



***PAN-EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE
DIVERSITY STRATEGY***

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**COUNCIL FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN
BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY STRATEGY**

DRAFT BELGRADE STATEMENT

**Preparations of the biodiversity session at the 6th Ministerial
Conference *Environment for Europe: Belgrade Conference***

11th meeting
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*Document prepared by the Chair, the PEBLDS Bureau
and Friends of the Chair*

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Sixth Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe*
Belgrade Statement on Biodiversity

Submission of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

We, the European Ministers and High Representatives of the states participating in the PEBLDS process, gathered in Belgrade from 10-12 October 2007 for the Sixth Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe*,

Reaffirming our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development, and the Millennium Development Goals, with its recently adopted biodiversity target,

Reiterating our commitment to the 2010 biodiversity target as expressed in the Strategic Plan to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity and the European Council Declaration by the European Union adopted in 2001 in Gothenburg,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy that provides a framework to promote a consistent approach and common objectives for national and regional action in the pan-European region to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was endorsed in 1995 at the Third Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria and has been reconfirmed by successive Environment for Europe conferences,

Recalling that the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment recommends that countries should consider integrating implementation needs of multilateral environmental agreements into their national sustainable development strategies,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity, which was adopted in 2003 at the Fifth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe in Kyiv, Ukraine and highlighted as key issues for Europe: forests and biodiversity, agriculture and biodiversity, the Pan-European Ecological Network, invasive alien species, financing of biodiversity, biodiversity monitoring and indicators, and public participation and awareness,

Underlining that the Environment for Europe process is an important platform for pan-European cooperation with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

Noting that the Sixth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe offers the opportunity to assess and evaluate the Kyiv commitments given that halting the loss of biodiversity is a priority for the pan-European region,

Express the following:

Achievements

We note with satisfaction that since 2003, regional, sub-regional and national activities have been ongoing in Western Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to address the 2010 biodiversity target,

We recognize the strategic framework endorsed in 2006 by the Environment Council of the EU *Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond: Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being* with an annexed action plan, which aims to pull together actors and resources at EU and Member State levels to implement the actions that can make the greatest contribution towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;

We recognize the initiatives and activities carried out at the pan-European level in order to assist in the achievement of the Kyiv targets, which include *inter alia*:

- The technical and political progress for the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), under the PEBLDS framework, which has increasing relevance within adaptation to climate change, biodiversity conservation and protected areas programmes at the pan-European, national, regional and local levels, and which is underpinned by the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks,
- The Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators project led by the European Environment Agency, in collaboration with the PEBLDS, the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and other partners, to review, test, refine, document and help produce specific biodiversity indicators,
- The cooperation between the PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) on issues such as sustainable forest management and the ecosystem approach; illegal logging and related trade; and afforestation and reforestation guidelines,
- The progress on raising awareness of the importance of High Nature Value farmland, and activities related to its identification and conservation in the pan-European region, as a result of the efforts of the PEBLDS, the EEA and ECO-Forum,
- The implementation of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species adopted in 2003 under the Bern Convention, and the ongoing activities implemented by the Bern Convention as the European forum for IAS, as well as activities at the national and regional level to address the threats posed by IAS,
- The accomplishments of the 2010 Countdown Initiative with close to 100 international, national, regional and local non-governmental and governmental organizations from the entire pan-European region as partners, to raise awareness of the pan-European and global biodiversity commitments,
- The progress in Biodiversity Financing in the framework of the European Task Force for Banking, Business and Biodiversity under PEBLDS, resulting in increased practical partnerships with the finance and business sector, pilot projects and the development of a Biodiversity Finance Technical Facility
- The continued efforts by governmental and non-governmental organisations at all levels to support the implementation of the programmes of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

Challenges

We are aware that the pan-European region represents a living environment and provides livelihoods for millions of people, having a rich natural heritage and enormous economic potential, but facing rapid environmental, social and economic changes with different development patterns in Western Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

We note with concern the finding of the Belgrade Assessment by the European Environment Agency that the 2010 biodiversity target will be difficult to attain unless considerable additional efforts are made. Habitat destruction, fragmentation and degradation as well as the rapid spread of invasive alien species is increasing in Europe and affecting particularly farmland, mountain regions and coastal zones. Furthermore, European hotspots of endemic species are at risk because of the effects of climate change and the lack of space between habitats to allow for adaptation; and pollinators such as butterflies, honeybees and bumblebees are declining in parts of Europe. The current and future economic costs of all of these losses could reach billions of Euros,

We also note with concern the implications on global biodiversity conservation of the rapidly increasing ecological footprint of Europe.

