

**Statement of Non-Governmental Organizations,
submitted by the European ECO-Forum**



The Statement has at the basis the document STRA-CO (2011) 2 “Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity” and the document UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2 of 29.10.2010 “X/2. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets”, especially the “Strategic goal A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society”. On this basis, we, the NGOs of pan-European region expect from national governments and the Strategy more active regional environmental policies.

We, the NGOs of pan-European region are guided also by ideas of the Outcome of the United Nations Rio+20 Conference “The future we want” (doc. A/CONF.216/L.1), which highlights the vital importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for sustainable development and human well-being.

We emphasize that the Outcome notes diverse aspects and services related to ecological networks, i.e.:

- “reaffirms the necessity of a more sustainable agriculture ..., forestry, fisheries ... that improves food security, while conserving land, water ..., biodiversity and ecosystems and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters” (Art. 111);
- “highlights the importance of biodiversity conservation, enhancing habitat connectivity and building ecosystem resilience (Art. 197)”; and
- refers to mitigating the effects regarding desertification, land degradation and drought, incl. by good soil and water management to contribute to sustainable development (Art. 205).

Relying on the specific mandate of the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity to support the Convention on Biological Diversity in the UN ECE pan-European region, and especially implementation of Aichi Targets, we underline the unique role of the Strategy:

- to unite efforts of the countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in order to maintain ecosystem viability of the region as the basis of human life incl. in the face of climate change, especially considering that industrial mitigation measures influence rather globally whereas measures related to biodiversity also contribute directly to local improvements;
- to unite efforts of governments and civil society organizations and other stakeholders that brought significant results not once e.g. in favour of the Pan-European Ecological Network;
- to find the realistic ways to incorporate ecosystem services monetary considerations in governing systems at least for the most sensitive and ecosystem service-producing sectors as agriculture, forestry, fishery and tourism, and to adapt TEEB and biodiversity-assessing methodology for the practical use – the Strategy encompasses the opportunity to unite effectively expert potential of western and eastern countries of the region to solve those problems;
- to identify the main pressures (current resource and land use patterns) behind biodiversity loss and promote holistic (integrative) responses to improve the current unsustainable resource and land use patterns.

Taking into account the unique position and perspectives, we emphasize the necessity to strengthen the Strategy, including through incorporating the clear short- and long-term goals, making them attractive in the informational space addressed to governments, public, business and financial sector. Thus, we urge to amend the Strategy's goals:

- each country in the pan-European space should define "flag" species, communities, biodiversity components and the most important measures aiming to the both strategic measurable advances for implementation of the Aichi Targets and other strategic objectives related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and a reliable field for the broad informing and publicity in favour of biodiversity-friendly decision-making and financing;
- on this basis, countries may co-agree the flag directions for relevant sub-regions that would encourage also their cooperation, coordination of efforts and harmonization of reporting on MEAs;
- each country should determine the specific realistic short- and medium-term tasks for the flag directions that will become indicatory for implementing the objectives 2020 in frames of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans for the conservation of biodiversity, as well as for other national programmatic planning related to sustainable development.
- The Strategy, in cooperation with UNEP Regional Office for Europe (UNEP ROfE), the Council Members and the appropriate experts, should develop and implement an action plan promoting their activities, and allocate relevant budget item. The action plan should be supported by adequate intellectual and financial resources of the Parties taking into account their capacities;
- The Strategy, together with UNEP and the Council Members is ought to ensure cooperation of the pan-European sub-regions discovering ways to incorporate costs of biodiversity-related ecosystem services in the state counting and financial systems, at least in the pilot regions and/or sectors;
- The Strategy should identify options developing a holistic regulatory framework for improved land use and resource policies, which can enable all the specific actions under the biodiversity MEAs, the Rio Conventions and other relevant initiatives.

We urge governmental and intergovernmental bodies to support the guaranteed budget of the Strategy. In this regard, we particularly welcome efforts of the Norwegian and Swiss Governments, and urge the European Union, the Russian Federation as the presiding country, as well as other countries to highlight their leading role in the UN ECE region.

We deeply appreciate the role assigned to civil society organisations in the Strategy and urge the Council Members to determine clearer the leading body of the Council that would include representatives of civil society organisations, important European institutions and international unions, demonstrating and supporting the special opportunities of the Strategy, following the democratic spirit as it was since 2000.