



A Healthy Planet is a precondition to a healthy society PES Presidency Declaration, adopted on the 29 June 2023

Our imprint in the natural world has become impossible to ignore. According to a UN Report from 2019, around 1 million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. Moreover, a 2022 WWF publication reports an average decline of 69% of wildlife since the 1970s. The rate of global change in nature during the past 50 years is unprecedented in human history. Yet, we depend on nature for the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe.

The 2023 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a Synthesis Report assessing the dire effects of global warming on the natural world. Current global warming is already causing mass biodiversity loss, and directly harming citizens. Overshooting global warming targets would lead to heatwave exposure for larger population numbers; a rapid increase on sea levels causing a direct impact on millions of people; a complete loss of coral reefs.

The loss of biodiversity is human made, it derives from changes in land and sea use, the direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species. The 2023 IPCC report estimates that humans destroy the equivalent of a soccer field every five seconds, this amount to thousands million square meters per year. It further estimates that 150 species disappear daily due to economic activity.

The EU, thanks to the efforts of the Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans, has put the issue of biodiversity loss and restoration, food production and food security at the centre of the debate. Notably with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law, aiming to set binding targets to increase biodiversity and strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy. While at the same time respond to the international commitments of the COP15 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. As well as, with the 2020 Farm to Fork strategy, aiming to make food production and consumption more sustainable, to limit the effects of climate change, and reverse biodiversity loss. And, the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation aiming to reduce pesticide use and promote agronomic efficiency. Moreover, the S&D-led report calling for mandatory EU due diligence rules to halt global deforestation has led to the adoption of the world's most ambitious legislation, targeting deforestation and forest degradation by imposing a ban on imports or products produced on or from newly deforested land.

The PES family has been consistent in striving for progressive legislation that aims to better people's lives. We believe the shift to a more sustainable way of living must be achieved together with the people and for the people. The involvement of individuals, local communities and regions is crucial. Contrary to conservative and neoliberal EU forces,



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who continue to undermine progressive efforts to reverse climate change and protect the environment, while continuously embracing far right climate denial narrative. Most recently the EPP in the European Parliament, withdrew themselves from the negotiations on nature restoration law claiming threat to food security and European agriculture, asking the legislation is tabled anew. The EPP is openly pulling the breaks on protecting and reversing biodiversity, and tackling climate change. For them short term corporate profit and short-sighted political gain ahead of the 2024 European elections are reasons good enough to put Europe's efforts for a better future at risk.

Maintaining our planet is the most responsible and sustainable way to ensure our health, wellbeing and longevity. Changes in ecosystem services affect income, local migration, health and can even exacerbate political conflict. Protecting biodiversity is key for preventing poverty and famine. Restoring nature and protecting biodiversity ensures that Europe's farmers can prosper and continue their livelihoods in the future. These are not opposing aims, but rather two sides of the same coin. Climate change and biodiversity loss are interlinked and will hit the most vulnerable faster, intensify gender inequality, with most devastating effects. People living in coastal areas are in danger of displacement due to rising sea waters, desertification already affects 250 million people, while water shortages and increasing food insecurity due to crop failure can bring unaffordable price increases to large population segments.

The need for urgent action is clear. Humankind depends on the survival of nature's species and plants. The PES calls for:

- Keeping global warming to below 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emission by at least 55% below 1990 levels by 2030, as well as other short-lived pollutants such as methane gases by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030 and 45% by 2050 and completely phase out fluorinated gases by 2050. We will fight for the sustainable decarbonisation of industries and enhance our efforts to mitigate climate change and strengthen legislation for the protection and restoration of nature.
- Giving greater focus to soil health and forest observation, sustainable forestry that takes into account biological diversity as well as forest growth, pollinators, and marine ecosystems. Promoting sustainable food production and consumption, especially in agriculture, fishing and aquaculture.
- The need to halt and reverse deforestation and the violation of the rights of people living in, from and with forests, through sustainable forestry and to protect and restore marine biodiversity. Healthy sea bed and soil can capture more carbon and produce food.
- The protection of natural reserves, wetlands, seagrass beds, marshlands, dune biomes and their surrounding areas in order to maintain and ensure their preservation.
- The acceleration of nature restoration, with reward incentives on carbon sequestration, peatland rewetting, water filtration, protection against coastal and ground erosion, genetic diversification, preservation of biodiversity and clean air provision.
- The implementation of legally binding targets to reduce the use and the risk of chemical pesticides in line with the Farm to Fork strategy, the promotion of organic farming and sustainable and environmentally friendly integrated pest management.
- Supporting the development of sustainable and affordable local and regional food systems with special attention to agriculture, fishing and aquaculture. Paying special attention to supporting farmers, fishers and communities in the transition.
- Stricter regulation of microplastic use, to reduce the amount of microplastic released in nature by at least 30% by 2030. As well as, the set up of a monitoring mechanism to track the volume of microplastics in EU air, sea, water and soil.

- A complete ban on intentionally added microplastics in products, such as cosmetics, household and industrial detergents, cleaning products, paints, amongst others.
- The adequate support of vulnerable groups in direct threat of climate change and biodiversity loss with early prevention, adaptation and financial assistance mechanism.
- A reform of the post-2027 EU Common Agricultural Policy with the financial means to ensure a sustainable future for European farmers, provide more targeted support to medium and small farms, reward the delivery of public goods, such as climate and environmental protection and animal welfare and tackle depopulation in rural areas.
- The integration of a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach to biodiversity conservation initiatives, including strategies, workplans, frameworks and financing mechanisms.
- Ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in biodiversity-related actions

Europe has been at the forefront fighting against climate change. Europe needs to continue being a leader in promoting a progressive change in the way we protect and live in our planet. There is no Green Deal without nature protection and nature restoration. Restoring biodiversity and reducing use and risk of pesticides is the only way to make our food system sustainable in the long run. The EPP cannot hold the wellbeing of our planet or future generations hostage to their short-sighted interests. This immoral stance needs to be criticized and the Party should be held accountable for any watering down. Biodiversity loss must and will come at the top of the EU agenda. Providing a sustainable future to us and future generation is contingent to immediate and global action.