



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL ENVIRONMENT  
Directorate B - Natural Capital  
ENV.B.2 - Biodiversity  
ENV.B.3 - Nature

<b>CGBN</b>  <b>Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature</b>  <b>18<sup>th</sup> meeting – 12/03/15 (all day) &amp; 13/03/15 (morning)</b>		
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**OPERATIONAL SUMMARY RECORD  
OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATION GROUP FOR BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE (CGBN)  
HELD ON THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015 (ALL DAY) AND FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015 (MORNING)**

**Place: European Commission's Conference Centre "Albert Borschette" - 36, rue Froissart - B-1040 Brussels (Schuman metro station)**

*This is an operational summary record of the discussions that took place. It is to be seen in parallel with the supporting documents prepared by the Commission and posted on the CGBN CIRCABC site prior to the meeting (<https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/6f30d1d2-d6f2-4c6e-a4dc-1feb66201929> - site requesting an ECAS authentication). All presentations made during the meeting can also be found on the CIRCABC site.*

**Chairs:** François Wakenhut, Head of Unit ENV.B.2 Biodiversity and Stefan Leiner, Head of Unit ENV.B.3 Nature

## **1) Record of Previous Meetings**

### **1.1 Approval of the summary record of the previous CGBN meeting (26-27/09/2014) (doc 1.1)**

The summary record of the previous meeting was approved without any change.

### **1.2 Nature Directors meetings – Outcome of the last meeting under the Italian Presidency and information on the next meeting under the Latvian Presidency (Riga, 28-29/05/15) –(Doc. 1.2)**

Italy reported from the meeting of the Nature Directors in Rome which had been preceded by a half-day conference on the links between natural capital and cultural capital. The latter had given rise to the “Carta di Roma” that was subsequently presented by the Italian Presidency to the Environment Council in December. Italy re-affirmed its engagement with regard to the link between natural capital and cultural capital and encouraged future Presidencies to continue to work on this important

issue. The CGBN expressed its thanks to the Italian Presidency for the excellent organization of the meetings in Rome and on the excellent work carried out on natural/cultural capital.

The Latvian colleagues thanked the Italian Presidency and provided information concerning the priorities and planning of their own Presidency. The main priorities for the Latvian Presidency will be 'competitiveness' 'digital Europe' and 'engaging in Europe'. The informal Council of Environment Ministers will be a joint meeting with Energy Ministers and will in particular look at the links between biodiversity and the promotion of renewable energy. The next NDM will take place in Riga on 28/29 May. Items for discussion will include the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The meeting will be linked to a Green Spider event. There will also be a site visit to a raised bog. The ND meeting will be preceded, on 26/27 May, by a Nature conference looking at the successes and the failures of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The colleagues from Luxemburg informed the meeting that the ND meeting during the period of their Presidency was foreseen for the period 25-27 November 2015. The meeting will be held in parallel with meetings of the Water Directors/Marine Directors.

## **2) Implementation of target 1 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy**

### **2.1 Overall progress on actions under target 1 (Information Point) (Doc 2.1)**

Stefan Leiner presented an overview of the progress in relation to target 1 and the 4 associated actions. He highlighted the progress being made in relation to site designations and the Natura 2000 biogeographic process. He also referred to the financing for the network and awareness-raising, including the Natura 2000 award scheme and the publication of guidance documents.

In the discussion that followed a number of issues were raised in relation to the achievement of Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy:

- The need for a consistent approach with regard to the identification of priority species under the birds' directive and the LIF+ programme;
- The current discussions under the Alpine convention regarding the wolf and the need to ensure consistency with the EU legislation;
- The withdrawal of COPA from the large carnivore initiative which NGOs considered to be regrettable.
- The biogeographic seminar to take place in Romania in Sept/Oct and the work taking place at national level in France related to Marine Priority Areas;
- The protection measures (fisheries measures) for a number of marine areas established under the Common Fisheries Policy on the basis of joint submissions submitted by Sweden and Denmark.

