



### **European Network of Heads of Nature Conservation Agencies (ENCA)**

ENCA is an informal network, which fosters exchange of information and collaboration amongst its partners, identifies future challenges and offers information and advice to decision-makers in the field of nature conservation and landscape protection.

ENCA brings together scientific evidence and knowledge of practical application together with experiences in administration and policy advice in the context of biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services. More details can be found at [www.encanetwork.eu](http://www.encanetwork.eu).

## **ENCA recommendations for an 8<sup>th</sup> EU Environment Action Programme**

The 7<sup>th</sup> EAP 'Living well within the Limits of the Planet' runs until the end of 2020, which is only 11 months away. Therefore, the European Network of Heads of Nature Conservation Agencies (ENCA) needs to consider the future of European environmental and nature conservation after 2020.

ENCA welcomes the recent call of the Council of the European Union to the European Commission to present an ambitious and focused proposal for the 8<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (EAP) for the period 2021 – 2030 recognising biodiversity as an important pillar. We also support biodiversity as a focus for action in the Green Deal. In particular, we recognise the need for responding to the main challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, underlined in the IPCC report on global warming<sup>1</sup> and in the IPBES 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including the five main drivers of biodiversity loss.<sup>2</sup>

ENCA recommends that an 8<sup>th</sup> EAP should:

- be one of the main strategic frameworks for the integration of the environmental dimensions of the SDGs into EU policies;
- address the issue of a fundamental transformation of the economy and of society, together with their interaction with all natural systems until 2050;
- stress that digitisation should be designed in such a way that it serves as a lever and support for the great transformation towards sustainability;
- act as an inter-institutional roadmap for environmental policy-making and policy coherence, strengthening the integration of environmental, climate and biodiversity-related concerns into all relevant other EU policy areas;
- be clearly linked to delivering the targets of a future EU biodiversity strategy (post 2020) and seek to reduce the main pressures on biodiversity, notably by addressing the five main drivers (land use change, over exploitation, invasive species, pollution and climate change) of biodiversity loss highlighted in the IPBES report;
- promote the benefits of an enriched natural environment on human health and well-being;
- implement biodiversity protection, conservation and sustainable use in a holistic, adaptive, transparent and participatory way;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>

- stress the importance of protecting those ecosystems essential for carbon storage e.g. forests, wetlands, peatlands, mires;
- set clear perspectives in traditional areas of environmental, climate and nature conservation policy e.g. water, air, waste, chemicals, biodiversity and ecosystem services, in particular promoting nature based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- achieve coherence and integration with other strategic approaches at EU level such as the Common Agricultural Policy, Forest Policy, Bioeconomy and Circular Economy; and
- strive to ensure a precise process of monitoring, reporting and evaluation of progress achieved.

As with earlier EAPs, the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP has created an important framework with long term predictability, guiding European environment and nature conservation policy until 2020. We have seen progress across most areas of the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP, even though it is evident that not all the objectives of the Action Programme have yet been fully achieved - nor are they likely to be within the time remaining. ENCA notes that the European Environment Agency's 2018 indicator report<sup>3</sup> stresses the need for more effort to reach Europe's environmental and nature conservation goals and that only 28% of assessed species and 16% of assessed habitats in the EU were in 'favourable' status in 2007-2012. The recent Global Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) makes stark reading. About 25% of all species are now threatened with extinction, and the impacts of the losses in natural capital are already having profound impacts upon people around the world. These ongoing declines in nature represent a depletion of the natural capital upon which European prosperity and well-being depends, and these losses further reduce our ability to cope with climate change and other pressures. In addition, the sixth Global Environment Outlook<sup>4</sup> produced by the United Nations Environment (formerly UNEP) and launched in March 2019 in Nairobi provides a clear prognosis of what will happen if people continue with business as usual. However, both key assessments also conclude that there is still time to act. Nevertheless, only transformative changes to economic, political, and social systems will allow humankind to reverse the trend by increasing biodiversity locally, regionally, and globally. The 8<sup>th</sup> EAP has the potential to make a critical contribution.

The European Parliament's mid-term evaluation of the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP concludes that a majority of stakeholders is fully convinced that strategic guidance for policy-making in the field of environment and climate, including nature conservation, in the form of an Environment Action Programme would be a good framework for the post-2020 period. ENCA agrees with this assessment. An 8<sup>th</sup> EAP is the opportunity to emphasise a cohesive vision, to guide European activities for the protection of the environment and biodiversity and respond to the challenges the recent IPBES report has highlighted.

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>5</sup> represents a clear paradigm shift in international policy. The EU has committed to implement the SDGs in both its internal and external policies. ENCA considers an 8<sup>th</sup> EAP and the timescale 2021 -

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-indicator-report-2018>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

2030 to be critical to Europe's ability to deliver these ambitious commitments, and notes the EU is also likely to adopt a range of post-2020 biodiversity strategies and targets (e.g. arising from upcoming new post-2020 commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity).

ENCA is representing the European Nature Conservation Agencies, which are major players with respect to public sector action in Europe, contributing to the implementation of the EAPs. ENCA is well-placed, ready and able to provide support and offers to contribute to the development and preparation of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP with our specific expertise. The network calls for a clear process, which provides for engagement and inputs from actors such as ENCA. The world is at a cross-roads where business as usual is no option and where transformative change is required to bend the curve of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

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