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Viite: Kuuleminen Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuskauden painopistealueista

Asia: WWF Suomen lausunto Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuskauden painopistealueista

WWF kiittää lausuntopyynnöstä ja toteaa seuraavaa:

EU:lla on tärkeä vuosi edessään: Euroopan parlamentin vaalit ovat toukokuussa, EU:n toimielimet saavat uudet johtajat loppuvuodesta ja edessä on uuden strategisen ohjelman teko. Lisäksi Euroopan komission ja jäsenvaltioiden tulee miettiä ensi vuoden aikana useita uusia strategisia tavoitteita vuoden 2020 jälkeiselle ajalle, esimerkiksi kestävän kehityksen, luonnon monimuotoisuuden ja ilmasto- ja energiapolitiikan alueilla.

Suomella on Euroopan neuvoston puheenjohtajamaana sekä mahdollisuus että velvollisuus edistää aktiivisesti kunnianhimoista ja johdonmukaista kansainvälisten sopimusten mukaista politiikkaa. Suomen tulisivin nostaa oman puheenjohtajuusohjelmansa keskiöön seuraavat painopistealueet:

- kestävän kehityksen Agenda 2030 -toimintaohjelman määrätietoinen ja riipeä täytäntöönpano kestävän kehityksen tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi,
- Pariisin sopimuksen 1,5 asteen tavoitteen mukaiset pitkän tähtäimen ilmasto- ja energiatavoitteet, sekä tehokkaat lyhyen tähtäimen suunnitelmat, ja
- luonnon monimuotoisuutta koskeva kunnianhimoinen kansainvälinen ja EU-tason strategiatyö vuoden 2020 jälkeiselle ajalle.

EU kestävän kehityksen maailmanlaajuisena toimijana

Suomea pidetään maailmanlaajuisesti yhtenä kestävän kehityksen mallimaista, joten Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuteenkin kohdistuu paljon odotuksia Agenda 2030 -ohjelman toimeenpanon edistämiseksi. Tähänastiset toimet ovat olleet riittämättömiä kestävän kehityksen tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi. Euroopan komissio julkaisee tämän vuoden lopulla mietintönsä siitä, kuinka EU voisi täyttää kestävän kehityksen ohjelman vaatimukset. Suomella on ensi vuonna puheenjohtajan roolissa ainutlaatuinen mahdollisuus vaikuttaa siihen, että **kestävän kehityksen toimintaohjelman tavoitteet ja komission tulevat suositukset konkretisoituvat kokonaisvaltaisen strategian kautta tehokkaiksi päätöksiksi ja toimenpiteiksi**. Suomen tulee puheenjohtajuuskaudellaan priorisoida ja edistää aktiivisesti seuraavia kestävään kehitykseen liittyviä toimia:

- Tehdään kokonaisvaltainen strategia EU:n Agenda 2030 -toimeenpanolle.
- Kestävän kehityksen tavoitteet ovat osa kaikkia EU-johtajien tulevaisuutta käsitteleviä keskusteluita ja EU ottaa johtajaroolin Agenda 2030 -toimintaohjelman täytäntöönpanossa ja seurannassa.
- EU raportoi kattavasti ja yhtenäisesti edistymisestä ja tehdyistä toimenpiteistä YK:n korkean tason poliittisessa foorumissa 2019, pohtien myös missä tavoitteissa EU on jäljessä.



- Kestävän kehityksen työ on yhtenäistä kaikilla politiikan aloilla ja kaikki neuvoston tekemät päätökset ovat johdonmukaisia: toimet yhdellä alueella eivät saa heikentää toisen alueen edistymistä.

Hallitusten välisen ilmastopaneelin IPCC:n tuoreen raportin mukaan ilmaston lämpenemisen rajaaminen 1,5 asteeseen on vielä mahdollista, mutta se edellyttää valtioilta pikaisia toimia. Jo 1,5 asteen lämpeneminenkin aiheuttaa vakavia ongelmia luonnolle ja ihmisille. Yli 1,5 asteessa käyminen tarkoittaisi monien lajien pysyvää menettämistä. Suomen ja EU-maiden päättäjien on näytettävä poliittista selkärankaa päästöjen nopeaksi vähentämiseksi ja konkreettisiksi toimiksi luonnon puolesta. Suomen Euroopan neuvoston puheenjohtajakausi tarjoaa ainutlaatuisen mahdollisuuden ajaa kiristyksiä päästövähennyksiin koko Euroopassa varsinkin EU:n pitkän aikavälin ilmastostrategian kautta: Euroopan komission odotetaan julkaisevan vaihtoehtoja pitkän aikavälin strategiaksi marraskuussa 2018. On todennäköistä, että tuon strategian käsittely jatkuu Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuskaudella. Suomen tuleekin puheenjohtajuuskaudellaan kannustaa EU:n jäsenmaita kunnianhimoisiin pitkän tähtäimen ilmasto- ja energiatarvoitteisiin, sekä tehokkaisiin lyhyen tähtäimen suunnitelmiin:

- **EU:n pitkän tähtäimen ilmastotavoitteen lähtökohtana pitää olla Pariisin ilmastopöytäkirja ja tavoite rajata maapallon keskilämpötilan nousu 1,5 asteeseen verrattuna esiteolliseen aikaan. EU:n tulee saavuttaa hiilineutraalius vuonna 2040.**
- EU:n kasvihuonekaasupäästö-, energiatehokkuus- ja uusiutuvien energialähteiden tavoitteita tulee nostaa vuodelle 2030, linjassa uuden pitkän tähtäimen tavoitteen kanssa.
- EU:n ilmasto- ja energiapolitiikan tulee olla prioriteetti EU-johtajien asialistalla.

Euroopan neuvosto keskustelee ensi vuoden aikana myös lainsäädännöstä, jolla **vähennetään kertakäyttömuovien vaikutusta meriin**. Suomen tulisi puheenjohtajakaudellaan rohkaista EU:ta ja sen jäsenvaltioita hyväksymään kunnianhimoisen lainsäädäntö ja tukemaan YK:n ympäristökokouksen prosessia muovin eliminoimiseksi merestä:

- Käsitellään kertakäyttömuovien vaikutuksia meriympäristöön ja tuetaan lisätoimenpiteitä kadotettujen tai hylättyjen kalastusvälineiden vähentämiseksi.

Luonnon monimuotoisuuden ja vesistöjen suojelu

Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuskauden aikana pohditaan luonnon monimuotoisuustavoitteita vuoden 2020 jälkeiselle ajalle sekä maailmanlaajuisesti, että EU:n tasolla. Nykyisen EU:n luonnon monimuotoisuutta koskevan strategian tavoitteena on pysäyttää luonnon monimuotoisuuden heikkeneminen vuoteen 2020 mennessä. Tästä tavoitteesta ollaan kuitenkin kaukana: **jos sama meno jatkuu, tulee vuoteen 2020 mennessä selkärankaisten yksilömäärä olemaan jo kaksi kolmasosaa pienempi verrattuna vuoden 1970 tasoon. Jotta tämä katastrofaalinen kehitys saadaan kääntymään, tarvitaan korkean tason poliittista sitoutumista ja huomiota luonnon monimuotoisuuden suojeluun**, aivan kuten ilmastomuutoksen vastaisessa työssä on tehty. Euroopan neuvoston puheenjohtajamaalla on tärkeä rooli strategisten keskusteluiden ohjaamisessa ja Suomen tulisikin aktiivisesti tukea ja edistää seuraavia luonnon monimuotoisuuden säilyttämiseen liittyviä toimia:

- Luonnonsuojelun vahva edistäminen YK:n biologista monimuotoisuutta koskevan yleissopimuksen (CBD) puitteissa vuoden 2020 jälkeen, keskittyen sopimuksen toimeenpanoon ja vastuumekanismeihin.



- Uuden EU-biodiversiteettistrategian valmistelu vuoden 2020 jälkeiselle ajalle, keskittyen luonnon monimuotoisuuden häviämisen torjuntaan sekä luonnon ja ekosysteemien ennallistamiseen.
- Kunnianhimoisten päätösten edistäminen luonnon häviämisen pysäyttämiseksi niin Euroopassa kuin kansainvälisillä foorumeilla, mukaan lukien YK:n biodiversiteettisopimus ja Uhanalaisten eläin- ja kasvilajien kansainvälistä kauppaa koskeva yleissopimus (CITES).
- EU:n luonnonsuojelun lainsäädännön täysimääräinen ja tehokas toimeenpano, sen rahoitus ja valvonta EU-jäsenvaltioissa ja EU-jäsenyyttä hakeneissa maissa.
- EU:n aloite pölyttäjistä, korostaen samalla tarvetta käsitellä pölyttäjien vähenemisen aiheuttaneita todellisia syitä, mukaan lukien intensiivinen maatalous ja torjunta-aineiden käyttö.

EU-maat sitoutuivat jo 18 vuotta sitten vesipolitiikan puitedirektiivillä saattamaan kaikki vesistönsä hyvään ekologiseen tilaan vuoteen 2015 mennessä. Tällä hetkellä takaraja on vuodessa 2027, mutta on käynyt ilmi, että useat jäsenvaltiot, myös Suomi, haluaisivat keskustella takarajan siirtämisen tarpeellisuudesta ja muustakin lainsäädännön heikentämisestä. Tämä on todella huolestuttavaa tilanteessa, jossa suurin osa Euroopan kartoitetuista pintavesistä on edelleen huonossa kunnossa ja makean veden ekosysteemit ovat maapallomme uhatuimpia. Vesipuitedirektiivi on käsittelyssä Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuuskauden aikana ja on erittäin tärkeää, että Suomi antaa täyden tukensa seuraaville toimenpiteille:

