





CEEweb for Biodiversity
 Széher út 40, 1021 Budapest, Hungary
 Phone: +36 1 398 0135
 Fax: +36 1 398 0136
 ceeweb@ceeweb.org
 www.ceeweb.org


Results in the biodiversity policy of Polish Presidency and raising opportunities for the Danish Presidency

Global biodiversity crisis is the main environmental problem today besides climate change. It has serious negative effects on the society: biodiversity underpins ecosystem services, which contribute to human wellbeing through the provision of food, water, timber, and stable climate, prevention from disasters, recreational opportunities and spiritual values. In order to avoid the substantial further deterioration of human wellbeing, the needed structural changes through a holistic approach (considering the underlying causes of biodiversity loss) is still missing from the current biodiversity –, as well as the overarching resource and land use policies.



Recognizing the challenge caused by the biodiversity crisis, past and current Presidencies had different approaches to address the problem. Focusing on two main underlying pressures behind biodiversity loss – resource and land use – CEEweb examined the efforts and formulated proposals within the following key themes in light of the Hungarian and Polish Presidencies and of the beginning of the Danish Presidency.


I. Protecting the EU's biodiversity and contributing to tackle global biodiversity challenges

	Hungary	Poland
	Environmental Council Conclusions	Good Environmental Council Conclusion proposal
	MSs did not support actions under the sub-targets.	The prepared proposal has been strongly criticized by MSs. Besides, the Polish Presidency has failed to lead properly the negotiations towards the adoption of strong and ambitious actions, resulting <i>inter alia</i> in the extremely meaningless refer to the Common Agricultural Policy and no increase in Life + funding.



	The Strategy without clear and ambitious actions does not have the real power to contribute to the halting biodiversity loss and to the restoration of it. Therefore, the Danish Presidency should urgently initiate discussion on how greening of the CAP should take place in order to preserve EU's natural heritage before it is too late. Besides, it should stand for a five fold increase of Life+ to fulfill its aims.
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II. Screening options for effective financing of biodiversity

	Hungary	Poland
	Development of the EU position on the Innovative Financial Mechanisms and indicators started and two EU submissions were handled to the CBD Secretariat.	The Polish Presidency has emphasized the role proper Natura2000 financing would play in delivering the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets and thus make the Commission issue its Communication on the issue.
		No continued efforts have been undertaken and thus and "sustainability check" to assess the potential mechanisms in order to avoid and mitigate any potential negative effects has not been either carried out.



	The Danish Presidency should start make efforts towards continuing the proper screen of options for effective financing of biodiversity urgently. Besides, it should pay particular attention to the dialogue with non-EU European countries with regards to indicators and safeguards in relation to Resource Mobilization.	
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III. Ensuring the fair share of biodiversity benefits

	Hungary	Poland
	The signature of Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing by the EU as well as its 12 Member States was realized in June, 2011	
		Due attention should have been paid from the side of the Polish Presidency to resource mobilization – also in light of the ratification process and the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.


	Due to the very slow ratification process it is not sure yet that the EU will ratify the protocol in time to take part in the COP /MOP 1 in Hyderabad in October 2011. However, the Danish Presidency should continue the efforts undertaken by the Hungarian Presidency in order to develop those tools for resource mobilization, which fall under sustainability criteria.	
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IV. Resource efficiency

	Hungary	Poland
	Under the Hungarian Presidency some possible tools for introducing a resource use limit were discussed at the Green Week satellite event in Budapest on resource efficiency and resource use.	The Polish Presidency considers the topic of resource efficiency an environmental protection priority. It has organized an informal ministerial meeting on the issue.
	No concrete political attention has been paid to the challenges of the rebound effect ¹ nor action have been undertaken to address resource use limitation within the debates linked to resource efficiency.	The Polish Presidency should have stood for concrete solutions, which tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss and lead to the substantial reform of natural resource use. As a result of the lack of efforts, the December Council conclusion on resource efficiency does not address the challenge of the rebound effect and stays vague and cautious about concrete policy tools that would be necessary to achieve its political ambition.

	The Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe was published in September; however it does not address the rebound effect. Thus, Denmark should initiate open debate on the need of absolute limitation and eventual reduction of resource use. The Danish Presidency should push for including the necessity of resource use capping into negotiations related to the concrete implementation framework of the Resource Efficiency Flagship Initiative.
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V. 7th Environmental Action Programme


	Hungary	Poland
		Final assessment of the 6 th EAP was carried out and Council Conclusion on the 7 th EAP (October, 2011) was adopted. Moreover, discussions have been starting, the European Parliament has been preparing its own initiative report, and the 7 th EAP will go under co-decision process.

	In depth discussions should continue on the 7 th EAP as soon as possible among the MSs and EU institutions in order to make the best use of the available time till the end of 2012. The future 7 th EAP shall be put on a different basis than the previous EAPs so that it can provide a coherent framework for holistic policies, where future sectoral policy reforms can take place. The 7 th EAP shall be based on the DPSIR (drivers-pressures-state-impact-response) framework similarly to the CBD Strategic Plan.
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The rebound effect occurs when some or all of the savings from below cost efficiency increase (when efficiency improvements pay for themselves) are cancelled out (or even exceeded) due to various reasons. It can be a direct (e.g. turning up the heating in a newly insulated house) or indirect (e.g. starting new investments from the realized savings) effect on either a consumer or firm level. On a macro- economic level, improved below cost efficiency drives economic productivity overall, resulting in more rapid economic growth and resource consumption. Recently, the global economy as a whole showed significant improvements in resource efficiency. On the other hand, the total resource consumption of the global economy continued to increase.


VI. Greening the EU budget 2014-2020

	Hungary	Poland
		Polish Ministry of Agriculture criticism towards 'greening the CAP' exceeds even the Presidency's neutrality.

	The further loss and degradation of ecosystems with EU funding shall be stopped in order to ensure the maintenance of ecosystem services. Therefore, the Danish Presidency should push for an EU budget, which follows a new logic, where revenues are collected from activities with negative externalities and expenses support activities generating positive externalities. For this aim Cohesion and Structural Funds shall serve the prevention of the further loss in biodiversity, whole Life+ shall support biodiversity loss mitigation measures. Furthermore, agricultural and rural development spending shall not serve opposite goals, support for agri-environmental schemes and Natura 2000 shall be enhanced and land use limits shall be introduced.	
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VII. Biodiversity events

	Hungary	Poland
	Workshop on Innovative Financial Instruments was held with the participation of various European experts.	Planning for Biodiversity expert conference was a success, during which importance of spatial and land use planning in biodiversity conservation was emphasized. Besides, it showed leadership in collaborating with NGO's through giving them the opportunity to present their views.
	Unfortunately, no high level conference on biodiversity was organized during the Hungarian Presidency.	

	The Danish Presidency shall continue efforts in addressing land use to realize substantial reform of land use policies in order to decrease the total environmental pressure and thus achieve significant improvements in the state of species, habitats and ecosystems. A transition of all land use types towards sustainability is needed. Denmark should initiate open EU-level discussions on innovative ideas as soon as possible.	
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