



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

Geneva and Strasbourg, 17 February 2005

STRA-CO (2005) 3

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

Ninth meeting
16-17 March 2005
Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg
Room 11, 9.30 am

Halting the Loss of Biodiversity in the Pan-European Region:

Catalytic Actions under the PEBLDS

Pan-European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan

Stakeholder Version

*Document prepared by
the Joint Secretariat for PEBLDS
with assistance from the European Centre for Nature Conservation*

How could you help ensure a future for Europe's rich Biodiversity?

Introduction

Biodiversity is about life on Earth. It is about species and habitats, about ecosystems, but perhaps most important for humankind: it is about *you and me*. Without biodiversity, planet Earth will not survive, nor will the many species, including humans.

At the Third *Environment for Europe* Ministerial Conference¹ (Sofia, Bulgaria) in 1995, 53 countries and the European Commission adopted the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), in which the following 'Common Vision for Europe' was presented:

A Common Vision for Europe

After the first five years of the Strategy, there should be national biodiversity strategies and action plans for all countries of Europe to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. In the years to follow, national ecological network action plans and networks should have been established, and a Pan-European Ecological Network should be realized, along which animal and plant species would be able to migrate freely.

In 20 years the Strategy aims to realize full biological and landscape diversity conservation, including inter alia the safeguarding of the last wild rivers, wetlands and coasts, and the last remaining virgin forests of Europe. There would be public and civic understanding and commitment to preserving Europe's natural heritage. Geological and cultural features determining landscape identity would be adequately protected.

In addition, biological and landscape diversity considerations would be integrated into relevant economic and social sectors as far as practicable. In particular, it is anticipated that agriculture, marine fisheries, forestry, and tourism sectors would recognize biological and landscape diversity as the heart of their industry, and actively strive to maintain and enhance nature and landscapes. (PEBLDS, page 27, 1995)

The PEBLDS is primarily a forum for governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental

¹ The *Environment for Europe* process sets long-term environmental priorities at the pan-European level.

organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to promote, coordinate and implement national and regional actions to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity in the pan European region.

In May 2003, the Ministers at the Fifth *Environment for Europe* Ministerial Conference (Kyiv, Ukraine) took a historic decision and agreed to halt the loss of biological diversity by the year 2010. Europe agreed to 9 so called "Kyiv" key sub targets in seven areas: forests, agriculture, ecological networks, invasive alien species, biodiversity financing, biodiversity indicators and monitoring, and public awareness and participation. Therefore, Governments are committed to implement actions on the ground for the concrete achievement of these fundamental targets. The PEBLDS offers a platform for co-operation to facilitate co-ordination and strengthen synergies to reach the 2010 goal.

Never before has the entire pan-European region agreed to such a far-reaching target, and never before have such concrete and focused targets been set in a joint effort of all European countries, including the European Union (EU), which already agreed in 2001 to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU. The EU Malahide Message (2004) is the stakeholder response to that commitment and will be followed by a EU communication on reaching the 2010 biodiversity targets.

What are the commitments?

The overall and most important commitment is to **halt the loss of biodiversity – at all geographical levels – by 2010**. The Kyiv key biodiversity targets will greatly contribute to achieving the overall 2010 target:

- By 2008, European governments will have contributed to the implementation of the Forest Biodiversity Expanded Programme of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity through cooperation between the MCPFE and the PEBLDS, national forest programmes and application of the ecosystem approach.
- By 2006, the European Ecological Network will be identified.
- By 2008, all core areas of the European Ecological Network will be adequately conserved.
- By 2008, a coherent European programme on biodiversity monitoring and reporting will be operational and by 2006 a core set of biodiversity indicators will be agreed.

- By 2008, national Communication, Education and Public Awareness action plans, will be implemented by at least half of the countries in the pan European region.
- By 2006, the identification, using agreed common criteria, of all high nature value areas in agricultural ecosystems in the pan European region will be complete. By 2008, a substantial proportion of these areas will be under biodiversity-sensitive management by using appropriate mechanisms and financial subsidy and incentive schemes for agriculture in the pan European region will take the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in consideration.
- By 2008, there will be substantially increased public and private financial investments in integrated biodiversity activities in Europe, via partnerships with the finance and business sectors.
- By 2008, the pan European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species developed under the Bern Convention will be implemented by at least half of the countries of the pan European region.