- Avoimuuden edistäminen ja julkisen osallistumisen varmistaminen vesihallinnon päätöksenteossa. Erityisesti vesipuitedirektiivin tarkistusprosessin ja kaikkien siihen liittyvien keskusteluiden tulee olla avoimia ja osallistavia.
- **EU:n vesilainsäädännön täysimääräinen ja tehokas toimeenpano ja kaikkien tarvittavien hallintotoimien käyttöönotto, jotta vesipuitedirektiivin tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa viimeistään vuoteen 2027 mennessä.**
- Vesipuitedirektiivin täytäntöönpano sekä EU:n jäsenmaissa että EU:n jäsenyyttä hakeneissa maissa riittävän tuen turvin, jotta voidaan myös varmistaa käytäntöjen yhdenmukaistaminen ja seuranta.
- Vesipuitedirektiivin ja kestävä vesihuollon näkökulmien ottaminen mukaan myös niiden sektoreiden päätöksentekoon ja toimiin, jotka vaikuttavat makean veden ekosysteemeihin, kuten maatalous, energia, liikenne, suunnittelu ja tulvien hallinta.
- Rahoitus- ja veropolitiikan tulee tukea vesivarojen suojelua eikä heikentää sitä.

Kestävä julkinen ja yksityinen rahoitus

EU oli avainasemassa kun kestävä kehityksen Agenda 2030 -toimintaohjelma ja Pariisin ilmastopuolitus hyväksyttiin. EU:lla on nyt myös vastuu näiden sopimusten tuloksellisesta toimeenpanosta. Nämä kansainväliset sitoumukset tulisi ottaa huomioon kaikessa poliittisessa päätöksenteossa, mutta näin ei kuitenkaan tällä hetkellä ole. **Pariisin ilmastopuolitus, kestävä kehityksen tavoitteet tai biologista monimuotoisuutta koskeva sopimus eivät näy EU:n vuotuisessa talousarviossa, sen ohjelmissa tai rahoitusinstrumenteissa niin kuin näiden tärkeiden strategisten painopistealueiden kuuluisi näkyä.** Lisäksi finanssialaa koskevan sääntelyn pitää olla linjassa kiristävän ilmastopolitiikan ja kestävä kehityksen tavoitteiden kanssa. Institutionaaliset sijoittajat, kuten pankit, vakuutusyhtiöt ja eläkeyhtiöt, sekä



varainhoitajat, jotka tarjoavat sijoituspalveluja ja/tai hallinnoivat muiden varallisuutta, voivat omilla toimillaan merkittävästi jouduttaa vähähiiliseen infrastruktuuriin siirtymistä.

Euroopan komissio julkaisi jo viime vuonna ehdotuksen asetukseksi, jolla pyritään muuttamaan Euroopan valvontaviranomaisten toimeksiantoja, hallintoa ja rahoitusta, mukaan lukien niiden kestävyys. Lisäksi EU:n kestävän rahoituksen toimintasuunnitelmaa seurasi viisi lainsäädäntöehdotusta, jotka neuvoston on määrä tutkia ensi vuonna. EU:n jäsenmaat voivat nyt tukea ja vahvistaa näitä lakeja ja huolehtia siitä, että niitä **käytetään investointien ohjaamiseksi kestävämpään suuntaan**. Suomi voi varmistaa, että näin tapahtuu, ottamalla huomioon seuraavat suositukset jo meneillään olevassa sekä tulevassa lainsäädäntötyössä, varsinkin asemassaan neuvoston puheenjohtajana:

- Sijoittajilta pitää vaatia, että he arvioivat, vastaavatko sijoitukset Pariisin ilmastopimuksen ja kestävän kehityksen tavoitteita, ja ryhtyvät toimiin, jos näin ei ole.
- Sijoittajien tehtäviä koskevassa ehdotuksessa on vaadittava asiakkaiden mieltymysten kysymistä ja niiden mukaan toimimista investointien mahdollisten ympäristö-, ilmasto- ja sosiaalisten vaikutusten osalta.
- Vähittäisasiakkaiden neuvonnan soveltuvuuden tulee perustua selkeään kyselyyn, jossa yhdistyvät asiakkaiden ympäristö-, ilmasto- ja sosiaaliset mieltymykset.
- Kestävyysluokitteluasetukseen tulee täydentää ympäristön kannalta kestävien (vihreiden) taloudellisten toimintojen lisäksi myös luokitus haitallisille (ruskeille) taloudellisille toimille.
- Euroopan valvontaviranomaisten (ESA) tulee sisällyttää kestävyysriskit ja edistää kestävä rahoitusta osana toimeksiantoan ja tehtäviään.

Lisäksi WWF Suomi odottaa, että Suomi Euroopan neuvoston puheenjohtajana nostaa EU:n asialistalle **luonnonvarojen kestävä käytön, ilmastonmuutoksen torjunnan ja luonnonsuojelun tärkeyden arktisilla alueilla**.

