

INVOLVE THE BUSINESS!

But it DOES matter how!

The position of CEEWEB on the “Business and Biodiversity” initiative

With the adoption of the 2010 target strong commitments have been made, which, however, requires the involvement of all stakeholders within the society. Thus involving the business sector in the protection of biodiversity is an excellent initiative, which is warmly welcomed by NGOs.

Besides multinational corporations, small and medium enterprises also have great impact on nature. The so-called pro-biodiversity enterprises, which depend on nature in their core business activities and strive for positive impact on biodiversity, require special attention. These SMEs are more sensitive to environmental degradation, since their operation and their long-term economic viability more depend on local human and natural resources. Because of their special situation they fall back upon specific, additional support.

Hence in order to further increase the number of pro-biodiversity enterprises, efficient, favourable loans should be worked out, in which process European banks should have a special responsibility. The “Business and Biodiversity” initiative is an EU wide programme, and EU level environmental policies and regulations should be developed to create an even playing field in the common European market.

Transparency and public participation shall be ensured throughout the whole process, and public-private partnerships for biodiversity shall be promoted for developing successful financing mechanisms for pro-biodiversity SMEs. A European Biodiversity Investment Facility might be a potential engine to drive development of these enterprises.

Pro-biodiversity enterprises shall in any case fully consider the carrying capacity of nature and conserve ecosystem services on the affected area (e.g. water and soil protection, fitting into the landscape) within the whole life cycle of products (including the environmental friendly supply coming from both the developed and developing countries, processing and waste management).

Moreover companies shall apply local natural and human resources, decrease transportation needs and raise environmental awareness not only in the company management but also among the employees and the consumers.

Adequate indicators shall be developed for measuring dependably and precisely each of aforementioned factors so that business involvement in biodiversity conservation is not just a greenwashing campaign.

The Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB) is an international network of NGOs in the Central and Eastern European region. The mission of the network is the conservation of the biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.