

Business and Biodiversity

Last updated in July 2011

Latest Developments

Overall assessment of Business and Biodiversity developments and impact on golf in Q2 2011:

Following the 2010 year of biodiversity both at international and EU level, a number of initiatives continued to take place in the first quarter of 2011, indicating that biodiversity is still a priority area for companies and EU Institutions. In May, the European Commission finally published its post 2010 Biodiversity strategy that sparked some disagreement between Member States on finding the funding to reach these goals. Therefore, biodiversity will continue to be an important area for discussion as now EU officials will need to put their targets into concrete actions.

On 21 June, EU environment ministers failed to endorse concrete measures proposed by the European Commission to protect biodiversity, with some expressing reservations on the proposed targets of the EU 2020 biodiversity strategy until more clarity is found on actions and funding. However after some debate on the draft conclusions, ministers rubber-stamped the strategy, together with its targets, as "a key instrument to enable the EU to reach its overall 2020 headline target".

[EU 2020 biodiversity strategy,](#)

NGOs including the EEB are concerned by the lack of enthusiasm shown by some member states to endorse the EU Biodiversity Strategy and its targets. As a consequence, the possibility of curbing biodiversity loss is left hanging by a thread. EU ministers also failed to endorse the Commission's low carbon roadmap. The EEB says it is a worrying sign that some member states seem to lack any serious commitment to tackle Europe's critical biodiversity decline and are merely paying lip service to the issue.

Following the Environment Council's discussions on the Biodiversity Strategy. Commissioner Potočník stated that he very much appreciates the efforts made by the Hungarian Presidency to secure support for the Commission's proposals. He was satisfied of the council conclusions and believed that they send an appropriate message regarding the level of seriousness with which the EU treats the issue of biodiversity loss. He also stressed the need to live up to the commitments made last year in Nagoya. He noted that protecting biodiversity is a priority that cannot wait and that the EU must build on the success in Nagoya in getting international backing for effective protection and restoration of our vanishing species. He also added that the importance of integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies, the ongoing reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, and the discussions on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework has been recognised by Ministers.

[Statement by Commissioner Potocnik](#)

In May, the Commission presented the new Post 2010 Biodiversity strategy to protect and improve the state of Europe's biodiversity over the next decade. The strategy includes six targets which address the main drivers of biodiversity loss and which will reduce the main pressures on nature and ecosystem services in the EU by connecting biodiversity objectives in key sectoral policies.

The six priority targets are:

- Full implementation of existing nature protection legislation and network of natural reserves, to ensure major improvements to the conservation status of habitats and species
- Improving and restoring ecosystems and ecosystem services wherever possible, notably by the increased use of green infrastructure
- Ensuring the sustainability of agriculture and forestry activities
- Safeguarding and protecting EU fish stocks
- Controlling invasive species, a growing cause of biodiversity loss in the EU
- Stepping up the EU's contribution to concerted global action to avert biodiversity loss.

The strategy also suggests concrete actions that must be completed to achieve the outlined targets (See Annex of Strategy attached). An action suggested by the Commission that can be interesting to the EGA GCC relates to setting priorities to restore and promote the use of green infrastructure. The Commission will develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy by 2012 to promote the deployment of green infrastructure in the EU in urban and rural areas, including through incentives to encourage up-front investments in green infrastructure projects and the maintenance of ecosystem services, for example through the better targeted use of EU funding streams and Public Private Partnerships. This can be an opportunity for the EGA GCC to get involved in discussions with the Commission and suggest golf courses in urban areas as green infrastructure and perhaps also get some funds to develop such projects.

Moreover, the strategy is in line with two major commitments made by EU leaders in March 2010 – halting the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2020, and protecting, valuing and restoring EU biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2050. It is also in line with global commitments made in Nagoya in October 2010, in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, where leaders adopted a package of measures to address biodiversity loss worldwide over the coming decade.