WWF:n yksityiskohtaiset suositukset tuleville EU-puheenjohtajamaille löytyvät liitteenä olevasta julkaisusta.

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LIITTEET Leading the European Union's Environment Policy in 2019-2020 – WWF priorities for the upcoming presidencies of the Council of the European Union



WWF

BRIEFING

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LEADING THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ENVIRONMENT POLICY IN 2019 – 2020

WWF priorities for the upcoming presidencies of
the Council of the European Union

This briefing aims to highlight current WWF priority files at EU level and provide an overview of our recommendations on these issues for the upcoming presidencies, particularly with a view to the next Presidency trio beginning in January 2019 through to 2020 (Romania, Finland, and Croatia).

INTRODUCTION

The next two years are a key moment for the EU: the May 2019 European elections will usher in new leadership in the European institutions, and the European Commission and Member States will set new strategic priorities for the post-2020 period. Meanwhile, the EU will need to deliver on and prepare a number of high-level international conferences on environment and climate.

During this time, the Council of the European Union (hereon referred to as “the Council”) and the EU Member States holding the rotating presidency will have a crucial role to play on the delivery of these commitments, both at a global level and within the EU by ensuring the advancement of the Council’s work on legislative (and non-legislative) files currently being examined by the EU’s co-legislators.

This briefing aims to highlight current WWF priority files at EU level and provide an overview of our recommendations on these issues for upcoming presidencies, as well as suggestions where presidencies can help drive progress on these issues, through the different priorities identified in their individual and trio programmes, and high-level events organised by the presidencies. For further detail on each of these issues, please see the list of papers in annex.

1. THE EU AS A GLOBAL ACTOR FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In recent years, the international community has come together to address the major challenges we face for our climate and environment, and make commitments to address them: in 2015, both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change were adopted, creating major momentum for action at global level to improve the health of our planet. The EU was a major driver for ambition in the lead up to the adoption of these agreements, and now the EU, its Member States and the Council have a responsibility to ensure the commitments made are adequately and continuously translated in all policy-making, and are taken into account in all priorities set by the Presidencies.

a. Setting ambitious long-term climate and energy objectives and effective short term plans

In 2015, 195 countries, including the EU, signed a historic climate agreement in Paris, committing to keeping global warming well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to keep it to 1.5° C. Unfortunately, current efforts globally, including in the EU, are not remotely sufficient to achieve those aims, and need to be stepped up dramatically if the Paris Agreement is to be implemented and catastrophic climate change impacts avoided.

For this, the EU needs a long term strategy that ensures net greenhouse gas emissions are cut to zero by 2040 and that enables EU businesses to seize a leading role in the low carbon economy of the future. EU 2030 targets on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency and renewables must also be significantly increased in line with that longer term goal.

The European Commission is expected to publish options for a draft long term climate strategy in November 2018. The Council and its upcoming presidencies have a responsibility to taking this work forward thereafter, and ensuring that an ambitious EU climate strategy in line with the Paris Agreement is agreed and submitted to the UNFCCC by 2020.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Broker agreement on long term EU climate targets compatible with the Paris Agreement goal to keep temperature increase below 1.5°C, for example reaching zero net emissions within the union by 2040;
- Increase the ambition of the EU's 2030 Climate & Energy targets for greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and renewables in line with that new target;
- Ensure the future of the EU's climate and energy policy is among the priorities discussed in the context of the Leaders' Agenda;
- Ensure that the expansion of renewables is in compliance with nature conservation criteria.

b. Fulfilling the EU's commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, the world's governments adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, setting universal goals and targets to be achieved by 2030. The EU and its member States were major champions for an ambitious, integrated and transformative outcome at the UN intergovernmental negotiations.

The European Commission responded to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda through a communication published at the end of 2016, which was endorsed by the Council in conclusions adopted in June 2017, reiterating the EU and its Member States' commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the approach taken so far by the EU isn't sufficient if the EU is to achieve the SDGs in full by 2030. It fails to provide detail on how the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will work in practice beyond business as usual, and offers no long-term, transformative vision for its implementation. Gaps, inconsistencies, and areas where poor implementation or contradictions between policies undermine the achievement of the SDGs have yet to be identified.

