

## Restore and protect nature and climate

The ongoing climate crisis and sixth wave of extinction of biodiversity calls for a strong and coordinated action to solve both challenges simultaneously. Therefore, the EGP strongly supports the European Commission's proposal for a Nature Restoration Law that clearly addresses these issues. The specific objective is to restore degraded ecosystems across the EU in order to help the EU's biodiversity to be on its path to recovery by 2030, and restoration by 2050. This includes wetlands, forests, marine, agro-ecosystems, rivers, lakes and alluvial habitats.

The proposal is based on clear and concrete scientific evidence and suggests binding goals for national implementation - goals that are ambitious and call for immediate action. Action that is urgently needed since the current trends are resulting in detrimental and irreversible loss of biodiversity. Nature restoration is also the best short- and long-term solution for reversing ongoing climate change, giving added value to several aspects of our common future.

At the same time, given the natural system's intricate connectedness and complexity, limiting climate change is very important for nature conservation and restoration. Therefore, measures to curb climate change have to be implemented fast and thoroughly.

Acknowledging that the status of 81% of EU habitats is poor, that one in three bee and butterfly species are in decline, and that these are strong reasons for taking strong action to restore nature.

The EGP demands further and strengthened actions on the following aspects of the Nature Restoration Law:

- While the Restoration Law as the first real nature legislation in 20 years rightly focuses on restoring carbon-rich ecosystems such as peatlands, wetlands and old-growth forests, it falls short in addressing the role of current forestry management, especially on drained peatlands, and lacks strong governance mechanisms and a robust funding. We therefore call on the European Parliament and Member States to improve the Commission's proposal in these regards and to complete negotiations in a timely manner in order to be able to meet ambitious 2030 targets;
- The parallel development of the relevant EU policies and funding mechanisms to support and facilitate nature restoration by spending at least 10% of annual spending on biodiversity under the EU Multi-Annual Framework. This must be implemented at EU as well as national and regional levels to give concrete and swift results;
- Support for legally binding targets for the EU and its Member States to reach at least 30% of protected terrestrial and marine areas (of which one third shall be strictly protected areas) and to restore at least 30% of degraded ecosystems at Union level by 2030 (and at least 60% by 2040, and at least 90% by 2050);
- Ensure that the upcoming restoration targets are additional to existing obligations under the

relevant EU Directives whilst, at the same time, improve the implementation and enforcement of existing environmental legislation;

- Guarantee the participation of local populations and civil society stakeholders in planning, management and realisation of protection and restoration actions;
- Identify and remove subsidies and reform regulations that are obstructing or reversing the actions needed for the restoration of nature;
- Increase the funding for nature restoration actions, since it is unlikely that the funding proposed will be sufficient. The EU should provide necessary financial support to implement the transition from conventional to regenerative agriculture financed through the existing CAP;
- Demand that implementation of energy savings projects and projects for sustainable energy production are done in a nature inclusive way, with at least maximum possible mitigation and compensation for negative effects on nature;
- In addition to the demands on the Nature Restoration Law, the EGP demands that the EU puts forward maximum of efforts in the upcoming COP on Biodiversity in December in Canada, to come to the high level of goals and actions that are really necessary to guide global action through 2030 to halt and reverse nature loss;
- Considering the environmental impact caused by anthropic activities, especially manufacturing activities, on the quality of aquatic habitats, a renewed European strategy is needed to reduce water exploitation and protect rivers, aquifers and seas from pollution: this is why it is proposed to pursue preventive solutions, such as closed-loop water reuse in industrial sectors and urban contexts, useful for preventing damage to the ecosystems that the proposed Nature Restoration Law aims to protect and reducing risks to food security;
- The Nature Restoration Law must as a minimum align with the EUs position in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.