



Integration for Biodiversity in European Union

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1. Introduction

European Union report¹ that since 1997, integration is a requirement under the Treaty establishing the European Community. Article 6 of the Treaty states that 'environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community policies [...] in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development'. Environmental integration means making sure that environmental concerns such as biodiversity are fully considered in the decisions and activities of other sectors. Policy areas of specific importance for environmental integration are Agriculture, Cohesion Policy, Development, Employment, Energy, Enterprise, Fisheries, Internal Market, Research, Trade and External Relations, Transport and Economic and Financial Affairs. For more information please see: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/integration.htm>.

2. The Cardiff Process

The Cardiff process, which was launched by European heads of state and government in 1998, provides a mechanism for integrating environment considerations into key sectors of EU policy. It has contributed to raising the political profile of integration, which is now being regularly discussed at the highest political level. Each Directorate-General of the European Commission has an 'integration correspondent', while a number have specialist environmental units. The Agriculture and Rural Development DG and the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs DG, for instance, have promoted integration of biodiversity concerns into revisions of the common agricultural policy (CAP) and the common fisheries policy (CFP), respectively. For more information please see: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l28075.htm>.

3. EU Sustainable Development Strategy

In 2001, the European Council adopted the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which provides a long-term vision that involves combining a dynamic economy with social cohesion and high environmental standards. It requires a new emphasis on policy coordination and integration. As part of the implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the Commission has extended the impact assessment system to all major policy proposals. This approach provides information on the tradeoffs between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development to inform decisions. By providing a full appraisal of the potential environmental costs and benefits of all major Commission proposals, and the costs and benefits of specific environmental measures, it helps promote environmental integration. The Sustainable Development Strategy strengthened the biodiversity strategy that was adopted in 1998, by adopting the target to 'halt' the decline in biodiversity by 2010 inside the EU. Under the 1998 biodiversity strategy, four biodiversity action plans were adopted in 2001, on conservation of natural resources, agriculture, fisheries and economic and development cooperation. For more information please see: <http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/>.

¹ European Union (2009). Fourth National Report of the European Community to the Convention on Biological Diversity, May 2009, 91 pp.

4. The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community 2002-2012

In July 2002, the EU adopted its sixth environment action programme ('Environment 2010: our future, our choice'), which established a 10-year framework for priorities under the Sustainable Development Strategy. The programme addresses nature and biodiversity protection as a matter of priority. The importance of integration is reaffirmed in the Sixth Environment Action Programme, which stipulates that 'integration of environmental concerns into other policies must be deepened' in order to move towards sustainable development. Nature and biodiversity are one of the priorities of the EU's sixth environment action programme 2002-12. For more information please see: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>.

The Environment Directorate-General (DG) of the European Commission has integrated biodiversity considerations into environmental policy — for example, in strategies concerning air quality, pesticide use, soils and the marine environment, as well as in directives on nitrates and the EU water framework. However, biological diversity is affected by many EU activities. Many more DGs are therefore involved in implementing the CBD to some degree.

The Commission's Directorate-General Environment established an interdepartmental coordination group on 'Biodiversity'. A subgroup deals with interdepartmental coordination in relation to implementation of EU Biodiversity Action Plan and delivery of the EU 2010 biodiversity target. Another interdepartmental co-ordination group on biodiversity deals with the international aspects of biodiversity. The international formation of this group serves to ensure inter-departmental coordination on meetings under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The groups are composed of representatives of a broad range of Commission services including Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Communities), the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, Directorate-General Agriculture, Directorate-General Competition, Directorate-General Economic and Financial Affairs, Directorate-General Education and Culture, Directorate-General Employment, Directorate-General Transport and Energy, Directorate-General Enterprise, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Directorate-General Health and Consumers, Directorate-General Information Society, Directorate-General Market, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security, Directorate General Regional Policy, Directorate-General Research, Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union, Directorate-General Development, Directorate-General Enlargement, Directorate-General AIDCO, Directorate-General External Relations, Directorate-General Trade and the Legal Service.

5. Integration of biodiversity in Agriculture

Many of the biodiversity-rich habitats in need of conservation are situated in, or close to, land devoted to agriculture. These habitats need to be maintained appropriately. The recent reforms of the common agriculture policy (CAP) have enabled further integration of biodiversity concerns into agricultural policy. With the major reform of 2003, national statutory requirements derived from EU directives concerning *inter alia* birds, habitats, nitrates and pesticides were included in the reference level to be respected by farmers (i.e. cross-compliance). Standards of good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) are

also part of cross-compliance, some of them having a positive impact on biodiversity, e.g. retention of landscape features or protection of permanent pasture. The new 2005 rural development regulation also refers to the objectives of the sixth environment action programme, stating that ‘key issues to be addressed include biodiversity, Natura 2000 site management, the protection of water and soil, climate change mitigation, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the reduction of ammonia emissions, and the sustainable use of pesticides’.

