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DRAFT REPORT

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/0000(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives (2020/0000(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) of 31 May 2019,
- having regard to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the upcoming 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties thereto (COP15),
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity of 15 September 2020,
- having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report of 4 December 2019 entitled ‘The European environment – state and outlook 2020’,
- having regard to the Global Resources Outlook 2019 report by the International Resource Panel of the UN Environment Programme,
- having regard to the IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics of 29 October 2020,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency²,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2019 on the annual strategic report on the

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0015.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078.

- implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Committee on Fisheries,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas Parliament has declared a climate and environmental emergency and approved an ambitious Climate Law report; whereas biodiversity loss and climate change represent equal threats to life on our planet;
- B. whereas the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the upcoming international agreement under the CBD aim to establish the European and global framework on biodiversity up to 2030;
- C. whereas the evidence available suggests that it is not too late to halt and reverse current trends in the decline of biodiversity⁴;

Current biodiversity status

1. Welcomes the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and its level of ambition;
2. Recalls the conclusions of the IPBES report of 2019, according to which nature is declining at a rate unprecedented in human history and around 1 million species are threatened with extinction; strongly regrets that the Union has neither fully met the 2020 biodiversity strategy objectives nor the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
3. Stresses that the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the ‘One Health’ principle in policy-making and that transformative changes are needed; calls for an urgent rethinking of how to align the Union’s current policies with the changes needed;

Protection and restoration

4. Expresses strong support for the targets of protecting at least 30 % of the Union’s marine and terrestrial areas, and of strictly protecting at least 10 % of these areas, including primary and old-growth forests; stresses that these should be binding and implemented by Member States in accordance with science-based criteria and biodiversity needs; underlines that in addition to increasing protected areas, the quality of protected areas should be ensured and clear conservation plans implemented;
5. Welcomes the upcoming legislative proposal on the EU Nature Restoration Plan and reiterates its call for a restoration target of at least 30 % of the EU’s land and seas, which should be implemented by each Member State consistently throughout their territory; considers that in addition to an overall restoration target, ecosystem-specific

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0220.

⁴ Global Biodiversity Outlook 5.

targets should be set, with a particular emphasis on ecosystems for the dual purposes of biodiversity restoration and climate change mitigation and adaptation; stresses that after restoration, no ecosystem degradation should be allowed;

Drivers of biodiversity loss

6. Underlines that the Biodiversity Strategy's actions must adequately tackle all five main direct drivers of change in nature: changes in land and sea use; direct exploitation of organisms; climate change; pollution; and invasive alien species;

Changes in land and sea use

7. Highlights that soil biodiversity is the basis for key ecological processes; notes with concern the increased soil degradation and the lack of specific EU legislation; calls on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal for the establishment of a common framework for the protection and sustainable use of soil that includes a specific decontamination target;
8. Recalls that the EU has committed to achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030, but that this target is unlikely to be achieved; calls on the Commission, therefore, to present an EU-level strategy on desertification and land degradation;
9. Calls on the Commission to set specific ambitious targets on urban biodiversity, nature-based solutions and green infrastructure and to develop a Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure (TEN-G) linked to the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N);

Direct exploitation of organisms

10. Expresses its support for the 2030 targets of bringing at least 25 % of agricultural land under organic farm management, which should become the norm in the long term, and ensuring that at least 10 % of agricultural land consists of high-diversity landscape features, which should be implemented at farm level, targets which should both be incorporated into EU legislation; considers it imperative that farmers receive support and training in the transition towards agroecological practices;
11. Stresses that all fishing activities must be subject to maximum sustainable yield levels, with zero tolerance of illegal fishing practices and the elimination of by-catches of sensitive species;
12. Insists that priority for protected areas must be environmental conservation and restoration and that no activity in these areas should undermine this goal; calls on the Commission to avoid future marine renewable energy developments and bottom-trawling fishing within Marine Protected Areas;
13. Underlines that the new EU Forest Strategy must be fully aligned with the Climate Law and the Biodiversity Strategy; calls for the inclusion in the Nature Restoration Plan of specific binding targets for the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems, which should also be incorporated into the Forest Strategy;
14. Stresses that the Union's tree planting initiatives should be based on proforestation, sustainable reforestation and the greening of urban areas; calls on the Commission to

ensure that these initiatives are carried out only in a manner compatible with and conducive to the biodiversity objectives;