For these reasons, the Commission has committed to reflect further on how the EU can fulfil its obligations to implement the 2030 Agenda, by publishing a Reflection paper "Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030, on the follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change" with considerable consultation and input with stakeholders. This paper, due end of 2018, will not constitute an implementation strategy, but provide options for ways forward for EU leaders to consider. Given the urgency of getting the EU on track to delivering its commitments towards the 2030 Agenda, we urge EU Member States to prioritise the development of an overarching EU implementation strategy during the next trio presidency, taking on board the Reflection Paper's recommendations.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Building on the European Commission's forthcoming Reflection Paper on the follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, come forward with an overarching long-term strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the EU;
- Ensure the Sustainable Development Goals form part of all discussions on the Future of Europe in the context of the Leaders' Agenda, particularly with a view to the Sibiu summit on 9 May 2019, and ensure the EU takes a full leadership role in implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda;
- Provide complete and integrated reporting on the EU's progress and actions taken to date at the UN High-level Political Forum in 2019, without omitting to reflect on where the EU is lagging behind.
- Ensure Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) across all policy areas, by making sure all policies and positions adopted by the Council are consistent and action in one area does not undermine progress in another.

c. Championing ocean governance at EU and international level

Despite significant progress in the marine governance, our oceans are under threat from over-exploitation, climate change, pollution and declining biodiversity. The international community has recently focused considerable diplomatic and political capital to reverse ocean degradation trends. However, there remains a significant disparity between the intention behind international commitments and the reality of global implementation. The EU has an important responsibility towards the ocean and seas, as Europe is home to some of the largest drivers impacting the health of our ocean. The EU's ocean agenda has put in place strong legal mechanisms to ensure the conservation of marine biodiversity and habitats in Europe. To reach their full potential and to ensure good environmental status of European seas and marine species, the EU needs to increase the effectiveness of the legal framework implementation.

Over the next Presidencies the EU will be deliberating and adopting key marine and fisheries legislation which could have a positive impact on our oceans globally if ambitious outcomes are obtained. Legislation to control fishing activities and the seafood products that enter in the EU market -the Control Regulation- will be revised over the course of 2018-2019, which could ensure that EU fishing control rules are further strengthened. Furthermore, the Council will also debate legislation to reduce the impact of single-use plastics on our ocean. WWF encourages the EU and its Member States to adopt ambitious legislation and support the United Nations Environment assembly process to eliminate plastic leakage into the ocean. Finally, with respect to the external dimension of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, the upcoming Presidencies will see further work on developing the common position of the Council on annual meetings of multilateral organisations and regional fisheries management organisations.

The EU can continue to lead and spotlight international governance issues through action at presidencies level, by prioritising on the delivery of these issues in its upcoming trio programmes.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Ensure that the implementation EU's marine and fisheries policies reflect its international obligations and commitments, including under the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Lead on the revision of the fishing Control Regulation so it ensures a more sustainable management and governance of European fisheries;
- Address the impact of single-use plastics on our marine environment and support additional measures to reduce lost gears from fishing activities.

d. Ending deforestation and forest degradation worldwide

Forests are essential for life on earth, providing a home to wildlife and livelihoods for 1.6 Billion people worldwide. They are vital for our biodiversity and climate, providing oxygen and the largest stores of carbon after oceans, as well as habitats for 80% of the world's biodiversity. For this reason, taking into account the policies that affect the health of our forests in the EU and globally is essential to meet the EU's international commitments under the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

As one of the world's largest importers and consumers of timber and wood-based products, as well as commodities linked to deforestation such as palm oil, beef and leather, soy, and cocoa, the EU has a responsibility to take action to halt global deforestation but also the destruction of other ecosystems and tackle the impact of its consumption. The EU was the leading importer of products linked to deforestation from 1990-2008, causing an area of deforestation at least the size of Portugal. The EU has furthermore acknowledged that it is lagging behind in the achievement of the SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

Measures are still needed to tackle the EU's role in deforestation. In its 7th Environment Action Programme, the EU committed to addressing deforestation and forest degradation worldwide. Despite this, the European Commission has yet to present its Action Plan on Deforestation and Forest Degradation, a serious gap towards reaching its international commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. A feasibility study presenting options for EU action was published in March 2018 but so far the European Commission has not taken any further steps.

The upcoming presidencies and EU Member States, in order to ensure the EU is a global champion on protecting our forests and other ecosystems, should consider prioritising discussions on sustainable production and consumption and the development of strategies to address this and the effect it has on halting deforestation.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Urge the Commission to come forward without delay with an EU Action Plan that proposes new measures from a demand and supply side that build on and strengthen governmental and credible corporate commitments for zero deforestation and conversion of ecosystems;
- Take a strong position on fulfilling the SDG 15 to halt deforestation by 2020
- Commit to EU Member State Action to address deforestation and destruction of ecosystems, e.g. promoting the Amsterdam declaration

- Organize a high level conference between state actors, private actors and civil society on how the EU's role in deforestation and ecosystem destruction could be addressed in light of the commitments made under the Paris Climate Agreement and the SDGs.

2. THE EU AS A LEADER FOR PROTECTING NATURE

The next years presents an exciting opportunity for the EU to be a champion for nature protection in the EU, EU accession countries and beyond. At the end of 2018, the world's governments will gather in Egypt at the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), leading to the adoption two years later in Beijing of a new global deal for Nature. This will lead the EU to reflect on its strategy for protecting biodiversity after 2020. Other high-level conferences on wildlife trade, wildlife migration and forests should lead to more new international commitments on environment. Meanwhile, flagship EU policies impacting on the EU's biodiversity are currently under examination by the EU, with the Water Framework Directive currently undergoing a fitness check and proposals for the LIFE funding instrument and a new post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy.

a. Forward-looking policies on biodiversity protection

The EU's biodiversity strategy to 2020, adopted in 2010, committed all Member States to help stop global biodiversity loss. Based on the Aichi targets adopted by the CBD, results have been mixed, with the EU currently not on track to meet its commitments by 2020¹.