### **2.2-The State of Nature Report (Discussion point with draft ND conclusions) (Doc 2.2) Presentation by the EEA of the technical report on the state of nature.**

Carlos Romao from the EEA gave a presentation summarizing the results of the reporting exercise under the Habitats (Article 17) and the Birds Directive (Article 12). The EEA (Copenhagen and the Nature/Biodiversity ETC) had analysed all the data provided by the Member States and the results of the analysis were available as detailed reports available through the EEA website-

[http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications#&c14=&c12=&c7=en&c9=all&c11=5&b\\_start=0&c5=biodiversity](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications#&c14=&c12=&c7=en&c9=all&c11=5&b_start=0&c5=biodiversity)

The analyses and reports produced by the Agency would serve as a basis for the Commission to produce the State of Nature Report which was due to be finalized in the near future.

In the discussion that followed the following issues were raised:

- The challenge of using the reporting data under the Birds and Habitats Directives to support a comprehensive assessment of ecosystem condition and the potential of satellite technologies, in particular through the Copernicus programme, to improve our capacities. EEA and the Commission explained how they were involved in the Copernicus programme;
- The central role of the Natura 2000 network in delivering the targets under the EU biodiversity strategy.
- The challenge of making the results of this massive monitoring and assessment programme accessible to a wider public. On this issue Stefan Leiner explained that the Commission were intending to produce an easy to understand, brochure summarizing the results of the reporting work.
- The EEA and Commission representatives explained how the community of experts and scientists had been fully involved in the reporting process.
- The need for greater consistency across the Member States was underlined in order to make comparisons more meaningful.
- The need for more targeted and detailed analysis in relation to particular ecosystem/habitat types e.g. those associated with agriculture and forestry, was stressed.

## **2.2 Update on the Nature Fitness Check (Information Point) (Doc 2.3)**

### **Presentation by the Commission on state of play, next steps etc.**

Micheal O'Briain gave a brief overview of the Fitness Check, explaining the context and setting out the timetable and the actions that were to be carried out. In relation to the input from Member States' authorities and stakeholders, he explained how targeted questionnaires had been sent to the national authorities and selected stakeholder groups (EU and national level). In addition the Commission would shortly be launching a public consultation. Ten countries had been identified for a detailed assessment to be carried out by the contractors supporting the Commission. These countries had been chosen on the basis of several criteria- North/South, East/West, Size, Federal/Centralized, declared interest to be part of such a process.

An important message to the CGBN meeting was that there would be extensive opportunities for input including the targeted questionnaires, the public questionnaires, the consultants' visits to the 10 Member States and a major conference towards the end of the year.

## **2.3 Natura 2000 and Hydropower (Information Point) (doc 2.4)**

Ludovic Le Maresquier presented the draft guidance document concerning Natura 2000 and hydropower. The document had been developed with the support of a consultant working together with the Commission services, experts from Member states and interested stakeholders. The work on the guidance document had also involved the colleagues working on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the colleagues from DG ENER. Mr Le Maresquier indicated that comments in relation to the draft document should be sent before end-March .

In the discussion that followed the following points were raised:

- The guidance was important and very timely as the push for renewable sources of energy was leading to more and more proposals for hydro-power projects. Where Natura 2000 sites were concerned it was essential to respect the obligations of Articles 6.3 and 6.4.
- Greece raised the issue of minimum ecological flows.
- Several Member States and organizations indicated their intention to provide comments.

## **2.4 The Wild-Life Estates Label (Information Point)**

Mr Kostas Kostopoulos presented the Wild-Life Estates label: an initiative supported by ELO to provide recognition and support to landowners/land-managers for nature-friendly land-use/land-management practices. The initiative has significant success across the Union with many land/estate owners joining the scheme.

In the discussion that followed, several Member States indicated their interest and support for this initiative.

## **3. The Year of Natural Capital (Discussion point leading to draft conclusions for the next Nature Directors meeting) (Doc. 3.0)**

Laure Ledoux made a presentation on the Year of Natural Capital (YNC) explaining its origin and the timetable for the series of events that would be taking place during the year. She highlighted the opportunity for linking events taking place in the Member States as being part of the YNC.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, several issues were raised:

- There was wide support for the initiative of the YNC;
- There were many activities taking place in the Member States that could be linked to the YNC. The Milan Expo and the European Green Capital events in Bristol were identified as two very high-profile events of particularly high relevance;
- The YNC should also profile the issue of cultural capital and its link to natural capital;
- Linkages between national initiatives/events such as the Fete de la Nature in France and the EU Green Week were also highlighted;
- The need for stronger links with political milestones such as the greening of the European Semester and the EU 2020 agenda were also emphasized;
- Some Member States indicated that they were using the term ecosystem services rather than natural capital;
- With regard to the draft conclusions for the next meeting of the Nature Directors, several Member States indicated support for the general direction of proposed text but had reservations with regard to some aspects of the drafting.

