



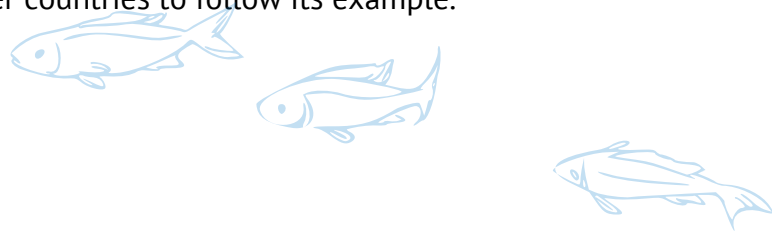
In Review: EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

In May of 2020, the European Commission (EC) published the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, setting an ambitious mission to protect Europe's ecosystems and endangered species. The plan is designed to be a milestone for global conservation and proclaims that by 2050 all the world's ecosystems must be restored, resilient, and adequately protected. This past year allowed the Commission time to re-examine past errors and improve upon frameworks. The Commission is aware of the need for immediate conservation action and encourages large-scale efforts to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy's goals. The Biodiversity Strategy addresses issues at the forefront of conservation; execution will be dependent on the ability of the European Union (EU) to fully mobilize the strategy across the continent. Cooperation and collaboration between Member States is the key to making actionable change.

One of the main goals of the Strategy is to protect and restore the EU's natural capital, encompassing aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, by forming a coherent Trans-European Nature Network. In practice, this would protect at least 30% of land and 30% of ocean systems. It builds upon past strategies by strengthening regulatory systems to increase accountability and sets up universal standards for protection, restoration, and monitoring plans. **Moving forward, it is important that the Commission can measure its failure and success; performance measures must be designed in a way that shows true impact and change.** Importantly, the Commission furthermore requests that Member States ensure there is no further deterioration in conservation trends and statuses of all protected habitats and species by 2030.

Forests: The Strategy aims to recognize essential ecosystem services by committing to increasing the quality and quantity of forest systems with particular emphasis on old growth forests. Healthy global forest systems, are needed to stand against stochastic events, like wildfire and drought, that are becoming all too common. Thus, the new EU Forest Strategy plans to plant three billion trees by 2030 to create new forest systems. Through forest protection and afforestation programs, the EU will not only preserve precious habitats but also increase the resilience of forest ecosystems. Congruent efforts to implement Urban Greening Plans will bring greater biodiversity to cityscapes are also in place. **The new EU Forest Strategy would do well to integrate its framework with the EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests to give attention to tropical forests where biodiversity is greatest.** The world depends on these ecosystems as carbon sinks to combat the climate emergency.

Fisheries: Not only will the EU focus on protections for marine environments, but it will also need to address how fisheries are managed to achieve sustainable yields. Primarily, fishery systems will need to alter practices that harm biodiversity. For example, fishing methods that use bottom-contacting gear destroy vital seabed habitat. **Fishery regulations must do more to achieve a sustainable fishing industry – the productivity of fish population is essential for the EU's food security.** At the current rate of consumption, the average person living in the EU annually consumes 4kg more fish and seafood than the global average. The EU will correspondingly emphasize a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. EU legislation and regulation in this realm will have positive international impacts and set the stage for other countries to follow its example.



Global Reach: What is more, the EU already has avenues to protect global biodiversity. In taking a “One Health” approach, the EU recognizes how human health, animal health and a resilient nature are all dependent on each other. In the wake of the Covid-19 global pandemic, this could not be any clearer. Spread of zoonotic disease poses a societal risk and must be mitigated. going forward, taking a stronger stance against wildlife trafficking will be an important factor in preventing future disease outbreaks. In the same vein, **the strategy should be amended to include consequences for forest crimes to discourage deforestation and the spread of plant pathogens and disease.** By augmenting international trade practices and strengthening international agreements, the EU can save species around the world.

Tackling environmental crimes like wildlife trafficking requires coordination with the EU strategy against organized crime. Law enforcement and judiciary bodies do not have the resources to properly address these crimes; not all Member States have dedicated departments combating wildlife and forest crimes. **Collaboration between Member States would strengthen efforts across the EU and bridge gaps in monitoring, enforcement, and prosecution.** For example, the finance sector can be tailored to track the financial flows of wildlife crime and supply information to law enforcement in a more timely manner. How the Biodiversity Strategy and the Strategy to tackle Organized Crime support each other will pave the way for coherent and cooperative global policy.

This Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 identified a glaring problem: “In the EU, there is currently no comprehensive governance framework to steer the implementation of biodiversity commitments agreed at national, European or international level.”



The EC proposes a new European biodiversity governance framework as a solution to outline the commitments Member States are expected to support. The framework calls for co-responsibility and co-ownership in meeting biodiversity goals. Collaboration and accountability are key in making sure progress is adequate. Such a framework is not yet legally binding, but that could change should the EU begin to fail at its mission. Member states need to prove that they are committed to protecting biodiversity and act accordingly. Success is also dependent on how well the EC can mobilize action. **Public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly important as NGOs and civil society organizations engage communities and pool resources to create conservation nexuses at every scale.** The Environmental Implementation Review will facilitate biodiversity progress monitoring implementation gaps and formulate solutions for problems before they become urgent. The goal of this new framework is to fully implement environmental legislation since the in the past actions did not meet expectations.

The EU is willing to put forth €20 billion a year to reach its biodiversity goals for 2030. Funding will come from a portion of the EU budget already dedicated to climate action. For long-term success, the EU will need to develop and invest in a financial system solely dedicated to biodiversity efforts and green recovery. Failure to mitigate and support biodiversity will result in taxation to reflect the economic losses equivalent to the value of biodiversity. The strategy strives to be fair with its Member States and their contributions.

The Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is an ambitious response to the global environmental crisis. The damages of the past are hard to undo – and in the cases of extinction, impossible. But over the next decade, Member States can take measures to transform Europe’s landscape. It is time that action meets legislation, and that the EU does not shy away from its aspirations.



JG Global Advisory is adept at developing integrated solutions for global environmental issues. The President previously developed strategic policy frameworks for the Obama Administration on combating wildlife trafficking. We have advised on projects focused on the international wildlife trade, climate security, illegal logging, and other natural resource crimes projects. JG Global Advisory strives to sustain innovative environmental policy and programs to help build a better and more secure planet.

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