



Shaping a sustainable future for Europe



The IUCN European Regional Office



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The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network with more than 1,200 government and NGO member organizations (approximately 335 in the European Region), and around 15,000 volunteer scientists (around 5,000 in the European Region) in over 160 countries¹.

The IUCN European Regional Office² provides regional and global services to the organisation. Based in Brussels, the Office provides vital linkages for IUCN (its Members, National Committees, scientific Commissions and the global Secretariat) to key EU institutions and other public and private actors with regional headquarters in Brussels.

Over the years, the IUCN European Regional Office has built close relationships both at working level and at the political level with the European Commission (especially DG Environment, DG Research and DG Development and Cooperation), the European Parliament, permanent representations of IUCN's state members in Brussels as well as environmental NGOs and other IUCN members.

With a strong focus on biodiversity, nature conservation, climate change, ecosystem services and Nature-Based Solutions, the IUCN European Regional Office provides valuable input into ongoing policy debates in these areas, as well as a broad platform for discussions thanks to its varied membership.

1. Informing EU policy making

- Promote IUCN's mission and ensure that its knowledge and programmes are reflected in the decisions of the EU institutions
- Provide a policy exchange platform for IUCN Members

2. Representing IUCN in Brussels

- The European Regional Office formally represents IUCN to the EU institutions
- Engage in partnerships with other Brussels-based organizations and represent IUCN at relevant events

3. Supporting resource mobilisation

- Support IUCN's Members and Secretariat in resource mobilisation
- Identify EU funding opportunities and channel information to IUCN Secretariat and Members

4. Working with European Members and Commission experts to implement the IUCN programme

Activities



The IUCN European Red List of Threatened Species™

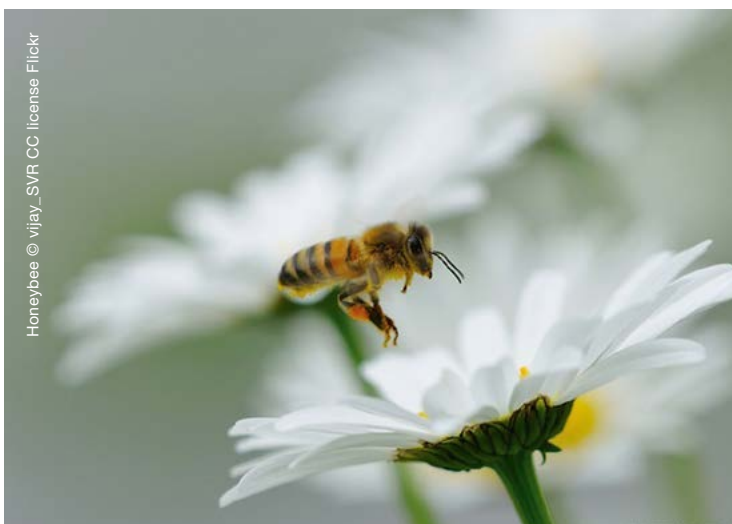
Over the last 50 years, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has made a significant contribution to guiding global conservation action and policy decisions. The IUCN European Red List is a review of the conservation status of European species according to IUCN regional Red Listing guidelines. It identifies those species that are threatened with extinction at the European level, so that appropriate conservation action can be taken to improve their status.

Funded by the European Commission since 2006, the European Red List is compiled by IUCN's Global Species Programme and the IUCN European Regional Office in collaboration with the Species Survival Commission and other partners and experts. To date, European Red Lists have been completed for more than 9,700 species, including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, dragonflies, butterflies, freshwater molluscs, vascular plants, bees, marine and freshwater fishes, birds and selected species of saproxylic beetles and terrestrial molluscs. In addition IUCN has just started up a project to assess all European grasshoppers and crickets.

The European Red List has developed into a powerful tool to inform policy decisions on biodiversity conservation and the protection of Europe's natural resources. It is also an instrument for policy-makers to measure progress towards achieving the targets set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which aims at halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2020.