A section of the Strategy is also dedicated to funding and the mobilizing of resources to carry out the actions that will lead to the priority targets. Please find below ways that the Commission along with Member States will try to mobilize funds:

- by ensuring a better uptake and distribution of existing funds for biodiversity
- by rationalising available resources and maximising co-benefits of various funding sources
- by diversifying and scaling up various sources of funding
- by financing to fully implement the Natura 2000 network

The Strategy also mentions the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform and explains briefly the work undertaken in the various sector groups. Moreover it suggests that the Commission will further develop the Platform and encourage greater cooperation between businesses in Europe, including SMEs, and links to national and global initiatives in the coming years.



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[Commission Post 2010 Biodiversity Strategy](#)

Impact on golf

- Course management
- Role of enhancing biodiversity

Background

Last updated in April 2011:

On 8 April, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development published a free guide on "Corporate Ecosystem Valuation", which outlines in detail how companies can measure and decrease ecosystem services impacts in order to prepare them to meet the standards set by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Article on ["Biodiversity guide to help firms achieve Nagoya goals"](#) and [Guide to Corporate Ecosystem Valuation](#)

On 16 March, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) invited various stakeholders under the Convention on Biological Diversity to take part in a review of their Fifth Assessment Report, which will entail reports from IPCC Working Groups addressing, amongst other issues, climate change and biodiversity. The report is expected to be published in 2014.

[Joint Notification from the Secretariats of the CBD and IPCC](#) and an article from the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#)

On 11 March, the European Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry announced that the European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) will introduce a new "Business & Biodiversity" award in 2012, which aims at honouring a company with excellent achievements in the field of biodiversity protection. The EBAEs were established in 1987 and are awarded every two years.

[Press release "Rewarding innovation for sustainability"](#) and [European Business Awards for the Environment Webpage](#)

On 1 March, the UK Natural Environment Research Council announced that scientists from the University of York have been chosen to direct the UK wide research programme "Biodiversity & Ecosystem Service Sustainability" which aims at analysing the role of biodiversity in British landscapes. The six year £13m programme will also involve various stakeholders such as recreational users and farmers.

[Press Release from the Natural Environment Research Council](#)

On 29 November, the European Environment Agency (EEA) published the "2010 State and



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Outlook Report” which provides an overview of the European environment’s trends and prospects. Regarding biodiversity, the report mirrored the findings of the UN report “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity” which concluded that dedicated management of natural capital, such as forests and clean water supplies, is necessary to tackle environmental risks.

[EEA 2010 State and Outlook Report](#)

On 26 November, the Commission launched a public consultation on Future EU co-financing of Natura 2000. More specifically, the Commission is working towards a new Communication, foreseen for mid-2011, aimed at identifying ways of enhancing the success of financing Natura 2000. The objective of this consultation is to gather the views of different stakeholders as an input to this process. The deadline for comments to this consultation is 17 February 2011.

[European Commission website of consultation for the Future EU co-financing of Natura 2000](#)

In November, the Belgian Presidency held a conference on “Restoring the Natural Heart of Europe” where Commission officials confirmed plans to boost the protection of Europe’s undisturbed and unmanaged wild areas. Participants were informed that a wilderness register would be developed in 2011 while the wilderness concept would be integrated into the EU’s post-2010 biodiversity strategy.

[Article on “Restoring the Natural Heart of Europe” Conference](#)

On 18 and 19 November, the European Tourism Forum held its annual meeting in Malta. Vice-president of the Commission and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship Antonio Tajani, presented his plan to achieve the European tourism strategy. He stated that the EU must encourage the development of high-quality tourism which is sustainable and responsible, and take advantage of new opportunities.

[Article on the European Tourism Forum](#)

On 18 October, the tenth meeting of parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was launched. On 29 October, agreement was reached on sixteen of the summit’s 20 strategic goals; parties undertook to:

- Reform subsidies detrimental for biodiversity by 2020,
- Avoid the over-exploitation of fishing resources,
- Protect 17% of ground surface and 10% of marine and coastal areas (that are not currently under any form of protection), and restore 15% of degraded ecosystems, and
- Integrate the value of biodiversity into their national accounts.