In conclusion, Francois Wakenhut encouraged CGBN members to support the YNC and to link foreseen events at national level with EU level actions. He noted the comments made in relation to the draft conclusions for the Nature Directors and undertook to work with the Latvian Presidency to improve the text in the light of the comments received.

## **4. Implementation of Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.**

### **4.1 MAES, Restoration, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity Proofing and No Net Loss Information Point) (Doc. 4.1)**

Laure Ledoux presented a short overview concerning implementation of the actions linked to Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy. The work on mapping and assessment continued to attract increasing levels of support across the Commission and among the Member States and stakeholder groups. Work on the development of Restoration Prioritization Frameworks (RPFs) in the Member States (Action 6a) was very slow to take-off with only 2 Member States responding to the Commission's request for information on the development of national/sub-national RPFs. Work on Green Infrastructure was continuing although there were a number of issues related to the future activities of the working group (see below). In relation to the EU initiative on No Net Loss, work was continuing on the development of the associated impact assessment. It had also been decided to postpone the finalization of the initiative until the completion of the Nature REFIT report.

In the discussion that followed the following points were raised:

- There is a strong linkage between the work under MAES and the work to be undertaken in IPBES.
- In relation to the development of national/sub-national RPFs it was underlined that the award criteria for biodiversity restoration projects under LIFE+ included the requirement to demonstrate that the proposed project was linked to the delivery of the national/sub-national RPFs. In the absence of RPFs points would not be awarded in relation to that criterion.
- In relation to the future NNL initiative the Commission explained how the results from the public consultation would be taken into account. Over 700 responses were received with a wide spread across the Member States and a wide range of respondent types. The Commission would use the feedback received but it was too early to give an indication as to the nature and content of the future initiative.

### **4.2 Future work on Green Infrastructure including the role of the GI Working Group (Discussion point) (Doc. 4.2)**

Marco Fritz made a short presentation regarding the future work on GI and on the role of the GI working Group. In particular, the Commission was concerned that only a small number of Member States were participating in the work of the group and in such circumstances it was appropriate to reflect on whether the GI work should be continued in some alternative format.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- GI activities were being undertaken in many Member States but predominantly at local and regional levels and consequently the relevance of detailed technical discussions at the level of the EU was not always clear;
- GI was important and it was useful to exchange experiences and good practices. However, rules, standardized approaches and common reporting mechanisms were not supported.
- Several Member States (SE and FI) and the EHF were explicitly in favour of the continuation of the working group whereas the majority, while positive in relation to GI in general, could not commit to giving active support to the Working Group.

In his summing up, the chair, Francois Wakenhut, indicated that on the basis of the feedback received, the Commission would suspend the GI working group unless the Nature Directors would provide explicit support for continuing. The Commission would reflect on how it would continue its activities on GI (information platforms, websites, conferences/workshops/focussed technical meetings etc.).

## **5. Implementation of Targets 3 and 4 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy**

### **5.1 Update on progress in relation to RDPs and OPs (Information point) (Doc. 5.1)**

Vujadin Kovacevic and Przemek Oginski presented an overview of the current position concerning the Rural Development Plans under CAP and the Operational Programmes under the ERDF/Cohesion Fund with regard to the foreseen investments in nature and biodiversity. Units in DG ENV had screened several hundred plans/programmes and the work was still ongoing. One of the major challenges with regard to the tracking of funding directed to nature/ biodiversity, concerned the precise nature of the actions that would be taken on the ground: allocation of monies to a particular budget heading was not necessarily a guarantee that investments would be positive for biodiversity/nature.

In the discussion that followed the following issues were raised:

- Many participants expressed their appreciation to the Commission for making the information available. In some cases environmental authorities were not informed of the final outcome of the negotiations at national level.
- Some Member States were of the view that overall the picture was not as bad as initially feared and that there were some grounds for optimism. With regard to pillar 1 of the CAP, it was felt by some speakers that it was too early to come to any conclusion regarding the impact of the greening measures;
- Representatives of the EHF and FoE indicated their disappointment with regard to what they considered to be the projected low-level of investment in nature and biodiversity.