The European Red List of Habitats

The European Red List of Habitats, inspired by the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, aims to provide an assessment of the threat status of all European habitat types, including the Annex I types under the EU Habitats Directive. This assessment will provide a substantial contribution to the assessment of the state of ecosystems



and of their services while also identifying priority sites for restoration. This can then be used to measure progress towards meeting the targets of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, and also to guide conservation action. The European Red List of Habitats, combined with the IUCN European Red List of Species, will provide a powerful tool for assessing the status of European biodiversity. In addition, the outcomes of this project will contribute to the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems and IUCN will continue to work closely with the European Commission in further developing this IUCN global standard.

Nature Based Solutions

Europe faces enormous challenges, such as mitigating climate change, enhancing resilience to natural disasters, ensuring safe and nutritious food to more than 500 million people, safeguarding water and air quality, protecting biodiversity, strengthening the economy, and dealing with increasing urbanization and human health issues.

Nature can play a strong role in tackling these challenges and nature's solutions are often at our fingertips. Using nature to respond to some of the most pressing challenges of our time can be cost-effective, help safeguard the environment and halt biodiversity loss, and provide numerous economic and social benefits. Nature based solutions can improve health and well-being of EU citizens, and also be a key driver in stimulating jobs, investment and innovation and preserving natural resources and biodiversity.

As the pioneer of the concept of 'Nature-Based Solutions', IUCN engages with policy makers at EU, regional and local levels, but also with scientists, planners, practitioners, landowners, business and civil society to promote the benefits of nature-based solutions and their potential to complement traditional conservation action.



EU Overseas Countries and Territories

IUCN is the only conservation organization dedicating an entire programme of activities to the EU Overseas.

The largest part of the EU's biodiversity (70%) is located in 34 overseas entities, linked to six EU member states (Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK). Together, these nine Outermost Regions (ORs) and 25 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) cover the world's largest marine territory and a land area equivalent to that of continental Europe.

However, no specific European programme or financial mechanism is yet dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity in the EU Overseas. A Preparatory Action for a Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST) was launched in 2010 aiming to support the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation in these areas. This Preparatory Action, adopted by the European Parliament, resulted in 18 projects supported.

The international conference of Guadeloupe (2014) reiterated the need for a dedicated mechanism to sustain conservation work in the EU Overseas. The BEST consortium, which is led

by IUCN and includes other key partners in conservation, is working to set up ecosystem profiles and regional investment strategies that will be critical for such a future mechanism.

Local and Regional Authorities

Many decisions affecting biodiversity are taken at the subnational level, and IUCN strongly supports efforts by cities and local and regional authorities towards biodiversity conservation.

Subnational governments (at urban, local and regional levels) play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); they nevertheless require increased and sustained support for knowledge and capacity building and exchange of best practices, as well as financially.

For IUCN, strengthening engagement with subnational authorities and other key stakeholders at the local level, is important to raise awareness of the values of ecosystem services and to integrate these values in urban and regional planning and development.

The IUCN Brussels Office participated in the Urban Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (URBES) project, funded by Biodiversa, which helped urban planners and decision makers identify ways of integrating nature in city planning and using nature based solutions to address challenges. In this project, IUCN contributed to an extensive communication and capacity building programme, developed in cooperation with ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability).

Since 2015, the IUCN European Regional Office (with support from the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province in South Korea) is leading the initiative 'World Environmental Hubs' to create a framework for evaluating and certifying cities and regions which place environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and ecosystem services at the heart of urban and regional development strategies.



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Invasive Alien Species

The EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) entered into force on 1 January 2015, focusing on the prevention of the entry of these species into Europe, early warning/rapid response, and effective and coordinated management. The Regulation will mainly focus on a subset of IAS (the “Union’s list”) and will require national governments to work together to detect IAS of high concern and coordinate management measures. A Scientific Forum, made up of scientific representatives of the EU Member States, will help to ensure that the regulation is based on the best available knowledge and science in order to ensure its effectiveness.