The ABS protocol will ensure a more equitable sharing between rich and developing countries of resources generated by the use of plants from southern countries by northern countries for the production of medicines, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. Additionally, the United Nations has been entrusted with setting up an international platform of experts on biodiversity similar to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change).

The conference included a plethora of side meetings and commitments, including a high-level dialogue between corporate leaders and ministers to discuss a new Business and Biodiversity initiative.



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Articles on the outcome of the Convention: [Nagoya biodiversity talks continue into the night](#) and [Success in Nagoya now to be implemented](#)

During the CBD, on 19 October, the EEA published a report entitled "EU 2010 Biodiversity Baseline" which provides facts and figures for measuring and monitoring progress in the EU from 2011 to 2020 in an effort to contribute to the post-2010 biodiversity strategy.

[EEA report "EU 2010 Biodiversity Baseline"](#) and [report summary](#)

During October, Jo Leinen, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Environment put forward his views on biodiversity ahead of the Nagoya Conference during an interview. He stated that the "the EU must take the lead in the preservation of biodiversity".

[Jo Leinen's interview on biodiversity](#)

Last updated in October 2010:

On 12 October, CropNews International, a platform that will provide educational materials and news on the issues facing agriculture now and in the future, launched its global campaign "Biodiversity World Tour" which will travel across three continents and visit several countries including Belgium. The aim of the campaign is to engage audiences in a worldwide discussion about biodiversity and agriculture with farmers, agricultural experts, researchers, and policymakers.

[Biodiversity World Tour website](#)

On 7 October, MEPs voted on a resolution recommending strategic objectives for the EU at the Nagoya, Japan conference on the UN Convention on biological diversity (18-29 October). They emphasised the need for global funding to halt biodiversity loss and called on the Commission and Member States to announce financial commitments ahead of the Nagoya conference.

MEPs also listed what they consider the strategic goals and 2020 targets in relation to biodiversity:

- Eliminating subsidies harmful to biodiversity;
- Zero net deforestation;
- The end of destructive fishing practices;
- At least 20% of land, fresh water and sea areas to be protected and
- Preventing extinction of known threatened species.

[European Parliament Resolution on the EU strategic objectives for the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\), to be held in Nagoya \(Japan\) from 18 to 29 October 2010](#)

On 4 October, the European Environmental Agency (EEA) published a report entitled "Assessing biodiversity in Europe". The report focuses on the status and trends of pan-European biodiversity and the implications of these trends for biodiversity management policy and practice. The report urges for a "more integrated approach to biodiversity management across sectors, and across administrative boundaries, at landscape and seascape scales would be an important step forward".



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[EEA Report on Accessing biodiversity in Europe](#)

On 22 September, ahead of the Nagoya Conference, a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on biodiversity was scheduled to approve the creation of the Inter-governmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). However, China and representatives of the G77 stated that the IPBES constitutes a premature development and should be conditional upon an agreement on biodiversity access and benefits-sharing –among the most sensitive issues to be discussed in the Nagoya Conference.

While it is recognised that biodiversity entails an economic and social value, the diverging interests of developing countries and wealthy nations seem to have taken precedence.

In response to the resolution of China and the G77, EU Member States extended the Commission's mandate to include negotiating an international agreement on access to genetic resources and benefits sharing to acquiesce developing countries' concerns. Commission negotiators will be in Japan two weeks ahead of the Conference to initiate informal negotiations.

[Article on the hurdles for the creation of the IPBES and the European Commission's Mandate](#)

A further issue which is very likely to be discussed during the Nagoya Conference are payments to developing nations to protect their biodiversity. In an interview to EUobserver, Jacqueline McGlade, director of the European Environment Agency, stated that while Europe is willing to make such payments, the issue of a verification system to provide the necessary proof that biodiversity is protected remains unresolved.

Her statement, however, contradicted those of EU statesmen including Belgium's Flemish Minister for Environment, Joke Schauvliege. Belgium currently holds the EU's rotating presidency and will be representing EU Member States.