The rural development policy provides Member States with several possibilities to support environmental integration, lessen the adverse environmental impacts of farming, and reconcile agriculture with the objectives of the CBD. Community strategic guidelines for rural development, adopted in 2006, offer advice on how biodiversity enhancement can be made compatible with changes to land management. They aim to protect and enhance the EU’s natural resources and landscapes in rural areas. The resources allocated to the objective of improving the environment and the countryside should contribute to achieving three EU priorities: biodiversity and the preservation and development of high nature value farming and forestry systems and traditional agricultural landscapes; water; and climate change.

One possibility for the Member States is to use a series of agri-environmental measures, designed to encourage farmers to protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity, in ways that go beyond the reference level of cross-compliance and other standards. During the period 2000-2006, around a quarter of all utilised agriculture land in the EU receives funding through the agri-environment payments, including sites in the Natura 2000 network. These measures include appropriate management of set-aside areas for conservation purposes, upkeep abandoned farmland and woodland to benefit farm-dependent species, maintaining landscape features, such as hedgerows, stone walls and ponds, reducing pesticide and fertiliser use and facilitating public access to agricultural land of environmental interest.

Other possibilities include measures to help farmers comply with demanding, newly introduced EU standards, measures for the conservation of genetic resources in agriculture, for training, for using and setting up farm advisory services, for non-productive investment and for payments in areas with natural handicaps at risk of land abandonment. The single farm payment scheme (SFP), introduced in 2003, is expected to help conserve biodiversity, by decoupling direct payments from agricultural production ('cross-compliance'). This removes a key incentive for intensive production. Full payments will only be granted under this scheme if standards for Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition and specific provisions in environmental legislation are met, including provisions under the birds and habitats directives, as well as legislation on pesticides ('cross-compliance').

As part of the Health Check of the 2003 CAP reform, the Council decided to make available additional rural development funding for *inter alia* biodiversity, via an increased transfer of money from the first to the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (i.e. modulation). It also decided to strengthen the GAEC standard on landscape features, and to add two new GAEC standards concerning the establishment of buffer strips along watercourses (compulsory) and the establishment and/or retention

of habitats (optional). These will also contribute to retaining the environmental benefits of set-aside which was abolished.

Indicators have been specially developed to assess farmland biodiversity. For example, in 2004, a set of indicators for farmland birds was added to the EU biodiversity headline indicators database. In September 2006, the Commission issued a communication entitled 'Development of agri-environmental indicators for monitoring the integration of environmental concerns into the CAP'. The communication reviewed the progress made on developing agri-environmental indicators through the IRENA project, and identified key challenges and actions for future work to make all the selected indicators fully operational in terms of concepts, methodology and data availability and quality. This concerns also indicators explicitly addressing biodiversity (e.g. high nature value farmland).

Over the last few years, organic farming in Europe has expanded, to the benefit of biodiversity. Organic farming has been encouraged by EU funding for farmers willing to convert to organic methods of production. A European action plan for organic food and farming was adopted in June 2004, strengthening research on organic agriculture and production methods. It also aimed at improving and reinforcing the Community's organic farming standards, import and inspection requirements and completing and further harmonising the standards for organic agriculture. This objective led to the adoption in 2007 of a new Regulation on organic farming². For more information please see: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/index_en.htm.

6. Integration of biodiversity in Maritime and Water Policies

Human activities have exerted pressure on marine, coastal and inland water ecosystems. Biodiversity concerns therefore must be integrated into the management of marine resources, water and fisheries.

The EU biodiversity strategy put forward broad objectives for the fisheries sector, while the biodiversity action plan for fisheries, adopted in 2001, made specific recommendations to protect biodiversity from the impact of marine fisheries and aquaculture. The action plan for environmental integration, adopted in 2002, contained guiding principles, management measures and a work programme to move towards an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries and to limit the environmental impact of the common fisheries policy (CFP).

These objectives, integrated into the reformed CFP, include:

- reducing fishing pressure to sustainable levels;
- improving fishing methods to reduce discard, by-catch and the impact on habitats;
- protecting non-target species and habitats; and
- decreasing the environmental impacts of aquaculture.