In summing up, the chair, Francois Wakenhut, underlined that the results were preliminary, that many programmes/plans had yet to be agreed and that work would continue to complete and refine the analysis. The resulting output would be used to inform the mid-term review process for the CAP and the Regional Development Policy.

### **5.2 The joint workshop of WFD, MSFD, Nature and Biodiversity (Information Point) (Doc. 5.2)**

The Commission, Fotios Papoulias, made a short presentation concerning the ongoing work to promote better co-ordination in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Birds and Habitats Directives. A very successful workshop was held in end 2014 and a second joint Director meeting was being planned for 2015 under the Luxemburg Presidency.

#### **6) Target 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy-Recent developments linked to the implementation of the IAS Regulation (Information point)**

Myriam Dumortier made a short presentation concerning the implementation of the new Regulation. She, in particular, drew the attention of the participants to the proposal from the Commission concerning the (re)establishment of an IAS working group under the CGBN. Dr. Dumortier also drew the attention of the meeting to recent activities at the level of the UN in the field of Invasive Alien Species.

In the discussion that followed, several participants expressed their satisfaction with the progress that was being made on implementation. Several Member States intervened to express their general support for the (re) establishment of the Working Group while at the same time underlining the need for avoiding duplication of work and programming meetings so as to reduce travel costs (back to back meetings where possible). The link between the WG, the Committee established under the Regulation and the Scientific Forum associated with the Regulation should be made as clear as possible.

#### **7) Target 6 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy (Information Point)**

The representatives of the Commission Arnold Jacques de Dixmude from DG DEVCO, with supporting input from Karin Zaunberger (DG ENV) made a presentation concerning the promotion of biodiversity in the context of the EU's development policy with a particular focus on the way that the BEST activities had been used as a lever to encourage biodiversity related actions. .

The FoE representative reminded the meeting of the international commitments to doubling international finance flows by 2015. France underlined the importance of the Guadeloupe conference and its follow-up. In response to a question from the UK, the Commission representatives confirmed that with regard to LIFE+, Overseas Territories could apply for funds in the case where the foreseen action contributed to the delivery of EU legislation.

#### **8. Preparation for EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy mid-term review. Discussion point with draft ND conclusions(Doc 8.0)**

Anne Teller (DG ENV) presented the current situation with regard to the Mid-Term Review (MTR). Her presentation included information on what would be included regarding progress at the EU level as well as information received so far on the actions being taken at the level of the individual Member States. The current planning was that the report on the mid-term Review would be finalized in the early summer. The representative from Luxembourg indicated that, the Luxembourg Presidency was planning to have Council conclusions on the MTR at the December Council.

In the discussions that followed, several Member States indicated that they had more up-to-date information concerning the progress that was being made at national level and others had comments and/or proposals for text changes. Participants asked for more information concerning the procedure and the timing for taking this updated information/comments/amendments on-board. Bird-Life indicated that it would shortly be producing its own mid-term report on the EU biodiversity strategy. The EEA underlined the need for linking the MTR to its own State of the Environment Report.

In his concluding remarks, the chair, Francois Wakenhut, made the following points:

- That the MTR was directed at reviewing the delivery of the strategy and not at revisiting the strategy itself;
- That it was very important for Member States to reflect upon the steps to be taken once the report is published as well as how to use the discussion around the MTR to attract more attention to biodiversity.
- That the latest comments from Member States will be incorporated and a revised final version will be available by mid-April
- The Commission will also hold a session on the MTR on 6 June in Brussels in the context of Green Week.

## **9. Financing the delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy (Information point) (Doc.9)**

The Commission made a short presentation describing recent progress in relation to the financing of the EU biodiversity strategy. The presentation focussed in particular on the tracking of biodiversity funding in EU funding instruments and a short-update regarding the development of the Natural Capital Financing Facility.(NCFF).