Globally, nature continues to decline at dangerous rates, and current efforts are too fragmented to effectively address the causes of nature loss and degradation. Without an ambitious, integrated, and high-level response, this trend will continue to worsen, leading to the loss of more than two thirds of populations of species by 2020². High-level political commitment and attention is needed, similar to the mobilisation of the international community around climate change, if this trend is to be reversed.

Meanwhile in Europe, species and habitats are protected by strong legal standards under the Birds and Habitats directives. In a recent fitness check, these directives were found to be fit for purpose, when properly resourced and implemented. Too often however poor implementation and enforcement mean nature does not always receive the high level of protection it needs in order to also sustain people and economies.

In the lead up to a new global deal being reached in 2020 to address nature loss, the EU is in a position to become a champion for ambitious global targets for biodiversity protection and restoration. It must also continue to take seriously efforts to protect nature in the whole of Europe, by continuing to seek improvements in the implementation of EU nature legislation and closing the funding gap.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Be a champion for nature protection in the EU, EU accession countries and globally, by advocating for the adoption of a strong post 2020 framework for the CBD with an ambitious mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and a

¹ State of Nature report, EEA

² Living Planet Report 2016

- clear focus on implementation and accountability mechanisms;
- Begin reflection towards a post-2020 EU biodiversity strategy, addressing biodiversity loss in Europe and globally, and with a strong focus on restoring nature and ecosystems;
 - Come forward with ambitious positions to halt nature loss in Europe and globally in international fora, including the CBD and CITES CoPs;
 - In the context of the Romanian presidency, hold a High-level Conference on Biodiversity Conservation ambition in EU policies post-2020.
 - Ensure that EU nature legislation is fully and effectively implemented, funded and enforced across all EU member states and EU accession countries;
 - Welcome and endorse the EU Pollinators Initiative while underlining the need to tackle intensive agriculture and pesticide use in order to protect pollinators.

b. Protecting the EU's freshwater ecosystems

Freshwater ecosystems are among the most fragile, threatened and degraded on the planet, having experienced the most significant decline in species populations since 1970. Pollution, unsustainable infrastructure projects, and over-abstraction are the main threats facing freshwater ecosystems in the EU. The Water Framework Directive (WFD), adopted in 2000, aims to ensure the good health of the EU's and EU accession countries' freshwater ecosystems. It provides a framework for true integrated water management –ensuring all the issues affecting water bodies are addressed in one plan, and is considered to be one of the most progressive pieces of environmental legislation in the world. Unfortunately however, the goal of having all EU rivers and freshwater bodies reach good ecological status by 2015 hasn't been met and currently only about 40% of surface waters are considered healthy.

The WFD, together with its two daughter directives (Groundwater Directive and Priority Substances Directive) and the Floods Directive, is currently undergoing a fitness check, due to be completed in mid-2019. This fitness check will evaluate the directive on the basis of its efficiency, coherence, relevance, effectiveness and EU added value. WWF together with its partners in Living Rivers Europe coalition of environmental NGOs are contributing to the evaluation process, which we expect to be carried out in an objective, fair, transparent, and evidence-based manner. On the basis of the outcome of the fitness check, the European Commission will make recommendations for the future approach the EU should take as regards water management in Europe. The Austrian presidency, together with the European Commission, held a Water Conference on 20-21 September 2018 in Vienna, to discuss progress on Member States' implementation of the WFD. WWF welcomes this initiative, which we hope will together with other initiatives and events planned for 2018 and 2019 put a spotlight on the urgent need for more ambitious action to address freshwater ecosystem degradation.

Based on our own assessment, we hold the WFD fit for purpose and its ambitious objectives justified; we believe that the main focus should be on improving its implementation and achieving coherence with other EU sectoral policies such as agriculture, energy and transport, as well as national and EU funding instruments. Any current shortcomings in its implementation would be better addressed through increased focus on enforcement and proper application of its provisions rather than on amending this ground-breaking piece of legislation, which could undermine

nature conservation and sustainable water management efforts across the whole of Europe for years to come.

