

Outcomes of the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 - What do they mean for Europe?

We live in a time of tremendous change, the nature and extent of which is the subject of intense debate and attention around the world. At the heart of this discussion is the clash between meeting the immediate needs of humanity versus the long-term impacts of these demands on the planet's capacity to support life.

To address these challenges, the IUCN World Conservation Congress has over the past few decades, contributed to setting the scene for key international conservation processes and treaties, such as the World Conservation Strategy, CITES, Ramsar, World Heritage and the Convention on Biological Diversity¹.

The European Union plays a major role in contributing to these international conservation processes and agreements. As the world's largest development aid donor, the European Union has a broad global reach, and its policies have a direct impact on biodiversity and ecosystems worldwide. Europe's tremendous influence on the global conservation agenda is also evident within the IUCN Constituency, which includes more than 367 European Members, of which 15 are State Members and 34 are Government Agencies from the EU.

This paper aims to provide an overview of the key outcomes from the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 and how they link to the EU environmental agenda. It provides a basis for further discussions and analyses at the high-level event 'Outcomes of the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 – what do they mean for Europe?' hosted by the IUCN European Regional Office, in collaboration with the Slovakian Presidency of the Council of the EU on 7 November 2016.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016

Held every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress is the world's largest and most democratic conservation forum. In 2016, the IUCN Congress took place in Hawai'i from the 1st to the 10th September. Over 10,000 leaders from government, civil society, indigenous communities, faith and spiritual traditions, the private sector and academia gathered to discuss and vote on key conservation issues and elect leaders to take these issues forward over the next four years.

The theme of the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 was 'Planet at the Crossroads' to reflect the serious choices and actions the world needs to make to reverse environmental declines and secure a healthy, livable planet.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 built on the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs), the Promise of Sydney (World Parks Congress 2014), Aichi Biodiversity Targets and other international agreements to find common ground in a spirit of partnership and collaboration.

The Congress concluded with the adoption of IUCN Global Programme 2017-2020, the Hawai'i Commitments as well as 100 Resolutions voted on by governments and NGO's.

¹http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/resolutions_eng_web.pdf

The IUCN Global Programme 2017-2020 – and the upcoming IUCN European Work Programme 2017-2020

The IUCN Global Programme 2017-2020 was developed in close collaboration and consultation with Members prior to the Congress. The Programme includes three priority areas:

- Valuing and conserving nature
- Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources
- Deploying nature-based solutions to societal challenges

Following the approval of this Global Programme, the IUCN European Regional Office is now consulting with European Members on the IUCN European Work Programme, which will be based on and contribute to the Global Programme, following the same structure and format.

The Hawai'i Commitments

The Hawai'i Commitments² were shaped by the debates and deliberations that took place during the IUCN Congress 2016 and are a result of comments submitted by the 10,000 participants who attended the event. In order to address the challenges of a 'Planet at the Crossroads' and cultivate a 'Culture of Nature', the document highlights the following issues:

- Linking Spirituality, Religion, Culture and Conservation
- Engage and Empower Youth
- The Challenge of Sustaining the Global Food Supply and Conserving Nature
- The Challenge of Preserving the Health of the World Ocean
- The Challenge of Ending Wildlife Trafficking
- The Challenge of Engaging with the Private Sector
- The Challenge of Climate Change

The Hawai'i Commitments also stress the roles of Indigenous peoples and women from local communities as critical to successfully implementing the Paris Agreement. The following table outlines how these commitments translate into the European context.

Hawai'i Commitment	Global 'solutions' outlined in document	Applying the Commitment within the context of Europe
The Challenge of Sustaining the Global Food Supply and Conserving Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase the cost effectiveness of food production, reduce food loss, decrease waste, change food consumption preferences and ensure sustainable management of water resources. • Need to create a 'roadmap' to transform our complex food production/consumption systems\ to avoid degrading biodiversity and ecosystem services. 	The review / evaluation of the current CAP and design of the future CAP should consider these commitments; towards a European food production/consumption system which ensures biodiversity and ecosystem services, and ending of perverse subsidies.

²https://portals.iucn.org/congress/sites/congress/files/EN%20Navigating%20Island%20Earth%20-%20Hawaii%20Commitments_FINAL.PDF