In the discussion that followed the following points were raised:

- Several Member States voiced their support for the focus on the tracking of biodiversity funding. There was also an interest in getting more information in relation to the new methodologies that were being applied in the tracking process.
- In relation to the NCFF, several Member States indicated that they would appreciate more information concerning the development of the project pipeline and how the Commission and the EIB were raising awareness in the Member States and with which stakeholders the bank was working.

The Commission explained that to the extent that confidentiality and Bank practices allowed, more information would become available as the project pipe-line was developed. Concerning awareness raising, questionnaires have been sent out and stakeholder seminars were being considered; initially to be centralized in Brussels but if there was a strong enough demand, seminars in Member States could be considered. With regard to biodiversity tracking, the new procedures and methodologies will be made available as soon as internal discussions between Commission services are completed.

## **10. Business and Biodiversity (Information point) (Doc 10.0)**

Strahil Christov gave a short presentation concerning the development of phase 2 of the EU Business and Biodiversity platform. The presentation described the events that had taken place as well as the work been undertaken on a number of selected thematic areas.

In the discussions that followed the following points were made:

- Finland indicated its support for the work on Business and Biodiversity and highlighted the linkages with major CBD meeting on Natural Capital Accounting taking place in Finland in 2016;



- The UK stressed the need to see outputs from the B&B platform and to link the work of the platform with the other activities taking place under the EU biodiversity strategy. The issue of clarity in terminology was also raised.
- DE stressed the distinction between natural capital accounts as applied in the public vs the private sector.

### **11. Recent and Upcoming Meetings**

The planning document is kept regularly up-to-date on circabc. Participants were invited to take note of future events and to suggest amendments.

The meeting took note of the information in the planning document.

# **18<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATION GROUP FOR BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE**

**HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> AND 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015 IN BRUSSELS**

## **List of attendees**

### **Member States:**

- Austria: Edda-Maria BERTEL, Arno ASCHAUER
- Belgium: Els MARTENS
- Croatia: Ana KOBASLIC
- Cyprus: Eleni STYLIANOPOULOU
- Czech Republic: Jiri MACH
- Denmark: Lars RUDFELD, Annette SAMUELSEN
- Estonia: Kadri MÖLLER
- Finland: Kristiina NIIKKONEN
- France: Fanny LENDI-RAMIREZ
- Germany: Christa RATTE, Detlef SZYMANSKI
- Greece: Eleni TRYFON
- Hungary: Rozalia ERDINE SZEKERES
- Ireland: Ciaran O'KEEFFE
- Italy: Eugenio DUPRÉ
- Latvia: Ilona MENDZINA
- Luxembourg: Frank WOLF
- Malta: Marie-Thérèse GAMBIN
- The Netherlands: Hans VAN DEN HEUVEL, Herman SNIJDERS
- Portugal: Mario SILVA
- Romania: Samad John SMARANDA
- Slovak Republic: Veronika VYSNA
- Slovenia: Branka TAVZES
- Spain: Miguel AYMERICH
- Sweden: Mette SVEJGAARD
- United Kingdom: Chris DE GROUCHY, Steven DORA

Not represented: Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland

**European Environment Agency / European Topic Centre:** Ivone PEREIRA MARTINS (EEA), Ronan UHEL (EEA), Dominique RICHARD (ETC), Sophie CONDÉ (ETC)

### **NGOs and other stakeholders:**

- BirdLife: Wouter LANGHOUT
- BUSINESS EUROPE: Catrin SCHIFFER
- CEPF (Confédération européenne des propriétaires forestiers): Clemens von DODERER
- CLIENT EARTH: Flamina TACCONI
- EAA (European Anglers' Alliance): Jan KAPPEL
- ECNC (European Centre for Nature Conservation): Neil MCINTOSH
- EHF (European Habitats Forum): Vera COELHO

- ELO (European Landowners' Organization) Delphine DUPEUX, Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS
- EPBRS (European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy) Jurgen TACK
- FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU): Cy GRIFFIN, C
- FOE (Friends of the Earth): Friedrich WULF
- IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature): Melanie YAMMINE, Ana NIETO
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme): Maria MORGADO, Claire BROWN (UNEP-WCMC)

**European Commission** *(attended all or part of the meeting): various colleagues mainly from units ENV.B.2 "Biodiversity" and ENV.B.3 "Nature" but also a from other DG Environment units and from other Commission Directorates General.*