WWF considers that the WFD is well equipped to address the main water pressures effectively and efficiently, and taking into account a dire state of EU freshwater ecosystems its stringent objectives are well justified. Amendments currently discussed by Member States will result in weakening of the legal provisions and undermining of the common framework to give our most precious natural resource a sustainable future for the benefits of people and nature. Weakening this Directive will have a ripple effect on the state of nature in the whole of Europe, given that rivers do not end at administrative borders. Attempts to revise the WFD will also create significant level of uncertainty for businesses. WWF therefore urges Member States not to prejudge the results of the fitness check process, and to ensure that any decision regarding the next steps the EU takes with the directive doesn't lead to weakening of the current framework and legal obligations. The main focus should rather be on improving its implementation and achieving coherence with other EU sectoral policies such as agriculture, energy, transport and planning, as well as national and EU funding instruments. Any weakening of the current framework would significantly compromise achievement of EU's global commitments established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Ensure the fitness check process as well as any separate discussions Member States are currently undertaking on the WFD framework is transparent and inclusive, with sufficient time for informed participation;
- Ensure that EU water legislation is fully and effectively implemented and that all necessary management measures are put in place to allow the achievement of WFD objectives by 2027 at the very latest;
- Ensure implementation of the WFD at river basin level, including in EU accession countries, with adequate support in order to ensure alignment of practices and monitoring;
- Effectively integrate WFD and sustainable water management considerations in other sectoral policies and actions which have an impact on freshwater ecosystems, most notably agriculture, energy, transport, planning and flood management;
- Ensure that financial and fiscal policies support protection of water resources and not undermine them;
- Significantly improve transparency of and ensure effective public participation in water management decision making (including on river basin management planning and projects authorisation).

c. Towards a fair and sustainable post-2020 farming policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the EU's oldest and most expensive policies. Over the years it has undergone many reforms. The last reform from 2013 sought to "green" the policy by introducing mandatory measures to improve the environmental sustainability of farming in the EU. Indeed, agriculture and nature are inseparably linked – agriculture relies on healthy nature and ecosystem services, while unsustainable farming practices are the biggest driver of biodiversity loss in Europe. However, the last reform failed to drive and support a transition towards

more sustainable farming systems in Europe. As a result, pressure on nature and climate from agriculture continues to increase, depleting natural resources, and polluting our rivers and lakes. This directly undermines EU targets on biodiversity, freshwater and its commitment to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, and is incoherent with the EU's environmental and sustainable development policies.

For these reasons, reform is needed towards a fair, effective and efficient farming policy with, as its core objective, the transition towards sustainable food and farming systems in Europe, which are respectful of nature. The European Commission in June 2018 put forward its proposal for the post-2020 CAP, which Member States will now deliberate, amend and decide on, jointly with the European Parliament, over the course of the next presidencies.

WWF considers that the post-2020 CAP, to truly move towards a policy which is respectful of farmers and nature, must be aligned with the EU's environmental, biodiversity and climate goals and policies, rather than undermine them. The 'polluter pays' principle must be reinforced, and the substantial amount of public money allocated to the CAP must be used to provide genuine 'public goods'. This would benefit sustainable farmers and land managers contributing to biodiversity and nature protection. Furthermore, there must be greater accountability of Member States to compensate for the higher level of subsidiarity and flexibility proposed by the Commission, through innovative ideas for a better governance framework that will encourage Member States to do more and orient their action responsibly towards performance.

The Council now has the opportunity to listen to over 250 000 citizens who took part in the Public Consultation on the future CAP and demanded to fix this unfair and inefficient policy, and make it fit for the future.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Adopt a fair and effective post 2020 farming policy through reform of the existing system of subsidies in the CAP's Pillar 1, and adequate budget allocations for measures that deliver benefits for nature and climate;
- Ring-fence at least 50% of CAP funds for dedicated financing of actions related to environment, nature conservation and climate;
- Adopt common objectives and robust targets for the CAP, which are coherent with the EU's environmental and sustainable development policies;
- Ensure accountability towards citizens through a better governance framework that encourages Member States to take more ambitious action.
- Ensure involvement of Environment and water ministers in the farming debates – organise a joint ENVI-AGRI informal Council meeting.

3. THE EU AS A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCE

To set Europe on a more sustainable path will necessitate both public and private finance to be mobilised, and for sustainable investments to be made. The next year will be crucial for this, as the EU is due to adopt several proposals which, if the opportunities are seized, can help achieve this: on the one hand, the EU has just started discussions on its financial framework, deciding how public money will be spent by the EU for the period 2021-2027; and at the same time, the Commission has just come forward with proposals to encourage more sustainable private investments.

a. A sustainable and fair EU Budget for all

The EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), also referred to as the EU budget, defines the EU's spending priorities over a seven year period. By defining which areas the EU should invest in, the MFF reflects the Union's priorities and serves not only as a budgetary planning tool, but also as an important policy-making tool.

The European Commission in May 2018 published its legislative proposal for the post-2020 MFF, followed by the proposals for the individual programmes and funds, including the LIFE programme for nature and climate. The current EU budget is mainly at odds with EU and international objectives on sustainability, climate and environment, and the direction taken in the proposal for the next budget isn't going to help change course: international agreements the EU committed to such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have not been made a crucial element of the next budget. Though an increase of the budget to 1,11% is proposed, this increase is not reflected in proposals for sufficient funding available for climate, nature conservation and environment. Yet, investing in climate and the environment is not only needed to protect our planet and its habitats and species, it is also good value for taxpayers' money, creating jobs, producing goods and services, and contributing to our overall well-being.

