CC Heine Christiansen

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Policy Paper | 08.12.2021

EU nature restoration law

Ecological Transition Cluster Paper

The biodiversity crisis is upon us. One million species are threatened with extinction and the vast majority will be affected within the current human generation . The UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration started on 5 June 2021, acknowledging that the global sustainable development goals can only be met by 2030 if the global destruction of ecosystems is stopped, their conservation is ensured and their restoration is initiated. A global target for the restoration of degraded ecosystems is envisaged to be adopted at the COP15 international conference on biodiversity in Kunming in 2022.

To achieve the international targets, an ambitious European contribution is essential. On the one hand, because we obviously are in an economically favourable position, on the other hand, because we are an enormous driver of species extinction. After India, Europe is the region with the least-intact biodiversity according to the IPBES. This is without even taking into account that our consumption habits fuel ecosystem destruction on other continents.

In addition to the intrinsic value of nature, the linear relationship between biodiversity decline and the deterioration of ecosystem services has been clearly demonstrated. A turnaround is therefore an advantage in securing livelihoods and economies by protecting the basic necessities for human existence: clean air, drinkable water, fertile soils, healthy oceans.

To this end, one key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is the commitment by the European Commission to lay down legally binding EU nature restoration targets. The analysis of the European Environment Agency (EEA)’s report on the State of the Nature clearly shows that the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 have not been achieved . In fact, not only are improvements missing at large scale, but populations and habitats are in free fall. This is particularly dramatic for formerly common species like farmland birds, but also for marine species and almost all habitat types except rocky habitats. The urgency raised by various scientific analyses cannot be ignored: measures and prospects must reflect the intensity of the problem.

This is the first real nature legislation since more than two decades. We call on the European Commission to present an ambitious proposal to ensure that the biodiversity crisis can be tackled effectively. To put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, we need to step up the protection and restoration of nature. This should be done by improving and widening our network of protected areas and by developing an

ambitious EU Nature Restoration Plan.

This paper will focus on the following key aspects for the upcoming legislation:

I. A clear definition of restoration
II. Ambitious binding targets for the restoration law
III. Supporting measures to achieve our goal
IV. Financing for the restoration objectives

- READ THE FULL PAPER FROM THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION CLUSTER

Recommended

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sebastian-johann



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04.11.2026

Press release

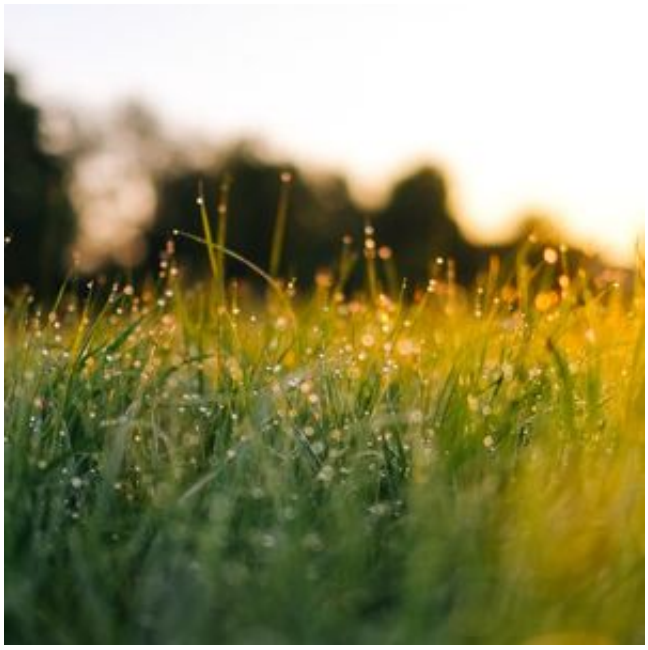
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Press release

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23.09.2025

Responsible MEPs



Jutta Paulus

Member

Contact person



Joanna Sprackett

Advisor on Environmental Issues

Attached documents

EU nature restoration law

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