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EUROPEAN HABITATS FORUM

A close eye on EU biodiversity policy

The EHF brings together leading European nature conservation organisations to provide advice on the development and implementation of EU biodiversity policy with a special focus on the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the reform of sectoral policies critical to a successful implementation.

Why the EHF

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth. Oxygen, food, fresh water, fertile soil, medicines, shelter, protection from storms and floods, stable climate and recreation – all have their source in nature and healthy ecosystems.

Biodiversity is currently being lost and ecosystem services are being degraded at an alarming rate. More concerted action on biodiversity is essential for the creation of a more sustainable and resource efficient Europe.

In 2010, the European Council committed to a new long-term (2050) vision and mid-term (2020) headline target for biodiversity recovery across the EU: *'To halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restore them in so far as possible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss'*. This target underpins the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and demonstrates high political commitment in response to the urgent need to protect and improve the state of Europe's biodiversity over the next decade.

To ensure that the EU translates its commitment into action leading to measurable results, improving integration of biodiversity into the agriculture and fisheries sectors and increasing funding, the EHF engages with EU decision makers through discussion, advocacy and joint initiatives.

Founded in 1991, the EHF represents the expertise and voice of leading European nature conservation organisations towards the European institutions. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels to provide a coordinated means of communication with the Directorate General for the Environment of the European Commission. Twice a year the EHF meets with DG Environment to provide advice and knowledge on pressing biodiversity issues. It is represented in numerous fora within the EU institutions, including the European Commission's Expert Groups, the Coordination Group on Biodiversity and Nature and the informal EU Nature Directors meetings, and also at the meetings of the Bern Convention.



What the EHF does

The EHF is committed to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of habitats and species in Europe. It represents the interests of civil society in conserving Europe's natural heritage and in the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. It also advises on and promotes biodiversity policy, sectoral integration and legislation through discussion and partnership with relevant stakeholders.

The EHF:

- Identifies opportunities for a better implementation and further development of EU biodiversity policy, while fostering policy integration and increase of funding;
- Undertakes common actions to promote, within EU institutions and national governments, a shared view on EU biodiversity policy and in particular on the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the Natura 2000 network;
- Stimulates its members' networks to undertake priority actions at local and national level;
- Facilitates information exchange between members' networks to enhance cooperation in the field of EU biodiversity policy.

How the EHF works

The EHF is led by a Coordination Group consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and the Secretariat and it is organised around thematic Working Groups to allow tackling issues of importance in a more efficient way.

Currently there are seven Working Groups, dealing with the following issues: EU Biodiversity Strategy, Management of Natura 2000, Financing Natura 2000, Monitoring and Reporting, Invasive Alien Species, Green Infrastructure and Emerald Network. Each Working Group is led by a Coordinator.

The EHF meets every six months and is presented at relevant European fora. Members regularly exchange information, publications, newsletters and funding opportunities.

Contact

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