



Reinforcing Europe's resilience: halting biodiversity loss and building a healthy and sustainable food system

Brussels, 20 May 2020

Today, the European Commission adopted a comprehensive new [Biodiversity Strategy to bring nature back into our lives](#) and a [Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system](#). The two strategies are mutually reinforcing, bringing together nature, farmers, business and consumers for jointly working towards a competitively sustainable future.

In line with the [European Green Deal](#), they propose **ambitious EU actions and commitments to halt biodiversity loss in Europe and worldwide** and **transform our food systems** into global standards for competitive sustainability, the protection of human and planetary health, as well as the livelihoods of all actors in the food value chain. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how vulnerable the increasing biodiversity loss makes us and how crucial a well-functioning food system is for our society. The two strategies put the citizen at the centre, by committing to increase the protection of land and sea, restoring degraded ecosystems and establishing the EU as a leader on the international stage both on the protection of biodiversity and on building a sustainable food chain.

The **new Biodiversity Strategy** tackles the key drivers of biodiversity loss, such as unsustainable use of land and sea, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, and invasive alien species. Adopted in the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy is a central element of the EU's recovery plan, crucial to preventing and building resilience to future outbreaks and providing immediate business and investment opportunities for restoring the EU's economy. It also aims to make biodiversity considerations an integral part of EU's overall economic growth strategy. The strategy proposes to, among others, establish binding targets to restore damaged ecosystems and rivers, improve the health of EU protected habitats and species, bring back pollinators to agricultural land, reduce pollution, green our cities, enhance organic farming and other biodiversity-friendly farming practices, and improve the health of European forests. The strategy brings forward concrete steps to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, including transforming at least 30% of Europe's lands and seas into effectively managed protected areas and bringing back at least 10% of agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features.

The actions foreseen in nature protection, sustainable use and restoration will bring economic benefits to local communities, creating sustainable jobs and growth. Funding of EUR 20 billion/year will be unlocked for biodiversity through various sources, including EU funds, national and private funding.

The **Farm to Fork Strategy** will enable the transition to a sustainable EU food system that safeguards food security and ensures access to healthy diets sourced from a healthy planet. It will reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system and strengthen its resilience, protecting citizens' health and ensuring the livelihoods of economic operators. The strategy sets concrete targets to transform the EU's food system, including a reduction by 50% of the use and risk of pesticides, a reduction by at least 20% of the use of fertilizers, a reduction by 50% in sales of antimicrobials used for farmed animals and aquaculture, and reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming. It also proposes ambitious measures to ensure that the healthy option is the easiest for EU citizens, including improved labelling to better meet consumers' information needs on healthy, sustainable foods.

European farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers play a key role in the transition to a more equitable and sustainable food system. They will get support from the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy through new streams of funding and eco-schemes to take up sustainable practices. Making sustainability Europe's trademark will open new business opportunities and diversify sources of income for European farmers and fishers.

As core parts of the [European Green Deal](#), the two strategies will also support the economic recovery. In the coronavirus context, they aim to strengthen our societies' resilience to future pandemics and threats such as climate impacts, forest fires, food insecurity or disease outbreaks, including by supporting more sustainable practices for agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture and by addressing wildlife protection and illegal wildlife trade.

The strategies also have important international elements. The Biodiversity Strategy reaffirms the EU's

determination to lead by example in tackling the global biodiversity crisis. The Commission would seek to mobilise all tools of external action and international partnerships to help develop an ambitious new UN Global Biodiversity Framework at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021. The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to promote a global transition to sustainable food systems, in close cooperation with its international partners.

Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal Frans **Timmermans** said: "*The coronavirus crisis has shown how vulnerable we all are, and how important it is to restore the balance between human activity and nature. Climate change and biodiversity loss are a clear and present danger to humanity. At the heart of the Green Deal the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies point to a new and better balance of nature, food systems and biodiversity; to protect our people's health and well-being, and at the same time to increase the EU's competitiveness and resilience. These strategies are a crucial part of the great transition we are embarking upon.*"

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food safety said, "*We must move forward and make the EU's food system a driving force for sustainability. The Farm to Fork Strategy will make a positive difference across the board in how we produce, buy and consume our food that will benefit the health of our citizens, societies and the environment. It offers the opportunity to reconcile our food systems with our planet's health, to ensure food security and meet the aspirations of Europeans for healthy, equitable and eco-friendly food.*"

Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus **Sinkevičius** said: "*Nature is vital for our physical and mental wellbeing, it filters our air and water, it regulates the climate and it pollinates our crops. But we are acting as if it didn't matter, and losing it at an unprecedented rate. This new Biodiversity Strategy builds on what has worked in the past, and adds new tools that will set us on a path to true sustainability, with benefits for all. The EU's aim is to protect and restore nature, to contribute to economic recovery from the current crisis, and to lead the way for an ambitious global framework to protect biodiversity around the planet.*"

Next steps

The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to endorse these two strategies and its commitments. All citizens and stakeholders are invited to engage in a broad public debate.

Background

The [European Green Deal](#), presented by the von der Leyen Commission on 11 December 2019, sets an ambitious roadmap towards a climate-neutral circular economy, where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

The European Green Deal is underpinned by an ambitious goal to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by transforming our food systems, forest, land, water and sea use, as well as energy, urban and industrial systems. It also highlights the critical importance of tackling climate change and biodiversity together.

More Information

Press Material:

[Question and Answers on Biodiversity Strategy](#)

[Questions and Answers on Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

[Factsheet on Biodiversity Strategy](#)

[Factsheet on Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

[Factsheet on The business case for biodiversity](#)

[Factsheet on Benefits for farmers](#)

[Factsheet on The Common Agriculture Policy's contribution to the European Green Deal](#)

Documents:

[Biodiversity Strategy](#)

[Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

Documents accompanying the Farm to Fork Strategy:

[Staff Working Document on the link between the CAP reform and the Green Deal](#)

Please see [here](#) for accompanying documents to the farm to fork strategy:

- Roadmap for the Fitness check of the animal welfare legislation;
- Implementation Report on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive;
- Report on the REFIT evaluation of the pesticide legislation;

- Report on front-of-pack nutrition labelling;
- Staff Working Document on the evaluation of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation.

Opinion of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, "[Towards a Sustainable Food System – Moving from food as a commodity to food as more of a common good](#)"

Websites:

[European Green Deal](#)

[Biodiversity](#)

[Farm to fork](#)

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