15. Calls on the Commission to urgently present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on mandatory due diligence that ensures sustainable and deforestation-free value chains;

Climate change

16. Expresses its concern that the majority of the ranges of terrestrial species will decrease significantly in a 1.5 to 2°C scenario; highlights, therefore, the need to prioritise nature-based solutions in meeting climate mitigation goals and in adaptation strategies and to increase the protection of natural carbon sinks in the EU;
17. Calls on the Commission to prepare a long-term EU action plan on climate and biodiversity that improves coherence and interconnections for future actions, and integrates commitments under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement;

Pollution

18. Welcomes the Commission's targets of reducing the use of more hazardous and chemical pesticides by 50 %, the use of fertilisers by at least 20 % and nutrient losses by at least 50 % by 2030, which should be made binding; considers that the derogation envisaged in Article 53(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 should be clarified and must only be applied for health and environmental reasons;
19. Strongly regrets the decline of pollinators, which are a key indicator of the health of the environment; reiterates the position expressed in its resolution of 18 December 2019 on the EU Pollinators Initiative⁵ and calls for an urgent revision of the initiative;
20. Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy are fully reflected in the future Zero Pollution Action Plan, which should also address noise and light pollution;

Invasive alien species (IAS)

21. Regrets that the list of Union concern represents less than 6 % of IAS present in Europe; calls on the Commission to ensure proper coverage of IAS affecting threatened species on the EU list and to reinforce prevention by introducing mandatory risk assessments prior to the first import of non-native species and by adopting white lists by 2030 at the latest;

Funding, mainstreaming and governance framework

22. Calls on the Commission to ensure effective biodiversity mainstreaming and proofing across EU spending and programmes on the basis of the EU Taxonomy and the 'do no significant harm' principle; calls on the Commission to provide a comprehensive assessment of how the EUR 20 billion per year needed for nature could be mobilised, to

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0104.

make corresponding proposals for the Union's annual budget and to examine the need for a dedicated funding instrument for TEN-N; considers that efforts should be made to reach 10 % annual spending on biodiversity under the multiannual financial framework (MFF) as soon as possible from 2021 onwards;

23. Calls on the Commission to provide an assessment of all subsidies harmful to the environment with a view to their phasing out by 2030 at the latest; reiterates its calls for the reorientation of taxation systems towards an increased use of environmental taxation;
24. Highlights the need for a legally binding biodiversity governance framework, similar to the Climate Law, which steers a path to 2050 through a set of binding objectives, including targets for 2030 and the COP15 commitments, and which establishes a monitoring mechanism with smart indicators; calls on the Commission to submit a legal proposal to this end in 2022;
25. Recalls that Article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights reflects the principle of ensuring environmental protection in Union legislation; considers that the right to a healthy environment should be recognised in the EU Charter and that the Union should also advocate a similar right internationally;

Research and education

26. Calls on the Commission to reinforce biodiversity within Union youth programmes such as the European Voluntary Service, and to launch a Green Erasmus programme focused on restoration and conservation; reiterates its calls for a specific mission and funding dedicated to biodiversity within future research programmes;

International action and ocean governance

27. Recalls the position expressed in its resolution of 16 January 2020 on COP15⁶ on biodiversity and the need for a post-2020 binding agreement similar to the Paris Agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030;
28. Reiterates its call for a full ban on the trade in both raw and worked ivory to, from and within the EU, including 'pre-convention' ivory and rhino horns, and asks for similar restrictions for other endangered species, such as tigers;
29. Notes that marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980, affecting at least 267 species; calls on the Union to lead negotiations for an international agreement for plastic-free oceans by 2030;

Implementation and enforcement of nature legislation

30. Urges Member States to fully comply with the obligations set out in existing EU nature legislation and calls on the Commission to swiftly pursue infringement procedures to remedy all cases of non-compliance and to allocate sufficient resources in order to overcome the current delays;

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0015.

31. Underlines that the successful implementation of the strategy depends on the involvement of all actors and sectors; calls on the Commission to create a stakeholder platform for discussion and to ensure an inclusive, equitable and just transition;

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32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Biodiversity is the basis for the functioning of ecosystems and life on our planet. The supply of clean water and air, the provision of essential resources and human and animal health are dependent on biodiversity and a healthy environment.

