



EUROPEAN BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

FEEDBACK FROM :

- French Federation of Regional Natural Parks
- Federation of Natural Spaces Conservatories
- Natural Reserves of France



1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2019, the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks has coordinated a national networking mission on Natura 2000 policy.

Supported by the French Ministry of Ecology, this mission has been developed in partnership with two other organizations : the Federation of Natural Spaces Conservatories and Natural Reserves of France.

Regarding the number of sites managed, the three organizations can be considered as the most important Natura 2000 network in France.

Indeed, almost 40 % of the French Natura 2000 areas are managed by members of those federations.

This partnership aims to ensure effective coordination at a national level between the different groups of stakeholders involved in the implementation of Natura 2000 policy.

The three federations are available to participate at the European and national level in the implementation and deployment of actions to achieve the objectives set in the strategy.

2. GENERAL COMMENTS

We support the ambitious goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (EUBS2030).

By developing challenging objectives and national restoration plans, the strategy represents a powerful framework to decline the loss of biodiversity and to respond to climate change.

The objectives to be achieved are clear but the means to implement them need to be defined more precisely (mobilization of European funds, legally binding restoration targets, ...).

We consider that the success of the strategy depends on increasing the extent of protected areas and on improving their conservation status.

Because the previous strategy has not succeeded to slow down the erosion of biodiversity, there is a real urgency to improve the protection and management effectiveness, in both terrestrial and marine networks of protected areas.

Above all, we believe that the financial resources which will be provided to guarantee their protection and management are the key to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Member States must take ownership of the strategy and work in cooperation, in particular, to ensure the connectivity of cross-border natural spaces.

Political and societal awareness must be strengthened by involving stakeholders to a greater extent.



Because sustainable economy and biodiversity cannot be uncoupled, the EUBS2030 must be based on an integrating approach to initiate changes in agriculture, energy, tourism...

Objectives and actions of the EU Green Deal strategies (EU Climate law, the Farm to Fork strategy for sustainable agriculture...) must be aligned with EUBS2030 challenges and actions.

In the same way, the reform of the CAP should be better coordinated with the EU biodiversity strategy to raise the contribution of agriculture to biodiversity recovery.

3. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Designation

- A list of protected areas targeted by the strategy must be established in consultation with each Member State to be in line with the existing national protection tools.
- The existing gaps in the terrestrial Natura 2000 network need to be filled when the perimeters do not allow the implementation of management actions adapted to the issues identified.
- New terrestrial Natura 2000 sites should be created to meet the obligation to have a coherent and representative network at European and national level.
- The possibility of merging Natura 2000 sites that overlap or intersect, could be studied to optimize resources.
- The administrative procedures to designate terrestrial Natura 2000 sites have to be facilitated.

Restoration

- The measures taken by the European Union must not lead to the degradation of natural environments in other parts of the world.
- Restoration should be done, when it is possible, from the natural regeneration of habitats, particularly within degraded old-growth/primary forests. When it is not possible, restoration must be done by using native species.
- The location of tree plantations must be specified to avoid afforestation in open areas, in particular, within Natura 2000 sites.
- Compared to forests, grasslands and wetlands are not sufficiently highlighted in the strategy.
- The restoration of habitats protected under Directives and qualified as "carbon traps" should be a priority.
- The restoration plans must also cover areas outside protected areas to ensure their connectivity.



- Targets for recovery and protection of wild pollinators and their habitats need to be added.
- Targets to restore and to monitor soil quality need to be added.
- The implementation of the European Union regulation relating to the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species must be strengthened.

Stakeholder involvement

- Promotion and dissemination of good practices have to be strengthened.
- Sustainable collaborative networks between scientists, stakeholders, and policymakers should be fostered.
- The erosion of biodiversity will not decrease without changes in lifestyles. Actions to support citizens in reducing their biodiversity footprint have to be integrated into the EUBS2030.
- Local politicians must be mobilized and supported to promote better implementation of Natura 2000 policy in the territories.
- The training needs of Natura 2000 site managers must be reinforced to develop their expertise and skills.
- The development of shared communication tools could provide better visibility of Natura 2000 policy system.

Monitoring and reporting

- The defined goals must be based on the best available scientific knowledge. Any binding proposal must be supported by solid scientific data.
- Effective tools must be developed to collect and analyze homogeneous data at a national level with a view to European reporting.
- All protected areas need to have legally binding management plans, with conservation objectives and actions for monitoring.
- Outcomes of ecological restoration (biodiversity, health, tourism, job creation...) must be assessed and widely released.
- An economic assessment of the benefits linked to the creation of new protected areas should be carry out.
- For the Natura 2000 network, improvement objectives must be established at biogeographic regions scales in addition to a national level.



Agriculture

- Reductions in pressures from intensive agriculture practices and reversal of abandonment of grazing and mowing regimes need to be targeted.
- The biodiversity hosted in agricultural ecosystems needs more effective protection and management action.
- Financial and technical means must be offered to support livestock farming in areas of agricultural decline.
- Agricultural areas in Natura 2000 sites must be more valued and not only economically.
- Conversions to organic farming and the development of agroecology must be enhanced within Natura 2000 sites.
- The development of sustainable production systems that can guarantee the maintenance of agriculture in disadvantaged areas must be explored.

Funding

- The available budget for LIFE projects must be drastically increased.
- A list of funds dedicated to the strategy as well as those that may come to contribute indirectly (CAP, Climate funds, ...) could be established.
- The human and financial resources necessary for the Natura 2000 managers' work must be sufficient and sustainable.
- The funds for post-COVID recovery should be used to support EUBS2030.
- A specific funding mechanism dedicated to green infrastructure should be created.
- Technical support system must be elaborated at national levels to help in the development of projects mobilizing European funding.