² Council Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91, OJ L189, 20.7.2007, p. 1

A shift in focus, from supply-side productivity towards an ecosystem-based approach, is a major step to safeguard the EU's marine resources and their sustainable management. This is in line with the objectives of the CBD. However, much remains to be done. Many fish stocks in EU waters have been overexploited as a result of a complex interplay of driving forces. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) set 2015 as a deadline to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield. The EU has recently developed a number of policies and schemes aimed at implementing the EU commitment to this objective.

The aim of the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (adopted in June 2008) is to protect more effectively the marine environment across Europe. It aims to achieve a good environmental status of the EU's marine waters by 2021 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive constitutes the vital environmental component of the Union's future maritime policy, designed to achieve the full economic potential of oceans and seas in harmony with the marine environment.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive establishes European Marine Regions on the basis of geographical and environmental criteria. Each Member State — cooperating with other Member States and non-EU countries within a marine region — are required to develop strategies for their marine waters. The marine strategies to be developed by each Member State must contain a detailed assessment of the state of the environment, a definition of 'good environmental status' at regional level and the establishment of clear environmental targets and monitoring programmes. The goal of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is in line with the objectives of the 2000 Water Framework Directive 2000, which requires surface freshwater and ground water bodies — such as lakes, streams, rivers, estuaries, and coastal waters — to be ecologically sound by 2015 and the first review of the River Basin Management Plans should take place in 2020.

An increased emphasis on sustainability is also influencing EU policy regarding fishing beyond EU waters. In accordance with its duties under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the CBD, the EU cooperates with other parties to manage marine living resources effectively. The EU also actively promotes global progress in the development of effective international fisheries governance within multilateral institutions, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Bodies and the CBD. In October 2007, two important proposals were adopted by the Commission: a proposal to protect fragile deep-water ecosystems from bottom trawling in the high seas, in line with the recommendations issued by the UN General Assembly in December 2006, and a proposal aimed at improving the fight against 'illegal, unreported and unregulated' (IUU) fishing. Proposed measures would allow access to EU markets only to fisheries products that have been certified as legal by the flag state or the exporting state concerned. A European blacklist of vessels and states would be set up, as would deterrent sanctions against IUU fishing in EU waters and against EU operators engaged in IUU fishing anywhere in the world. Lastly, the EU has adopted a policy on fisheries partnership agreements with third countries, including measures to ensure sustainable fisheries management through improved scientific advice, reinforced fisheries controls and capacity building.

The EU water framework directive changed the way fresh and coastal waters are managed, to improve water quality and the way aquatic ecosystems in Europe work. The directive contains a number of qualitative and quantitative targets, such as the requirement that all surface water must not deteriorate in quality and that it should achieve good ecological and chemical status by 2015. Key actions include integrated management, international cooperation, environmental assessment and public participation. Implementation of the directive will ensure the maintenance of biodiversity in aquatic ecosystems and contribute to wider biodiversity objectives. For more information please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/management_resources_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/external_relations_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/marine/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html

7. Integration of Biodiversity in Research Policy

EU multi-year framework programmes for research and technological development (RTD) allocate considerable funds for research on biological diversity conservation. Global change and ecosystems are among the research priority areas for 2002–06. Framework funds are also used to improve scientific support to policy. From 1998 to 2006, the EU allocated about EUR 100 million to biodiversity-related projects.

These projects include ALARM (assessing large-scale environmental risks with tested methods) and Daisie (delivering alien invasive species inventories for Europe). Optimising the infrastructure for sharing taxonomic information is a priority, in support of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Research supporting integration of biodiversity concerns into the CAP and the CFP is also funded.

The seventh framework programme (2007–13) provides further opportunities to carry out research aiming to support implementation of the CBD.

Many EU-funded biodiversity research projects also involve developing and other third countries. Many involve training to identify, conserve and use biological diversity in a sustainable way.

The European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) aims to identify and promote strategically important biodiversity research that will contribute to policies and management relating to biodiversity loss. The EPBRS developed and adopted a biodiversity research action plan, in 2005, which identifies the most urgent research needs in the field of biodiversity in Europe. For more information please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=bio

8. Integration of Biodiversity in External Policies

EU policy addresses the relationship between biological diversity and poverty eradication within EU policy. The EU (Member States and European Commission) is the world's largest donor in the field of

environment and natural resources. The EU Councils of both Environment and Development Cooperation Ministers have welcomed the ‘Message from Paris’ adopted at the Conference on Integrating Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation (19–21 September 2006 in Paris).