Unfortunately, despite their importance, the latest biodiversity reports paint a depressing picture. The IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services¹ warns that one million species are in danger of extinction and the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report² reveals that none of the Aichi Targets have been met. Similarly, the *Era of Pandemics* report³ warns that the alarming degradation of ecosystems and human beings' current relationship with nature is increasing the risk of pandemics.

We therefore need to change our interaction with nature, our society and our economy, starting by limiting human activities that lead to the transformation and destruction of ecosystems. At European level, the Biodiversity Strategy and the European Green Deal are the basis for this, while at international level the new global framework to be adopted at the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be a great opportunity – perhaps the last opportunity – to reverse the process.

Drivers of biodiversity loss

While there are many factors that lead to biodiversity loss, scientists have highlighted five main direct drivers: changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasion of alien species. If the situation is to be remedied, these drivers need to be properly addressed.

Changes in land and sea use

Although soil biodiversity is the basis for key ecological processes, there is no specific legislation in the EU to protect soil; rather, agricultural, industrial and water regulations have been fragmented in order to preserve it. The Commission therefore needs to put forward a legislative proposal establishing a common framework for the protection and sustainable use of soil.

Desertification must also be tackled. The EU is party to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, under which it has committed to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030; an EU-level strategy on desertification and land degradation is therefore needed to deliver on this commitment.

In addition, urbanisation and its effects on biodiversity need to be addressed. Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure make cities more resilient, hence a strategic approach is needed to improve the use of funding and its integration into EU policies and legislation.

¹ <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>

² <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>

³ <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

Likewise, given the importance of green infrastructure for the connectivity of protected areas, a Trans-European Green Infrastructure Network (TEN-G), linked to the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N), is necessary.

Direct exploitation of organisms

In the context of the Aichi Targets, the EU had undertaken to halve the annual loss of natural forests by 2020, although a new FAO report is warning that another 25 years will be needed to achieve this goal.⁴ Forests are unique ecosystems that host 60 000 species of trees and almost a third of the earth's amphibians, birds and mammals, and are invaluable in natural processes such as carbon absorption or temperature regulation. All primary and old-growth forests in the EU must therefore be rigorously protected.

Forests are a common heritage of the Union⁵ and the future Forest Strategy must therefore be aligned with the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy. Specific targets should be set for the restoration of forests, as only 15% of forest habitats of European interest have favourable conservation status.

The impact of farming on biodiversity is undeniable, as is the importance of the agricultural sector in the EU. Together with the fisheries sector, the agricultural sector will have to undergo profound changes in order to adapt to the new models needed for the green transition. This will require support and training.

It is imperative to achieve the targets of a 25% use of agricultural land for organic farming and the return of at least 10% of agricultural land to highly diverse landscape features. Both of these targets need to be incorporated into legislation to become legally binding.

Despite all the efforts already made by the fisheries sector in Europe, further efforts are needed to ensure that all fishing activities are subject to maximum sustainable yield levels, to avoid incidental catches of sensitive species and to have fisheries management measures in all marine protected areas, for which the primary objective should be the conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

In terms of production and consumption, more than 90% of global biodiversity loss is caused by the extraction and processing of material resources. If we continue our production and consumption patterns, we will be consuming as if we were three planets in 2050.⁶ The EU must therefore set a target to reduce the use of primary raw materials.

Climate change

According to the IPBES report, 16% of species are at risk of extinction in a 4.3°C warming scenario and the decline in species would be drastic even in a 1.5°C to 2°C scenario.

Marine and terrestrial ecosystems absorb around 60% of global anthropogenic emissions per year, and nature-based solutions will be responsible for 37% of climate change mitigation by 2030.⁷

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8642en/CA8642EN.pdf>

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=ecli:ECLI:EU:C:2018:255>

⁶ [A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe](#)

⁷ https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/ipbes_7_10_add.1_en_1.pdf

This shows that biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are interlinked and need to be tackled together. In this respect, a joint long-term climate and biodiversity action plan is needed that will improve the coherence and interconnection of future measures and integrate the EU's commitments under the CBD and the Paris Agreement.

Pollution

An integrated approach that also includes light and noise pollution is needed to tackle polluting factors such as emissions, chemicals or nutrients and their impact on biodiversity. In order to achieve this, the future Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the actions under the Chemicals strategy needs to be aligned with the Biodiversity Strategy.