The Commission aims to have the legislation finalised before the next EU elections in May 2019, which affords a short timeline for the co-legislators to examine and amend the proposal. In order to ensure this budget is the most forward looking and sustainable in the EU's history, WWF recommends the Council, when discussing the EU budget, always takes into account environmental and climate objectives and prioritises the following considerations in its positions:

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Bring all programmes and funding instruments of the EU budget in line with international commitments on climate, biodiversity and sustainable development; this includes EU accession funding;
- Include a mandatory spending target of 50% for climate, environment and nature
- Increase the funding for LIFE to 1% of the overall budget;

- Phase-out subsidies or support of actions that are harmful to the environment, climate, and biodiversity, such as (but not limited to) fossil fuel, biofuel and hydropower subsidies;
- Include ex-ante conditionalities for all programmatic and funding instruments to ensure that funds provided are properly spent and balance environmental, social and economic aspects;
- Mainstream climate and environment in EU external financing instruments and ensure strong environmental and social safeguards are in place.

b. Ensuring sustainability of private investments

Finance is a critical cog of our economic system. As environmental and social risks tend to materialise over long term horizons, these risks are often not sufficiently taken into account in investment decisions. This causes social and environmental harm, as well as exposure for investors to financially material costs.

In recent years, the EU has shown willingness to become a global standard setter on green finance. In 2017, a High Level Expert Group on sustainable finance was convened by the European Commission to produce recommendations on the steps the EU should be taking to encourage more sustainable investments. Ambitious sustainable finance legislation is necessary to ensure that private investment flows become aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

This led in March 2018 to the publication of an EU Sustainable Finance Action Plan, followed by five legislative proposals in May 2018. These proposals are due to be examined by the Council over the next year, and cover the following four issues:

- On taxonomy, a proposal for a regulation on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment. This taxonomy will list which activities are considered sustainable;
- On investor duties and disclosure requirements, amending several existing regulations, which will give investors more responsibility in relation to the environmental, social and governance risks of their assets;
- On a low-carbon benchmark methodology, amending the benchmark regulation;
- Two proposals on the suitability of financial advice to ask for and integrate sustainability preferences of retail clients.

In parallel, the European Commission released a proposal in September 2017 for a regulation seeking to amend the mandates, governance and funding of the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs), including regarding sustainability.

Member States can now support, strengthen and turn the planned laws into a tool to direct investments into sustainable assets. The Council can ensure this is the case by taking on board the following recommendations when co-legislating on these files.

WWF recommendations to upcoming presidencies

- Require that investors assess whether assets match with the Paris climate agreement goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, and take action if they don't;
- Ensure there is a requirement in the proposal on investor duties to ask for and act upon clients' preferences concerning the possible environmental, climate and social impacts of their investments;
- Ensure that the suitability of advice for retail clients builds on a clear questionnaire integrating environmental, climate and social preferences of clients
- Propose that the sustainable taxonomy will be complemented by a list of activities that are not considered sustainable - known as a 'brown taxonomy'
- Require the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) to integrate sustainability risks and to promote sustainable finance as part of their mandate and tasks.
- Hold a high-level event with ministers on sustainable finance, particularly on taxonomy, investors duties and suitability of advice.

FURTHER READING: WWF STUDIES AND BRIEFINGS

The information found in this briefing is based on a number of WWF reports and position papers, listed below. For more information on the issues raised, please consult the following WWF papers:

1. The EU as a global actor for sustainability

- [Planning to Succeed: How to build strong 2050 climate and energy development strategies](#)
- [EU Action for Sustainability, WWF response \(2017\)](#)
- [Towards a sustainable European Future: EU implementation of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development \(2016\)](#)
- [WWF Response – Targeted consultation on the reflection paper on SDGs \(2018\)](#)
- [Succeeding in oceans governance \(2016\)](#)
- [Tackling deforestation and forest degradation: a case for EU action \(2017\)](#)

2. The EU as a leader for protecting nature

- [The State of Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in the EU \(2018\)](#)
- [Living Rivers Europe Vision statement: Safeguarding healthy waters for people and nature \(2017\)](#)
- [Towards a Common Agricultural Policy that works for people and nature \(2017\)](#)
- [Preventing Paper Parks: how to make the EU nature laws work \(2017\)](#)
- [The Laws of Nature: what the EU should do to better protect nature in Europe \(2016\)](#)

3. The EU as a driver for sustainability through public and private finance

- [WWF Position on the next EU Budget and its application \(2018\)](#)
- [WWF recommendations for the Sustainable Finance Action Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [NGO recommendations for the EU Sustainable Finance Action Plan \(2018\)](#)

**For further
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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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