Current nature and biodiversity conservation activities in the pan European Region

PEBLDS Partners have carried out a number of catalytic activities on all geographical levels following the adoption of the PEBLDS. Flagship activities include the development of a pan-European system of protected areas and ecological networks, a regional monitoring framework, stakeholder activities in the agriculture and forest sectors, biennial preparatory conferences for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)² and many more. Also in the framework of the EU, many important steps have been taken, notably the 1979 EU Birds Directive (identification of endangered species and sub-species and designation of Special Protection Areas); the 1992 EU Habitats Directive (identification of sites of European importance and implementation of management plans) and the establishment of the EU's Natura 2000 Network (network combining Special Protection Areas and sites of European importance). The adoption of the European Community Biodiversity Strategy and its action plans was also very important for biodiversity in Europe.

² The Convention on Biological Diversity, ratified by most of the world's governments, sets out commitments for maintaining the world's ecological underpinnings as we go about the business of economic development. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

However, despite all these efforts by countries, the EU, international governmental and non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders, Europe's biodiversity still is declining at a rapid rate. Although ecological networks and the wider countryside approach are crucial for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems – and some successes have been obtained by safeguarding biodiversity in nature areas and landscapes – biodiversity is still at risk in and around these nature areas. In Europe, all major sectors have some effect on biodiversity and the agriculture and forestry sectors seem to have the highest impact in most countries (European Environment Agency, 2003). Farmland birds have dramatically declined over the last decades, as well as waders, even –and especially– in European countries with the highest nature conservation budgets. The European Environment Agency warns that nearly half of Europe's breeds of domestic animals are at risk of extinction and that important ecosystems continue to be at risk including forests, wetlands, species-rich agricultural habitats, several dry and arid areas and some marine areas (2003) in the pan European region. Central and Eastern Europe contains Europe's richest natural capital, including its last great wilderness areas and rich cultural landscapes, but all may be at risk from damaging agricultural, transport and infrastructure development policies (WWF International, 2004).

Working towards the achievement of the 2010 target in Europe and the Kyiv biodiversity targets is not something that can be delayed. Many habitats and species will be irreversibly lost if Europe does not succeed in achieving these targets. But there is more. European landscapes are undergoing a silent but dramatic transformation due to changes in agriculture and urbanisation, and extension of the transport infrastructure network. Climate change is already having noticeable effects and may result in habitats and species moving north, at a relatively rapid pace. Globalisation forces result in equalizing effects on various landscapes and regional cultures. On the other hand, the demands of European citizens on rural and urban areas are growing, and there is a growing emphasis on non-food related services and requirements, such as health care, nature and landscape, recreation, identity, environment and animal welfare. It becomes more and more clear that biodiversity, nature and landscapes are important economic assets for sustainable development in Europe. Economic functions such as agriculture, tourism and water management depend to a high extent on biodiversity and landscape management, and directly and indirectly biodiversity, nature and landscape values contribute substantially to the gross national products of many European countries.

Below we describe in a nutshell the policies and foreseen actions to achieve Europe's commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity for people and nature on this continent. It is a summary document of a larger Pan-European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan.

What should be done to halt the loss of biodiversity in the pan European region?

Reaching the key targets and the overall 2010 target requires a broad range of actions from international to local levels. Governments are now responsible for following up on their commitments at CBD, Kyiv, Malahide and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Actions at the national level focus on the implementation of crucial elements of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans including tackling problems of a trans-boundary nature and participation in (sub) regional and international negotiations aimed at creating the right environment and incentives for biodiversity conservation.

In order to maintain and wisely use biodiversity in Europe, new approaches have to be explored and new partnerships have to be developed.

Within the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) action plans have been developed to facilitate the achievement of these targets, while benefiting of a new initiative - *Countdown 2010* - an independent communication and technical support instrument to profile the importance of the global 2010 target in the pan-European context and to monitor the progress of implementation of these targets. The action plans propose a number of catalytic activities that highlight and address elements of the key targets that best can and should be undertaken under the direct umbrella of the PEBLDS, through concerted actions, regional cooperation and capacity-building, with the involvement of governments, non-governmental organizations, relevant stakeholders, and economic sectors.

