



MINISTÈRE
DE LA TRANSITION
ÉCOLOGIQUE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



Strasbourg Declaration

Strasbourg - 25 February 2022

"Keys to success"

1. *We, the Ministers of the European Union (EU), the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, meeting in Strasbourg at the Ministerial Conference on "30 years of the Natura 2000 network", having taken note of the summary of the workshops bringing together representatives of civil society, European Member States, European institutions and regional conventions, adopt the following declaration.*
2. *The Fitness check of EU nature legislation in 2016 showed that, while achieving all their objectives and realising their full potential will depend on substantial improvements in their implementation, the Birds and Habitats Directives remain relevant and appropriate for tackling the main pressures on habitats and species.*
3. *We underline our common commitment to this essential and recognised legislative basis to contribute to limiting the biodiversity loss caused by human activities.*
4. *We reaffirm our shared commitment to work towards the necessary and substantial improvement of its implementation and enforcement, working in partnership with different stakeholders in Member States and across the EU to bring nature back into our lives and ensure that Europe's biodiversity is on the path to recovery by 2030.*
5. *In 30 years, the EU has established the world's largest continent-wide network of state-coordinated protected areas, demonstrating its capacity for action. A key objective for all stakeholders should now be to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Natura 2000 Network in achieving the overarching conservation objectives.*

6. *The European Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE) was created in 1992, when the Habitats Directive was adopted. The LIFE Programme continues to provide an important support for the implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network.*
7. *The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has stated that, if transformative changes are made and there is engagement from all actors in society today, it is still possible to achieve the European and global ambitions to conserve and restore biodiversity. These ambitions will be reaffirmed at the 15th conference of the parties to the Convention of biological diversity. They will also contribute to limiting and adapting to climate change and to advance towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.*
8. *Looking ahead, the Council of the EU declared the urgency of action in its October 2020 conclusions endorsing the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 "Bringing nature back into our lives".*
9. *As highlighted in the conclusions of the Council, to meet these challenges, strengthening the implementation of the nature Directives, alone, will not be enough. We welcome as an essential basis for political and societal discussions the objectives of the strategy, and particularly those concerning :*
 - *the EU nature restoration plan to restore terrestrial and marine ecosystems,*
 - *the strengthening of the network of protected areas, to ensure the protection of at least 30% of the EU's land area and a 30% of its sea area,*
 - *the achievement of the overarching conservation objectives of the protected areas in an effective manner,**in the context of climate change.*
10. *Our ambition is to mobilise all the stakeholders involved in the Natura 2000 network, and protected areas and, beyond that, citizens and local actors. Together, we want to amplify the most effective actions that are best adapted to the challenges of the different territories and local conditions. We must strengthen our ability to illustrate the progress made and we agree that the mobilisation and development of scientific knowledge will be essential for this.*
11. *In order to live up to these ambitions, we need to significantly strengthen the implementation and enforcement of EU nature protection legislation, reduce the pressures on nature, and support the evolution towards practices compatible with the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We also need to further explore, promote and recognize the opportunities that Natura 2000 offers for sustainable economic activities as a basis for local development.*
12. *This will involve simplifying and facilitating access to funding as well as intensifying the earmarking of funds for biodiversity to the extent of the needs identified, in full accordance with the existing ambition set by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission to devote 7.5% of annual expenditure under the Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) to biodiversity objectives in 2024 and 10% of such expenditure in 2026 and 2027.*
13. *Furthermore, in order to learn from the LIFE programme and other funding instruments, we recommend a reflection on options of more effective funding for biodiversity at European level, without prejudging future negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027 and the programmes thereunder.*
14. *Ahead of the crucial 15th Conference of the parties to the Convention of the Biological Diversity, we call on national, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, businesses, scientists, young people and all citizens to join one of the major global coalitions working to raise awareness about the need to protect biodiversity.*

15. *We encourage all countries to join the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, and we invite all national parks, nature reserves and other protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites, museums of all disciplines, research centres and universities around the world to join the Global Coalition "United for Biodiversity", initiated by the European Commission, to make our voices heard in the face of the ecological crisis.*
16. *Building on our work with the Natura 2000 network, we commit to further increase our ambition and efforts, at all levels and without delay, to ensure that all ecosystems in Europe are conserved restored, resilient and sufficiently protected by 2050.*
