



PRESS RELEASE

Europe is on its way to missing its biodiversity target *EEB calls for an “Ecosystem Rescue Plan”*

[Brussels, 16 December 2008] – Reacting to today’s publication of the European Commission’s mid-term review of its Biodiversity Action Plan, EEB, Europe’s largest federation of environmental citizens’ organisations, is calling for a rescue plan to avert the planetary bankruptcy that will occur if biodiversity loss continues.

Pieter de Pous, EEB Biodiversity Policy Officer, said: *“Now that the world is fully aware of the dangers of spending financial resources we don’t have, it’s time to wake up to a much greater danger: squandering natural resources we don’t have. Once natural capital is lost, unlike financial capital, it cannot be built up again within a time frame meaningful to humans. In other words, nature does not do bail-outs.”*

The target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 was adopted in 2000 by EU heads of state as part of the bloc’s Sustainable Development Strategy and in recognition of the importance of biodiversity for ensuring ecosystem functionality and human well-being. In 2006 the EU adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan detailing how the target should be met. According to today’s report Europe will almost assuredly miss this target [1].

EEB believes an “ecosystem rescue plan” should be adopted by 2010 and contain at a minimum the following elements:

- Ensure not only cessation of biodiversity loss but also reverse trends in order to restore the functionality and integrity of ecosystems within Europe and the rest of the world.
- Much better implementation of existing policies, such as Natura 2000 and the Water Framework Directive, and invest in the development of a ‘Green Infrastructure’, in order to effectively protect Europe’s most important biodiversity areas and better manage critical water resources. [2]
- Revise existing policies, such as the CAP or the recently agreed biofuels target, in order to make them instruments supporting ecosystem functionality rather than threatening it. [3]
- Prioritise recycling and the use of recycled materials in waste and product policies to reduce ecosystem pressure from mining operations.
- Develop EU natural resources policy that creates resource *sufficiency* goals based on strong resource *efficiency* targets.

EEB will call on the European Commission, the upcoming Presidencies of the Czech Republic, Sweden, Belgium and Spain and the European Parliament to demonstrate joint leadership and give the preparation of such a plan the highest priority.

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Editor's Notes:

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/bap_2008.htm

[2] Under Natura 2000, which was set up under the Habitats and Birds Directives, EU Member States have committed to designating and effectively protecting an area of land sufficient to ensure the long term survival of threatened species and habitats. They must also take additional measures to protect species within the wider landscape and develop a coherent ecological network, or a 'Green Infrastructure'. Such a Green Infrastructure should ensure that wildlife can move around between their habitats and consists for example of 'Green Bridges' and tunnels to cross roads and fish passes to pass weirs and dams. Implementation priorities for Natura 2000 were identified in the EEB publication *Saving Biodiversity: Releasing Natura 2000's Potential*: <http://www.eeb.org/activities/biodiversity/documents/EEBN2000potentialreportFINAL.pdf>

Under the EU's Water Framework Directive EU Member States have committed to reforming water management policies by changing the way in which they use, manage and value their water, in order to bring their water resources into good status by 2015. EEB and WWF's priorities for implementation of the Water Framework Directive can be found in the publication *Europe's Water at the Crossroads*: <http://eeb/publication/2008/Europe-at-the-Cross-roads-EEB-WWF-brochure.pdf>

[3] Under the revised Renewable Energy Directive, the EU now risks supporting the production and consumption of large volumes of highly unsustainable biofuels, which will lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions and the collapse of ecosystems through agricultural expansion and intensification. EEB's position on biofuels can be found in our biofuels policy briefing: http://eeb/activities/biodiversity/documents/EEB_Biofuel_Policy_brief_2008_FINALpdf.pdf

Under the revised CAP there is no relationship between the amount of money a farmer receives and the public goods they provide. Funding is in most cases still linked to volumes produced on each farm in the past, thereby providing no incentive for farmers to work more sustainably. See *EEB's Vision for European Agriculture 2008 - 2020* for more detailed demands: http://www.eeb.org/publication/2008/AgVision-Oct08+VBedits_Webonly.pdf

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