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Press release | 23.11.2022

COP15 must be a turning point for the protection of nature

Biodiversity

Today, Members of the European Parliament debated the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montréal, Canada. The Greens/EFA Group call for swift action to protect species and habitats, including the rewetting of wetlands such as peatlands and the protection of rainforests and oceans. For COP15 to be a success, it needs to commit to the effective protection of at least 30% of all land and sea areas in a new UN agreement on biodiversity. This needs to be accompanied by robust funding, support for less developed countries and a mechanism to implement the targets by 2030.

Ville Niinistö MEP, Greens/EFA delegate to COP15, member of the Environment Committee and member of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee, comments:

"While we just came back from the COP27 on the climate crisis, the COP15 on the biodiversity crisis is still ahead of us. Both issues are crucial to our survival. They are interlinked and one cannot be solved without the other. Both the IPCC and the IBPES agree that to stop the biodiversity loss, we need to restore valuable ecosystems, increase sustainable agricultural and forestry practices and cut off environmentally harmful subsidies. This helps both climate and nature but is not a substitute for necessary drastic reduction of global emissions and the phase-out of coal, oil and gas.

"We need the COP15 to set ambitious targets that protect at least 30 percent of all land and sea areas. But ambitious targets means nothing if not all, on all levels - international, EU, national and local, do their part to ensure those targets are also reached."

More:

Global warming is one driver of accelerated species extinction, whereas the main drivers are the destruction of habitats and intensive agriculture. Ecosystems provide habitats for species, sequester carbon and regulate the water balance, providing important protection against droughts and floods. Scientists warn that the world is on the brink of the first mass extinction since humans have inhabited planet Earth. According to an UN report published in 2019 out of an estimated grand total of eight million species on earth, as much as one million species are threatened with extinction, many within decades.

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Responsible MEPs



Ville Niinistö

Member

Contact person



Helena Hellstrom

Harassment Prevention and Response Officer

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