What can you do?

A great number of stakeholders exist whose activities have an impact on biological diversity, yet they have not been given the opportunity to play their part in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the pan-European region. The involvement of all stakeholders from all relevant sectors, including economic and production sectors, is vital to collectively address the root causes of biodiversity loss in the pan European region. It is also of critical importance that the entire pan-European community as well as other relevant stakeholders embrace and support, both financially and politically, the activities contained in the action plans to ensure follow up of the commitments

made at the regional and global levels. In this context, it would be essential that interested stakeholders would join the efforts of national authorities, institutions, non-governmental organisations and other partners, to implement the following flagship Action Plans contributing to the achievement of the Kyiv targets:

- Ecological networks
- Forests
- Agriculture
- Invasive alien species
- Biodiversity financing
- Biodiversity indicators and monitoring
- Public awareness and participation

Achieving the Pan-European target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 at the regional level

There are various international fora and instruments that exist to help European countries to reach each of the targets. The European Community has made important progress in the implementation of the European Community Biodiversity Strategy and its Action Plans, of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, including the establishment of the Natura 2000 Network and of biodiversity actions under the Sixth Environmental Action Programme and Sustainable Development Strategy. The European Union's Message from the Malahide Stakeholders' Conference (April 2004) – contains recommendations for priority objectives and targets to achieve the 2010 goal in the EU. The objectives of several of the pan-European Kyiv targets, therefore, will only be achieved through activities in the action plans carried out in collaboration and synergy with the European Community, particularly those involving the agricultural sector, monitoring, and ecological networks. Maximum synergies will be promoted between the Pan-European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan and the EU 2010 communication on biodiversity (in preparation). At the Third Biodiversity in Europe Conference (Madrid, January 2004), the EU Environment Commissioner pledged to work closely with the PEBLDS to achieve the 2010 targets.

What is the expected result of the implementation of the targets?

If the above targets would be fully achieved in coordination with the EU's 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan (*in preparation*), a significant contribution will have been made at the regional level

towards halting the loss of biodiversity, and the PEBLDS vision as described earlier will come true. Of course, targets and action plans only impact on reality if there is broad political, stakeholder and financial support, and when serious partnerships between all relevant stakeholders exist. Fortunately, the implementation of a number of important actions is already underway. However, much more must be done.

Which body will oversee the progress in the implementation of the Pan-European 2010 target?

The PEBLDS Council will ensure coordination of the implementation of the pan-European 2010 target and the nine Kyiv targets. The PEBLDS is an intergovernmental platform under the broad auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe's (UN-ECE) *Environment for Europe* process. Its legal framework is based on an agreement between the Council of Europe and UNEP, which provide its Joint Secretariat. The overall aim of the PEBLDS is to promote and enhance biodiversity protection in Europe, *inter alia*, through acting as an implementing arm of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The PEBLDS Council works closely with the UN-ECE and the European Commission.

How will the actions to achieve the targets be financed?

Both EU and non-EU Governments participating in the PEBLDS process will be approached for contributions for the implementation of the action plans. Closer cooperation, both financial and political, is sought from the European Commission. Besides governmental funds, it is expected that stakeholders' groups will take up certain actions, and will consider assisting PEBLDS with financial contributions. The overall costs for implementing the envisaged actions are relatively low, around 7 million Euro from 2004 – 2009. However, most of the funds required still are lacking.

What are the objectives and actions to achieve the targets, and how do they relate to policies for EU and the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region?

The Kyiv biodiversity targets will be implemented via a number of focused and concrete activities. Priority will concentrate on ensuring maximum synergy between the regions of the EU and EECCA. The annex of this document contains a summary of the targets, objectives of the action plans and major activities. The relationship between relevant EU policies and policies for the EECCA region is also highlighted.

If your organisation, company or stakeholder group is interested to become involved in the implementation of the Pan-European 2010 Implementation Plan, please contact the PEBLDS Joint Secretariat (www.strategyguide.org):

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