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to strengthen the governance system managing food production system. 	
The Challenge of Preserving the Health of the World Ocean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total, the area of marine protected areas now exceeds that of land under protection, including the expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (1,508,670 km²), or the creation of Taini Atea, a marine management area covering the entire French Polynesian economic exclusive zone (5,000,000 km² area). • There is a need to link methods and tools, e.g. fisheries and coastal zone management, to solve the multiple, interacting challenges facing oceans. 	This commitment can help boost the efforts to complete the marine part of the EU Natura 2000 network.
The Challenge of Ending Wildlife Trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need better protection of wildlife populations, both through law and strengthened enforcement, behavioral change to reduce demand for these illegal products, and enhanced cooperation at all levels, including greater involvement of local communities. • Require an integrated approach that addresses the whole supply chain of illegal products. Real outcomes are only possible by addressing the needs of local people, in order for the benefits of a legal economy to outweigh those of the illegal economy. 	Support to an enhanced implementation of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking
The Challenge of Engaging with the Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase investment in conservation action from both public and private sources. Economic and legal systems are needed that reward communities and companies for actions and investments that protect and restore nature. • Economic activity that destroys and degrades nature should be viewed as an economic cost. • A precondition for attracting private investment is that conservation opportunities exist at scale. Regulatory and policy regimes that also create a level playing field for business operations and that incentivize private investment to promote conservation are necessary. 	Improve the engagement of business to deliver on the EU Biodiversity Strategy and global goals for conservation and sustainable development by developing natural capital approaches and policy and valuation of ecosystem services.
The Challenge of Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature-based Solutions are widely recognised as an essential component of a comprehensive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation. • Essential to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement is building trust across the full range of stakeholders, especially indigenous peoples and women in local communities. 	<p>Integrating ecosystem approaches in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and developing evidence and promoting best practices to reduce climate related risks</p> <p>Support an EU contribution towards the restoration of 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030 through the extended Bonn Challenge.</p>

Resolutions from the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016

A selection of Resolutions³ from the Congress deemed particularly relevant for Europe is outlined in the following table:

Resolution	Motion number	Relevant EU debates/Initiatives
Towards an IUCN standard classification of the impact of invasive alien species	14	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation –Implementation of the IAS Regulation
Protected areas and other areas important for biodiversity in relation to environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development	26	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation –Implementation of the Nature Directives
Incorporating urban dimensions of conservation into the work of IUCN	28	Urban Agenda for the EU, EU Biodiversity Strategy
Identifying Key Biodiversity Areas for safeguarding biodiversity	44	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation –Implementation of the Nature Directives
Securing the future for global peatlands	46	CAP – future review / evaluation
Advancing conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction	49	Debate on the future of EU conservation
Promoting regional approaches to tackle the global problem of marine debris (litter)	52	EU Circular Economy Package – input to the Strategy on Plastics
Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation	53	Debate on the future of EU conservation
IUCN response to the Paris Climate Change Agreement	59	EU Climate Action – EU action needs to be in line with 2°C target as a minimum and analysis is needed for what 1.5 means,
Natural Capital	63	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation – MAES debate, and Business and Biodiversity Platform.
IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets	64	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation – No Net Loss Initiative.
Integration of nature-based solutions into strategies to combat climate change	68	EU Adaptation Strategy, EU Biodiversity Strategy
Financing for biodiversity projects in the European Union's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories	70	EU Development Cooperation Policy
Strengthening business engagement in biodiversity preservation	73	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation – EU Business and Biodiversity Platform
Strengthening corporate biodiversity measurement, valuation and reporting	74	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation – EU Business and Biodiversity Platform
Defining Nature-based Solutions	77	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation / EU Climate Action nature-based solutions for Climate Change, Forest-Landscape Restoration pledges for mitigation and fulfilling EU restoration target (target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020), Ecosystems based adaptation in support of the implementation of the EU climate adaptation strategy
Reinforcement of non-regression in environmental law and policy	82	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 implementation – Legislative discussions and evaluations, such as the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives

³ Motions as discussed and voted in Hawai'i can be found at: <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/assembly/motions>

Additional outcomes from the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 relevant for Europe

- Launch of Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation: In an effort to address an estimated US \$200-300 billion annual funding gap in conservation, the Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation (CPIC) was launched, including partners such as Credit Suisse, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and IUCN⁴. The European Commission and EU Member States could explore opportunities to join forces with this coalition to improve conservation finance in Europe, which still poses a challenge for implementing crucial policies such as Natura 2000, Green Infrastructure Implementation and Ecosystem Restoration.
- Launch of the Key Biodiversity Areas Partnership: eleven of the world's leading nature conservation organisations (including GEF, Birdlife International, WWF, Conservation International, IUCN and others) launched an ambitious new partnership to map, monitor and conserve the most important places for life on earth⁵. The Key Biodiversity Areas can support the achievement of the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, in particular by enhancing the implementation of the EU Nature Directives.
- The Honolulu Challenge is a call from IUCN together with the host community in Hawai'i, including experts, governmental and intergovernmental representatives, NGOs, and protected area managers, for greater action on addressing invasive alien species. The Honolulu Challenges includes a series of recommendations for action⁶, which could be relevant to and enhance the implementation of the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species.

⁴<https://www.iucn.org/news/new-coalition-launches-scale-private-conservation-investment-iucn-world-conservation-congress>

⁵<http://birdlaa2.memset.net/kba/kba-partners>

⁶<https://cms.iucn.org/theme/species/our-work/invasive-species/honolulu-challenge-invasive-alien-species>