IUCN’s Species Survival Commission organizes the Invasive Species Specialist Group, a global network of science and policy experts working

to reduce threats to natural systems and native species by increasing the awareness of IAS and examining ways to prevent, control or eradicate them.

IUCN will provide scientific knowledge to contribute to the process of developing the “Union’s list” and ensure that it includes the most damaging species.

Large Carnivores

Historically, large carnivores have seen their numbers and distribution decline dramatically, mainly as a consequence of human activity. However, in the last few decades, these animals have made a dramatic recovery across Europe and numbers have now reached around 40,000, with most of the populations stable or increas-



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ing. As many as 21 EU countries are now home to at least one of these species. Although this is considered a great conservation success, such increases in species numbers have also caused some conflicts with local people and stakeholders who share the same landscape in some areas of Europe, notably farmers and hunters.

IUCN's European Regional Office is one of the stakeholders represented on the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, which was launched by the European Commission in June 2014 to facilitate constructive dialogue among key stakeholders including farmers, conservationists, landowners and hunters. It aims to find commonly agreed upon solutions to conflicts arising from people living and working in close proximity to these large animals.

Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

The decision to develop and adopt Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one of the most important outcomes of the 2012 Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, aiming to guide sustainable global development over the next fifteen years (2015-2030). While building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at eradicating poverty in developing countries, the SDGs are universal, i.e. applicable to both developed and developing countries, and cover many more issues related to sustainable development.

The EU is committed to the SDGs and has taken on the role of one of the "driving forces behind mobilizing action internally and world-

wide". In December 2014, the EU Council adopted an ambitious set of Council Conclusions on a transformative, overarching post-2015 agenda in which the EU Member States agree that, amongst other issues, meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will contribute significantly to broader global sustainable development priorities.

IUCN engages closely with the EU institutions in stressing the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), and ensuring that the environmental dimension remains strong and integrated within the goals. In particular, IUCN advocates the adoption of nature based solutions and the effective governance of natural resources to ensure that the SDGs are truly sustainable.

Climate Change and Forest Landscape Restoration

Restoring and protecting Europe's ecosystems play an essential role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and also in helping adapt to the consequences of climate change.

In this context, IUCN actively engages in the debate on ways to properly include LULUCF emissions (land use, land-use change and forestry) in the carbon accounting of the EU and promotes the approach of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), which uses biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall climate adaptation strategy.

IUCN collaborates closely with the German government on the Bonn Challenge of committing to restoring 150 million hectares of forest landscape globally by 2020. IUCN's research also points at the huge potential of Europe to deliver considerable CO₂ abatement. Our findings will be further refined to inform decision making.

European Habitats Forum

The European Habitats Forum (EHF) assembles leading European nature conservation organisations to provide advice on the implementation and future development of EU biodiversity policy, including improving integration into sectoral policies. To ensure the adequate implementation of the Strategy and that Europe continues stepping up its efforts for biodiversity, the EHF seeks to influence EU policy and action through discussion, advocacy and joint initiatives.

The IUCN European Regional Office provides the Secretariat for the Forum which now consists of 25 members.

Science-Policy Interface

Successful conservation requires sound priority setting and decision-making that is based on the best available science. The IUCN continually strives to support the integration of new areas of relevant science into policy-making, and IUCN's science-based efforts have supported many conservation successes and increased global awareness of biodiversity and its importance. The IUCN European Regional Office has provided science-policy communications support to a broad range of projects in this field.



¹ As of June, 2015, at the global level there are approximately: 88 State Members and 123 Government Agencies. In the European region, there are a total of 335 members, including 21 State Members, 34 Government Agencies, and 280 NGO Members. There are 15 State Members in the EU. Additionally, there are approximately 5000 Commission experts in the European region.

² The IUCN European region includes all EU Member States plus Iceland, Turkey, Norway, Switzerland, Israel, Andorra, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Monaco and the Vatican. The IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Belgrade covers the remaining European countries.



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