[Jacqueline McGlade's interview](#)

On 21 September, the European Parliament adopted by a plenary vote the report "Implementation of EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity" drafted by Esther De Lange (Dutch, Conservative). During the debate preceding the vote, MEPs commented on the alarming state of biodiversity and presented several suggestions to halt biodiversity loss by better coordinating policies and adopting a cross-border approach to the Natura 2000 network. They noted that consistency with the principles of this report should be maintained when discussing the reform of the CAP, Fisheries Policy, or allocation of financial resources. Ms De Lange also emphasized the need to focus on restoring biodiversity.

[Esther De Lange Report on Biodiversity](#)

On 9 September, Friends of Europe published their report of the event organised within the context of Green Week 2010 "Pricing the Earth: How business can protect and profit from biodiversity". The conference illustrated that the opportunities for business to promote and in parallel, gain from protecting biodiversity will become increasingly important in the coming years. Biodiversity is present in every aspect of everyday life and business activity. The main problem hindering business from being able to achieve this double goal is that society is accustomed to using biodiversity in an unsustainable manner.



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[Report on "Pricing the Earth: How business can protect and profit from biodiversity"](#)

On 25 August, the European Commission launched a stakeholder consultation entitled "Protecting our natural capital: an EU strategy to conserve biodiversity and ensure the provision of ecosystem services by 2020". The consultation aims to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders on possible policy options for the European Union's post-2010 EU biodiversity strategy. The deadline for the submission of comments is 22 October 2010. The EGA GCC has sent a contribution to this consultation.

[European Commission consultation website](#)

On 18 August, Commissioner for the Environment Potočník replied to the question of Romanian Conservative MEP Elena Oana Antonescu on the need to adopt an integrated approach to reducing biodiversity loss in the EU's ecosystems. Commissioner Potočník while acknowledging that insufficient funding was one of the main reasons the 2010 biodiversity target was missed, he was not able to confirm whether investment in biodiversity would be prioritised.

He noted that biodiversity was increasingly integrated into sectoral policies such as CAP, the Marine Strategy Framework, the Common Fisheries Policy, the EU Cohesion Policy and EU Research Framework Programmes. Additionally, the Commission aims to enhance voluntary approaches as reflected in the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform.

Commissioner Potočník also commented on the necessity to strengthen the global science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services to ensure that decision-making is based on the best available science. In this respect, the work of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services will be an appropriate way to achieving this objective.

[MEP Question on an integrated approach to reducing biodiversity loss in the EU's ecosystems](#)
[Commission Answer](#)

On 9 August, Commissioner for the Environment Potočník replied to the question of Romanian Socialist MEP Daciana Octavia Sârbu on the lack of a comprehensive strategy for halting biodiversity loss in the EU. The Commissioner informed the MEP that the Commission is preparing a new biodiversity strategy which will apply to terrestrial and marine biodiversity. The strategy aims to deliver the EU2020 biodiversity target.

Additionally, the Commission is developing the 'green infrastructure' concept, first introduced by the White Paper on Climate Change Adaptation, in order to issue a Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2011.

[MEP Question on sectoral policies for biodiversity](#)

On 3 August, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in collaboration with leading organisations announced it has devised a tool for accessing accurately information on biodiversity and critical natural habitats. The information generated by the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) can be used into risk assessment reports and national or regional development strategies. Industry can also be assisted by this tool when implementing environmental safeguard policies and best practice standards. The UNEP-WCMC hopes this tool will help raise the issue of biodiversity in regulator's agenda.

[Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\)](#)



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Links

Link to DG Environment consultation on Future EU co-financing of Natura 2000:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/natura2000_en.htm

Link to the report of the Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-10/official/cop-10-27-en.pdf>

Link to EEA's report on EU 2010 Biodiversity Baseline:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eu-2010-biodiversity-baseline/eu-2010-biodiversity-baseline>

Link to EEA's 2010 State and Outlook Report:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/synthesis/synthesis>

Link to Jo Leinen's interview on biodiversity:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/064-87358-288-10-42-911-20101015STO87349-2010-15-10-2010/default_en.htm