In order to make legislative proposals binding, the Commission should set out the objectives to achieve a 50% reduction in chemical pesticides and more hazardous pesticides, a 20% reduction in fertilisers and a 50% reduction in nutrient losses by 2030. In addition, the derogations listed under Article 53(1) of Regulation 1107/2009 should be exceptional and the Commission should clarify the terms *emergency situation*, *special circumstances*, *reasonable means* and *limited and controlled use*.

Invasive alien species

There are currently 354 species threatened by invasive species in the EU and the 66 species on the EU's list represent only 6% of those present in Europe, which does not correspond to the scale of the threat they pose to biodiversity.

The cost of monitoring and remedying the damage caused by these species is estimated at around EUR 12 billion per year in the EU, making preventive measures the most cost-effective.⁸ For this reason, the Commission should carry out mandatory risk assessments prior to the first import of non-native species and adopt white lists to identify species that would only be traded and held within the EU.

The Commission, together with the Member States, should also prioritise plans to prevent, control or eradicate invasive species that harm critically endangered species and work to ensure that the EU list adequately covers invasive species that affect endangered species and those in the early stages of invasion or species not yet present in the EU.

Conservation and restoration

By 2030, at least 30% of marine and terrestrial areas should be protected in accordance with science-based criteria and biodiversity needs and one third of these areas should be strictly protected, covering all natural carbon sinks in the EU. These objectives should be included in legislation.

Similarly, at least 30% of degraded ecosystems should be restored by 2030. The United Nations has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. In this context, the EU Nature Restoration Plan should be ambitious, implemented considering the entire territory of each Member State and focus on ecosystems that fulfil the dual purpose of restoring biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/docs/ias-brochure-en-web.pdf>

Funding, mainstreaming and governance framework

The Commission has estimated that EUR 20 billion per year is needed to implement the Biodiversity Strategy's actions, although a thorough assessment of how this amount would be mobilised is needed.

Biodiversity proofing should be mainstreamed across all EU spending and programmes on the basis of the EU Taxonomy, with the precautionary and 'polluter pays' principles taking precedence in EU actions, taxation systems reoriented towards an increased use of environmental taxation and subsidies harmful to the environment eliminated by 2030 at the latest.

There is also a need for a legally binding biodiversity governance framework, similar to the Climate Law, which steers a path through a set of binding objectives for 2030 and 2050, and the commitments made at COP15. The Commission should make a legislative proposal to that effect in 2022.

Moreover, in contrast to some national laws, there is no recognition at European and international level of the individual right to a healthy environment. Article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights only reflects the general principle of environmental protection in EU legislation but does not declare it a substantive right. The Commission should strive to fill this gap at European level and also promote international recognition of this human right.

Research and education

Education and the role of the younger generation will be vital in reversing biodiversity loss. In this regard, it would be a good idea to launch a Green Erasmus programme focused on projects to conserve and restore ecosystems for young people.

In relation to research, in addition to national programmes and the EU's R&D programme, other funds should allocate a higher share of the budget to research and innovation, especially in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, to support their transition to sustainable practices.

International action and ocean governance

The Global Nature Agreement reached at the 15th CBD COP will be instrumental in saving nature. As with the Paris Agreement, it should be legally binding, set limits beyond which biodiversity loss will be irreversible and set out ambitious targets, such as protecting at least 30% of the planet and restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030.

Likewise, it is worth noting the potential of the trade and development policy to protect biodiversity and the environment outside Europe. In this regard, the EU should advocate binding sustainable development chapters in trade agreements and work towards halting global deforestation by presenting a legislative proposal on deforestation-free chains to prevent the import of products that have contributed to it.

Moreover, marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980; as a result, the EU should lead negotiations for an international agreement on plastics to ensure that our seas and oceans are plastic-free by 2030.

Implementation and enforcement of legislation

At present, nature-related legislation is not sufficiently implemented or enforced. Environmental infringement procedures are also beset by unjustified delays that obstruct the implementation of the legislation; the Commission should therefore closely monitor the situation and allocate sufficient resources to overcome such delays.

Finally, the successful implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy will depend on the participation and involvement of all actors. A platform is needed where all stakeholders can discuss their ideas and to ensure that the transition is inclusive, equitable and just.