



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from: Committee of Permanent Representatives

to: Council

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Subject: EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

- draft Council conclusions

1. On 3 May 2011, the Commission transmitted its Communication "Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020" aiming at reversing the biodiversity loss and speeding up the EU's transition towards a resource efficient and green economy. To this effect, the Communication focuses on few priority targets and corresponding measures: protect species and habitats, maintain and restore ecosystems, anchor biodiversity goals in other policies, combat invasive alien species and step up the EU's contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

2. On the basis of the Communication, on 24 May 2011, the Presidency tabled draft Council conclusions on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 that were examined by the Working Party on the Environment (WPE) at its meetings on 24 and 31 May 2011. Broad agreement was reached on the major part of the text.

3. Coreper examined the outstanding issues at its meeting on 8 June 2011. On the basis of the discussions in Coreper, the Presidency revised the draft conclusions as set out in the Annex. While the text is largely agreeable to delegations, some Member States entered scrutiny reservations, at this stage, and notably: BE, CZ, DK and ES to paragraph 1; SE to paragraphs 3 and 4 and PT to paragraph 14. The Commission entered a reservation to paragraph 1.
DK, SI and UK maintained their parliamentary scrutiny reservation.

4. The Council is therefore invited to consider the draft conclusions on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, as set out in the Annex to this note, with a view to their adoption at its session on 21 June 2011.

EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

- draft Council conclusions -

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RECALLING its conclusions on biodiversity policy of 25 June and 22 December 2009, 15 March and 20 December 2010, and, in particular the European Council commitment to the long-term biodiversity 2050 vision and the 2020 target made at its meeting on 25 and 26 March 2010;

ACKNOWLEDGING that a number of positive initiatives in various sectors have been launched with good results, in particular the NATURA 2000 network, and DEEPLY CONCERNED that the EU and the global biodiversity 2010 targets have not been met and that Europe's biodiversity remains under severe threat from, inter alia, changes in land use, pollution, invasive alien species, unsustainable use of natural resources and climate change, as is also shown in the trends of the 2010 assessment on implementation of the 2006 EU Biodiversity Action Plan;

RECALLING the commitments made in Nagoya (Japan) in 2010 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and especially the need to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

EMPHASISING the importance of ensuring an appropriate balance between the objectives of all EU sectoral policies and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 in particular with respect to major global challenges e.g. in the fields of biodiversity loss, food security and climate change, taking into account the principle of subsidiarity and without pre-empting the outcome of the negotiations on the next Multi-annual Financial Framework;

1. ENDORSES the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (hereinafter "the Strategy") and considers it a key instrument to enable the EU to reach its overall 2020 headline target; EMPHASISES the need to further discuss its targets and actions in order to ensure the effective and coherent implementation of the Strategy;

2. UNDERSCORES that, for the first time, EU biodiversity policy will benefit from a substantial coherent knowledge framework, including a baseline – the 2010 Biodiversity Baseline published by the European Environment Agency – which will serve as an element of the benchmark for measuring progress together with other indicators and will contribute to keeping the EU on track to reach its biodiversity objectives; and RECOGNISES the importance of effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms;
3. WELCOMES the fact that the Strategy responds to the main obstacles and threats that prevented the achievement of the 2010 target, including insufficient sectoral integration across EU policies in particular in the areas of agriculture, fisheries, water, climate and energy and other policies such as forestry, and shortcomings in the implementation of existing environmental EU legislation; inadequate funding and specific policy gaps, relating to, among others, invasive alien species, green infrastructure, including ecological connectivity, and ecosystem services, within and beyond protected areas, as well as scientific knowledge and data gaps;
4. WELCOMES the focus of the Strategy on biodiversity as a whole and ecosystems services - within but also beyond protected areas – in recognition of the essential services they provide as well as their intrinsic and economic value; WELCOMES the emphasis on maintenance, including management, and cost-effective restoration of ecosystems to ensure the continued provision of ecosystem services, in particular given the climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits of many ecosystems and the relevance for human well-being; UNDERSCORES the importance of green infrastructure also as a contribution to further integrating biodiversity considerations into other EU policies; and WELCOMES the Commission’s commitment to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy by 2012;