We emphasise that biodiversity and human well-being are inextricably linked, because biodiversity benefits people in a variety of ways including through its contribution to material welfare and livelihoods, security, resilience to climate change, social relations, health, food, recreation and fuels as well as freedom of choices and actions, as it is pointed out by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment;

We stress that for the conservation of the rich natural heritage of the pan-European region and for the improvement of human well-being it is necessary to reconcile land use and development needs with the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem services,

We are aware that important drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide include governance failures, and the failure of conventional economics to recognise the economic values of natural capital and ecosystem services and therefore *note the need* to engage all economic sectors in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.

Cooperation and Partnerships

We will reinforce our efforts to implement the Kyiv Biodiversity targets and to enhance the full support and participation of all pan-European countries in PEBLDS, which is an important framework for regional cooperation and a unique forum for realising global biodiversity commitments at the pan-European level;

We emphasise that all stakeholders have an important role to play, including landowners and land users, the private sector, financial institutions and the public as a whole, as well as intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations, in the efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target;

We welcome the *GreenForce* initiative as started by the European Commission in co-operation with its member states encouraging cooperation among implementing institutions and practitioners facilitating exchange of experience, capacity building and cooperation for implementation of legislation.

We appreciate the support of UNEP and the Council of Europe for the conservation and sustainable use of the pan-European natural heritage through hosting the Joint Secretariat of PEBLDS,

We appreciate the contribution of the European Environment Agency, UNEP-WCMC, ECNC, ECO-Forum and IUCN for their assistance for the achievement of the Kyiv targets at the pan-European level,

We continue to support the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network as an important means for protecting biodiversity in Europe, fostering programmes for the development or restoration of ecological connectivity between core areas of European importance and applying at the European regional level the global programme of work on protected areas of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity;

We encourage the further cooperation between PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) on joint pan-European priorities concerning forest biological diversity;

We express our conviction that the cooperation and support from the European Community and its Member States is crucial to address the challenges of the conservation of biodiversity and the reconciliation of development and the use of biodiversity in the pan-European region while taking into account the special needs and conditions in the EECCA countries.

Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN)

We, the European Ministers and High Representatives of the states participating in the PEBLDS process, gathered in Belgrade from 10-12 October 2007 for the Sixth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity, which was adopted in 2003 at the Fifth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe in Kiev, Ukraine that highlighted *inter alia* the key issue of the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network;

Noting that the Sixth Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe* offers the opportunity to assess and evaluate the Kyiv commitments concerning the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network,

Underlining that the *Environment for Europe* process is an important platform for pan-European cooperation to conserve the natural heritage in the pan-European region and thus an important tool for implementation of the requirements of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity programme of work on protected areas,

Stating that the Pan-European Ecological Network and its two major components, the EU Natura 2000 network and the Emerald Network of the Bern Convention, represents an essential tool for the implementation of both the principles of the protection of biodiversity within an ecosystem approach,

Noting with satisfaction the conclusions of the Report on the State of implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network (Technical Report and Message to Ministers and policymakers) and taking into account the Message in this Report,

Recommend

The further continued efforts by governmental and non-governmental organisations at all levels to support the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and their related programmes of work contributing to the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network in Western Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in order to address the 2010 biodiversity target at regional, sub-regional and national levels;

To continue, in this framework, to implement the Pan-European Ecological Network, as an important means for protecting biodiversity in Europe, monitoring climate change, guiding and fostering policies and programmes for the development or restoration of ecological connectivity between core areas of European importance, thus applying at the European regional level the global programme of work on protected areas of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity;

To encourage all national and international authorities to conserve adequately by 2008 all core areas of the Pan-European Ecological Network in order to give guidance to the major land use and planning policies at all levels;

To complete the identification of the different components of the PEEN at the pan-European, national and sub-regional levels and their complete mapping or updating of mapping;

To ensure that the various programmes of implementation and pilot projects ensure the balance of land, coastal and marine components of the PEEN, as well as a balance between regions within the pan-European areas;

To undertake the implementation of relevant pilot projects in countries outside the European Union and the drafting of practical guidelines, in view of fostering the development of ecological networks within coherent programmes at sub-regional level, including a database and a forum on good practices for creating and managing ecological networks;

To encourage commitment of the relevant stakeholders from the sectoral policies and economic and financial sectors;

Invite

The institutions and intergovernmental organisations engaged in the implementation of PEEN to continue to pursue and develop relevant activities; in particular the complete implementation of the Natura 2000 network in the European Union Member States and the Emerald Network in the other European countries and their management programmes

The Council of Europe and the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) to develop cooperation activities relating to the development of the PEEN;

UNESCO to develop its cooperation for the implementation of the PEEN, in particular through its Man and Biosphere, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites programmes;

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to co-operate further in the implementation of the PEEN;

The European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) of the Council of Europe to consider the relevant aspects of the setting up of the PEEN and their integration in the priorities activities for regional and spatial development in Europe;

The Council of Europe and the European Commission to provide appropriate political support and financial resources for the development of specific programmes and activities in the framework of the implementation of PEEN.