

CEEweb's position on the EU Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

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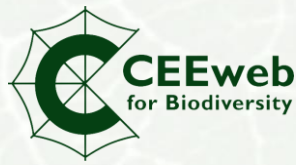
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Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029, outlines the priorities and work plan for the next legislative cycle, ensuring coordinated EU efforts in policy, funding, and decision-making. Given the increasing environmental, economic, and social challenges, it is crucial that the Strategic Agenda prioritizes these issues appropriately. Our position considers the first (leaked) version of the Strategic Agenda, focusing on nature-related policy areas, keeping environmental health in the spotlight, and leveraging our policy papers from the past two years. We also consider the unique characteristics of the Central and Eastern European region, aligning with the Vote Nature Alliance's recommendations.

STATE OF PLAY

The European Green Deal provides a novel and comprehensive framework for environmental protection by promoting economic solutions that include environmental protection as part of economic development and investment. As a novelty, it deals with the pay-offs. The Biodiversity Strategy 2030, part of the Green Deal, the most ambitious in its targets and coherent in addressing all drivers of the biodiversity decline and placing the necessary and wide-ranging measures in an appropriate economic and social context. Despite this innovative and ambitious policy framework, political support of Green Deal is lacking, with significant delays in its implementation (in particular the withdrawal and delay of some fundamental legislation). The previous efforts have not achieved the desirable results, therefore we need to raise the level of ambition.



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BASIC PRINCIPLE FOR THE STRATEGIC AGENDA

“Bringing back nature to our life” and “give space to nature” are foundational principles for efficiently tackling the current environmental crisis, which significantly impacts all areas of our life. Nature and societies are interdependent, evolving together within a complex, adaptive, and dynamic socio-ecological system. Ecosystem services – all goods (products and services) provided by the ecosystem and enhancing the human well-being – are vital aspects of this system. Sustainable economic growth in sectors like food production, industry, forestry, and agriculture can only be achieved by preserving ecosystem service capacity, improving and restoring the state of nature (putting nature on the path of recovery), and focusing on green solutions.

Strengthening the system approach and control: The current economic systems are fundamentally at odds with biodiversity conservation goals. Transformative change at systemic level can only be achieved if we have appropriate responses to all drivers of biodiversity loss. Strengthening the control processes in economic sector is essential in this regard.

Smart adaptation to the changing environment: The key to mitigating the negative impacts of climate change is adaptation. This involves building climate-resilient ecosystems, communities, and economy particularly through habitat and ecosystem restorations, changes in cultivation practices, prioritising green and nature-based solutions, and improving financial support. Measures need to integrate evidence-based research and innovation results.



PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS NEED FOR THE STRATEGIC AGENDA

1. Add a **separate priority** – complementing the existing three – **addressing environmental related policies** (nature, biodiversity, climate, water, soil, air) in line with the global and EU strategies and EU legislations - **“Steps towards a healthy, resilient and functional ecosystems”**
2. **Accelerate the implementation of European Green Deal** at EU level: by approving and launching urgently key laws and initiatives addressing environmental crisis (Nature Restoration Law, Soil Monitoring Law, Water Resilience Initiatives), and embrace and put to the political agenda new initiatives like Blue Deal. **Support national-level implementation** by improving the capacity of competent authorities, providing guidance, and streamlining administrative processes.
3. **Enhance water resilience and preserve wetlands, water dependent ecosystems and water resources** in quantity and quality via better legislation enforcement, prioritizing climate resilience through nature-based solution, reducing radically water pollution, water extraction and demand and introducing economic incentives for sustainable water practices. A paradigm change in water management, implement **landscape-scale water management** (ensuring the place of water in the landscape).
4. **Support farmers in the transitioning to sustainable farming fairly**, ensuring that agroecosystems and agrobiodiversity are preserved.
 - a. **Phase out of area-based payments (BISS) and reallocate** it to development and innovation programmes to ensure a positive nature conservation outcome of farming and eliminating current inequalities by making a small- and medium-size farms competitive.



- b. **Apply “value for money” principle to CAP payments:** Give greater emphasis to the monitoring of CAP’S environmental impact, link sanctioning system directly to the outcomes of the monitoring (e. g. measures that have no/hardly any detectable environmental impact by the end of current CAP period should pay back a certain amount of money and cannot be continued in the next CAP period).
5. **Ensure compliance with sustainability criteria for food production** by introducing a **legislative Framework for a Sustainable Food System**, prioritizing climate-resilient and nature-friendly agricultural practices (facilitate transition to organic farming and agroecology). Actions under the legislative framework need to cover market and food chain regulation, sustainable land policy, training and participatory decision-making equally.
6. **Significantly increase public and private funding for biodiversity and climate-adaptation**, as well as for sustainable economic and industrial investments partly by **mobilising new resources**.
7. **Ensure adequate governance, control mechanism, and process monitoring** under all priorities, **maintaining full transparency**.





REFERENCES SIGNED BY CEEweb

Agroecology for future, shaping EU Food Policies for a global food transition, Policy paper (<https://www.ceeweb.org/publication.php?id=840>)

Appeal to EU Leaders to prioritise a fair and inclusive green transition in the next political mandate, open letter (<https://www.ceeweb.org/publication.php?id=845>)

Natura-based water resilience cannot wait, open letter (<https://www.ceeweb.org/publication.php?id=839>)



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