5. HIGHLIGHTS the fact that the Strategy and its proper implementation is key to building a sustainable Europe, and should be an integral part of, and a contribution to the sustainable growth objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy by integrating biodiversity targets into the Resource efficiency roadmap. Fully valuing natural capital by integrating the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services in public and private sector decision-making and accounting systems will contribute to a number of the EU's strategic objectives towards a resource efficient and green economy;
6. CONSIDERING the benefits that biodiversity and ecosystem services provide to other sectors, EMPHASISES the need to take action to effectively integrate the relevant elements of the Strategy into all relevant sectoral policies as the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy and the Cohesion Policy as well as into other policies and their implementation, ongoing policy developments and reforms, such as the Multi-annual Financial Framework. In this regard CALLS ON the Commission to effectively incorporate biodiversity measures and concerns in its proposals for the legislative framework of the future financial perspectives (2014-2020) and to take into account Member States' contribution to the implementation of the Strategy, especially the Natura 2000 network and its priority features;
7. SUPPORTS the Commission's commitment to developing with Member States a common implementation framework involving all actors, sectors and institutions concerned at all levels and CALLS ON the Commission and the Member States to start working on the implementation of the Strategy and RECOGNISES the need to further discuss it;
8. ENCOURAGES Member States to integrate the Strategy into their national plans, programmes and/or strategies;

9. EMPHASISES the need to develop and implement a methodology taking into account existing impact assessment processes to assess the impact of all relevant EU-funded projects, plans and programmes on biodiversity and ecosystems and STRESSES the importance of further work to operationalise the 'no net loss'¹ objective of the Strategy for areas and species not covered by existing EU nature legislation and of ensuring no further loss or degradation of ecosystems and their services;
10. STRESSES the need to identify, reform, reorient and/or eliminate subsidies harmful to biodiversity;
11. AGREES that full implementation of the EU environment acquis, and in particular the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, is essential for the achievement of the new EU 2020 Biodiversity targets and ENDORSES actions aimed at the finalisation, improved management, monitoring, cooperation and public awareness of the Natura 2000 network; CALLS on the Commission to take into account the relevant provisions of Article 8 of the Habitats Directive when setting out its views on financing Natura 2000;
12. CALLS ON the Commission to address existing policy or legislative gaps in a proportionate and cost-effective manner, and WELCOMES in this context the Commission's commitment to the development of an EU strategy on Invasive Alien Species including a dedicated legislative instrument on invasive alien species by 2012 following a risk-based approach;
13. STRESSES the need to mobilise additional resources from all possible sources and ensure adequate funding through, *inter alia*, the future EU financial framework, national sources and innovative financial mechanisms, as appropriate, for the effective implementation of the Strategy, including predictable, adequate and regular financing for the Natura 2000 network; EXPRESSES the importance of further analysing this need and exploring and promoting the use of the innovative financial mechanisms in support of biodiversity policy objectives;

¹ A preliminary definition of this concept is that conservation losses in one geographically or otherwise defined area are balanced by a gain elsewhere provided that this principle does not entail any impairment of existing biodiversity as protected by EU nature legislation.

14. UNDERLINES the importance of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation in support of the implementation of the CBD; REITERATES the commitment of the Member States and the Commission to sign at the earliest opportunity the Nagoya Protocol and STRESSES the need for its timely implementation and ratification, including by concluding an EU-level impact assessment as soon as possible; and UNDERLINES the principle of the CBD that Parties have the sovereign rights to determine access to genetic resources within their national jurisdiction;
15. UNDERSCORES the fact that achieving the EU as well as the global 2020 biodiversity targets will require the full engagement and commitment of a wide variety of stakeholders, and therefore encourages communication on the benefits of biodiversity; HIGHLIGHTS the fact that in order to succeed all concerned stakeholders need to be mobilised and WELCOMES key partnerships highlighted in the EU Strategy and commits to their successful further development;
16. WELCOMES the global dimension of the Strategy and the strengthening of contributions from other policies such as trade and climate change as well as the need to deliver on the CBD Strategy for Resource Mobilisation;
17. AFFIRMS THAT the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are essential elements to supporting transition towards a green and resource-efficient economy, *inter alia* creating new skills, jobs and business opportunities, and that this should be fully reflected in discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio in June 2012;
18. RECOGNISES the need to reinforce the science-policy interface through the establishment of an effective and integrated monitoring and reporting framework consistent with international reporting obligations, building on and updating existing indicators and making use of the EU Biodiversity Baseline to assess progress and drawing on and contributing to the work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).
