global level within the initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), and forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), based on an active participation by developing countries, keeping in mind the objectives of the EU to reduce gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020 compared with current levels and halt global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest;
10. HIGHLIGHTS the mitigation and adaptation potential of resilient wetlands, oceans, forests, peatlands and grasslands and other ecosystems, and that conservation, restoration and sustainable use of these ecosystems result in carbon emission reductions, carbon storage and increased adaptation potential; RECOMMENDS the development and use of ecosystem-based approaches for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
11. STRESSES the need to enhance our understanding of how EU consumption and production patterns contribute to biodiversity loss globally and take measures to reduce the EU's ecological footprint, including through effective and integrated policies to conserve, enhance and, where appropriate, restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in relevant sectors, i.a. agriculture, forestry and fisheries, energy, trade and development cooperation, in particular where these policies have international consequences for biodiversity;
12. STRESSES the importance of the participation of the UN Environmental Management Group in the development and implementation of the post-2010 biodiversity targets in order to ensure the involvement of relevant international sectoral organizations;

13. WELCOMES the converging views resulting from the Second Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, held in Nairobi on 5-9 October 2009, and AGREES to actively promote the establishment in 2010 of an efficient and independent mechanism, building on and complementing existing bodies and processes, to improve and strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, taking into account experiences from the IPCC, and in this regard STRESSES the importance of convening a third and final intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting as soon as possible in 2010, to be in line with the international agenda;
14. ACKNOWLEDGES the need for a growing world population to sustainably use marine resources, and STRESSES the urgent need to reverse the loss of freshwater, marine and coastal biodiversity, and accelerate the implementation of the 2012 target on the establishment of a global and coherent representative network of marine protected areas, including areas beyond national jurisdiction, while fully respecting the relevant international conventions, i.a. by:
 - ensuring connectivity between protected areas,
 - applying environmental impact assessments for activities affecting the marine environment,
 - strengthening the conservation mandate of relevant regional and global organizations,
 - using maritime spatial planning to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine areas,
 - developing stronger enforcement and control mechanisms, and
 - improving sectoral integration;
15. UNDERLINES the need for the EU to agree on ambitious negotiating positions in preparing for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, October 2010, taking into consideration related developments;
16. AGREES to pursue the following key strategic principles in the deliberations on the CBD Strategic Plan and the development of a vision and targets beyond 2010:
 - The Strategic Plan should provide an effective framework for implementing the CBD and contribute to a coherent and coordinated approach to the implementation of biodiversity-related frameworks and agreements and at the international, regional and national levels;
 - The Strategic Plan should include a long-term (e.g. 2050) global vision complemented by a short-/medium-term (e.g. 2020) mission, including strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets based on best-available scientific evidence, building on existing CBD and other relevant biodiversity-related targets;

- The Strategic Plan should facilitate the adoption of appropriate targets for sectors, ecosystems and pressures, complemented by actions designed to achieve substantial, measurable and cost-effective progress at all levels;
 - The long-term global vision and the short-/medium-term mission for biodiversity should be fully endorsed at the highest political level, in order to be recognised as a common vision for all biodiversity-related processes;
 - The long-term vision and short-/medium-term mission should communicate the urgency and scale of the problem and necessary responses in a way that is understandable to a wide audience, encourages commitments of civil society at large and fosters collective action;
 - The long-term vision and the short-/medium-term mission and targets should identify and address indirect and direct drivers of biodiversity loss, reflect the full range of values of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, goods and services, and encourage sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services as well as better integration of the true economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services into policy frameworks, economic planning and national accounting;
 - The long-term vision, and the short-/medium-term mission and targets should provide a comprehensive framework for relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, programmes and strategies as well as in planning processes, and wherever feasible, address drivers, pressures and responses to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as incentives for sustainable use;
 - The Strategic Plan and its targets should be accompanied by clear and operational indicators to monitor progress in implementation, building on the existing framework and recognising the urgent need to improve the monitoring and evaluation systems for biodiversity and to provide a more complete set of indicators;
 - The Strategic Plan should facilitate adaptation to local conditions, participatory approaches and effective communication strategies, enable institutional learning evolving from sound management and scientific studies, and allow for future revisions of targets and indicators based on best available scientific knowledge and evidence."
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