

Nature restoration

2022/0195(COD) - 22/06/2022 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to lay down rules at EU level on the restoration of ecosystems to ensure the recovery to biodiverse and resilient nature across the EU.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: despite EU and international efforts, **biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems continue at an alarming rate**, harming people, the economy and the climate. The EU has so far failed to halt the loss of biodiversity. It did not meet the voluntary target to restore at least 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020.

The 2022 IPCC report in particular highlighted that the world and Europe have a brief, rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future, as the rise in weather and climate extremes has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt. It calls for the implementation of urgent actions for the restoration of degraded ecosystems, to mitigate the impacts of climate change, notably by restoring degraded wetlands and rivers, forest and agricultural ecosystems.

Recent geopolitical developments have further highlighted the need to safeguard food security and the resilience of food systems.

More decisive action is therefore needed to achieve the EU's climate and biodiversity objectives for 2030 and 2050 and to ensure the resilience of food systems.

The proposal implements Europe's commitment in the **Biodiversity Strategy 2030** to lead the way in reversing biodiversity loss and restoring nature. It paves the way for the restoration and preservation of a wide range of ecosystems in the EU by 2050, with measurable results by 2030 and 2040. It is the **EU's key contribution to the ongoing negotiations** on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 in Montreal from 7 to 15 December this year.

In its [resolution](#) of 9 June 2021, the European Parliament welcomed the Commission's commitment to develop a legislative proposal on nature restoration, including binding restoration targets.

CONTENT: the proposed Nature Restoration Regulation sets out a general objective to contribute to the **long-term, continuous and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature** across the EU's land and sea areas through the restoration of ecosystems. This establishes a framework in which Member States will put in place restoration measures which together shall cover **at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050**.

The proposed new legislation sets targets and obligations across a broad range of ecosystems at land and sea. It builds on existing legislation but covers all ecosystems rather than being limited to the Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 protected areas, aiming to put all natural and semi-natural ecosystems on the path to recovery by 2030.

More specifically, the proposal:

- sets restoration targets for **terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems and for marine ecosystems** (which include other marine areas in addition to those covered by the Habitats Directive);
- sets targets to ensure no net loss and development of **urban green spaces** in towns, cities and suburbs. There should be an increase in the total national area of urban green space in cities and in towns and suburbs of at least 3 % of the total area of cities and of towns and suburbs in 2021, by 2040, and at least 5 % by 2050;
- includes an obligation to remove obstacles on rivers so as to transform at least 25 000 km of rivers into free-flowing rivers by 2030;
- includes an **obligation to reverse the decline of pollinators** and achieve an upward trend in pollinator populations to satisfactory levels. This obligation will be based on a method for monitoring pollinators;
- imposes an obligation on each Member State to achieve upward trends in a series of indicators important for biodiversity in (i) **agricultural ecosystems** (grassland butterfly index; common bird index; organic carbon stock in cultivated mineral soils; share of agricultural land with high diversity topographical features) and (ii) **forest ecosystems** (overall increase in biodiversity and positive trends in forest connectivity, deadwood, share of uneven-aged forests, forest birds and organic carbon stocks);
- provides for the implementation of restoration measures, including rewetting drained **peatlands** used for agriculture and peat extraction sites;
- describes the requirements for **Member States' national restoration plans**. Restoration measures should be strategically planned so that they are as effective as possible in contributing to the recovery of nature across the EU and to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

National plans should be developed on the basis of the best and most recent scientific evidence available.

The Commission estimates that, overall, the benefits of restoring peatlands, marshes, forests, heaths and undergrowth, grasslands, rivers, lakes and alluvial habitats, and coastal wetlands can be estimated as being in the order of **EUR 1 860 billion** (with costs estimated in the order of EUR 154 billion). Significant benefits are also estimated for marine and urban ecosystems, forests, agroecosystems and for pollinator restoration. For example, the value of crop pollination by insects was estimated of the order of **EUR 5 billion** per year in the EU.