As regards the mainstreaming of biodiversity in development cooperation, country environmental profiles have been identified for most partner countries which stress the important role of biodiversity. Almost all draft country strategy papers include a commitment to undertake strategic environmental assessments (SEAs), which will be essential to avoid negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. As the new development cooperation policy will be guided by the principles of partnership and ownership, substantial additional funding for biodiversity will only materialise if biodiversity is effectively integrated as a priority objective in partner countries’ national development strategies or poverty reduction strategies. However, very few countries have identified biodiversity as a priority sector for cooperation in their country strategy papers. This is a major impediment to increasing EU funding for biodiversity in development cooperation. In order to raise awareness and build the capacity of staff to integrate the environmental dimension in EC development cooperation and into partner countries’ sector policies and programmes, the European Commission funds a project on environmental integration in EC development co-operation (see http://www.environment-integration.eu/component?option.com_frontpage&Itemid,155&lang,en/) that provides information and training. Furthermore, Directorate-General Development produced specific programming papers on biodiversity to guide the programming of strategy papers (see http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/iqsg/tools_fiches_en.cfm).

The EU also supports neighbouring countries. At the Fifth Ministerial Conference on ‘Environment for Europe’ (Kiev, 2003), European environment ministers passed a resolution calling for substantially increased public and private investment for integrating biodiversity activities Europe-wide by 2008. For more information please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/environment/biodiversity/biodiversity_en.cfm

9. Sectoral and Cross sectoral integration of biodiversity under the current EU Biodiversity Action Plan

The current EU Biodiversity Action Plan addresses the challenge of integrating biodiversity concerns into other policy sectors in a unified way. It identifies a comprehensive plan of priority action and outlines the responsibility of community institutions and Member States in relation to each. The Action Plan focuses on implementation and calls for the full integration of biodiversity concerns into all other EU policy areas, from territorial and rural development policies to fisheries and development cooperation.

The Action Plan represents an important new approach for EU biodiversity policy as it is the first time that all relevant economic sectors and policy areas are addressed in a single strategy document and apportioned a share of the responsibility to implement it. The plan explicitly calls for an integration of

biodiversity into agricultural, marine, fisheries, external and research policies and identifies concrete methods to do so.

Under objective 2, which aims to conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU countryside, the Action Plan identifies a target for Member States to optimise the use of opportunities under agricultural, rural development and forest policy to benefit biodiversity between 2007 and 2013. For agricultural and rural development policy, the Plan describes 12 actions to achieve this target (e.g. ‘encourage that implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy first pillar benefits biodiversity, notably through mandatory cross compliance, and decoupling (single farm payments and single area payment scheme) and by encouraging take-up of modulation by the Member States’) and three further actions for forest policy (e.g. ‘ensure that the forthcoming EU Forest Action Plan addresses forest biodiversity among the priorities, in line with the EU Forest Strategy and the 6th Environment Action Programme’).

Objective 3 of the Biodiversity Action Plan aims to conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU marine environment. Five targets, underpinned by 12 specific actions, for Maritime and Fisheries Policy are identified under this objective. The targets are to take an ecosystem approach to protecting seas and to take fisheries management measures no later than 2016, to substantially enhance funding provided to environmentally-friendly fisheries management from 2007 onwards, to have stock levels maintained or restored to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, where possible no later than 2015, to reduce the impact of fisheries on non-target species and habitats progressively and substantially from 2006 onwards and to have substantially improved information and reporting on environmental integration of the Common Fisheries Policy from 2008 onwards.

The Action Plan also addresses regional policy and spatial planning. Both are covered by objective 4, which calls for improving the compatibility of regional and territorial development with biodiversity in the EU. The objective identifies five targets in the fields of cohesion and structural funds, territorial plans, spatial planning and tourism.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan also recognises the vital importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services to livelihoods and the achievement of the millennium development goals in developing countries. Objective 7 is ‘to substantially strengthen support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU external assistance’. Specific action is grouped into two targets: to substantially increase in real terms the financial resources flowing to programmes and projects which directly benefit biodiversity for the period 2006–10 compared with the period 2000–05, and to ensure that biodiversity is ‘mainstreamed’ into EU development assistance and that negative impacts on biodiversity are prevented or minimised.

Furthermore the goal to support measure three of the Action Plan is to build partnerships for biodiversity. Action under this measure includes establishing farming and biodiversity, forestry and biodiversity, business and biodiversity and finance and biodiversity partnerships.

