



European  
Commission

# Together for biodiversity



Environment

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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# Foreword



Nature across the world is not doing well. We are losing plants and animals at a rate 1 000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history. In Europe, 420 million birds have been lost since 1990, two-thirds of wetlands have disappeared over the past century, while insect populations are in rapid decline. Globally, the population of wild species has fallen by 60% in just 40 years, with 1 million currently at risk of extinction.

But biodiversity is essential for life. It provides us with food, medicine, recreation and wellbeing. It is vital for the economy as more than half of global GDP - worth around €40 trillion - depends on nature.

To protect our precious ecosystem, the EU has recently launched its 2030 Biodiversity strategy. Measures foreseen include protecting 30% of land and 30% of seas in Europe, planting 3 billion trees, reducing pesticide use by 50% and halting the decline of pollinators.

On the day of the launch, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, “*Making nature healthy again is key to our physical and mental wellbeing and is an ally in the fight against climate change and disease outbreaks.*”

I wholeheartedly agree with the President and hope that this new strategy will put Europe’s biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, for the benefit of people, climate and our planet.

I would like to add that 2020 is the final year of the United Nation’s Decade on Biodiversity and governments are expected to agree targets and strong policies, under a global deal for nature, to help the world’s ecosystems recover by 2050. I am eager to see the results.

Beyond politics, making nature healthy again is nothing new for the EU’s LIFE-funded NGOs, who for years,

have been making great strides under our previous biodiversity strategy.

For example, an initiative led by *WWF-European Policy Programme (WWF-EPO)*, the *European Environment Bureau (EEB)*, *BirdLife Europe* and *Friends of the Earth Europe* has been calling for a *New Deal for Nature and People*, where the highest levels of government, business and members of society work together for urgent, decisive global action to halt biodiversity loss.

Similar initiatives to protect our oceans are being undertaken by some 100 environmental organisations. For example, *Seas at Risk* and other organisations supported by LIFE-funding are part of the *Blue Manifesto* - a rescue plan to save degraded and polluted oceans and coastlines.

The NGOs featured in this publication have campaigned on issues like improving the sustainability of the EU’s next seven-year budget period, ensuring imported products are not linked to deforestation and advocating for sustainable food production.

These projects are just the tip of iceberg – since 1992, there have been hundreds of LIFE projects involving NGOs. And I think we would need an entire library to describe what these NGOs have done for the EU’s biodiversity over the years. Thousands of staff, volunteers, experts and citizens have shown through the LIFE lens how powerful civil society can be.

I would like to thank each and every one of them for their sterling work and I am very much looking forward to the next chapter.

Thank you.

**Angelo Salsi**

*Head of Unit of the LIFE Programme at EASME*



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# Sharing data to protect birds from power lines

Collisions and electrocutions of birds with power lines are a serious threat to several species. Birdlife Europe's UK member wanted to better understand the available data on these risks. Work culminated in a study complete with recommendations on how to better use this data and ultimately save birds from being needlessly killed.

Photo: Pexels.com

Photo: A European roller perched on a power line



*“Decisions taken at EU level have a huge impact on ecosystems across the continent.”*

In an effort to minimise the danger power lines pose for birds, Transmission System Operators (TSOs) regularly collect significant amounts of data on so-called 'bird grid interactions'. However, this information tends to be used internally and is not shared with other organisations that could benefit from having access.

Birdlife Europe's UK member, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, was convinced of the need to share this data on these interactions. The society therefore teamed up with the Renewables Grid Initiative and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) in order to more effectively share study data on these bird grid interactions.

## More transparent

The objective of the study, carried out in 2018, was to understand which data TSOs are collecting, what opportunities there are for improved data sharing and how

this could best be achieved. Findings were gathered via a questionnaire and during a workshop.

This culminated in a report complete with a series of recommendations on the better utilisation and transparency of this data.

The partners next want to undertake further studies and analyses to better understand the drivers of bird collision and electrocution risk and how effective current mitigation measures are. They ultimately want to develop science-based tools that could support route planning. This will in turn reduce the negative impacts of power lines on bird populations.

In Brussels, meanwhile, BirdLife's European office regularly collaborates with EU decision-makers to help design policies that conserve important bird habitats. *“This work is vital because decisions taken at EU level have a huge impact on ecosystems across the continent,”* says Ariel Brunner, BirdLife's head of EU policy.

**More information:**  
[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)

# Saving our oldest fish species

Sturgeons have existed for 250 million years, long out surviving dinosaurs. But fast forward to today and these mammoth fish are near extinction due to our desire for caviar and the loss of their spawning sites and habitat. The Central and Eastern European arm of the World Wide Fund for Nature known as WWF-CEE is looking to reverse this trend.



*“My team explains to these locals that if poaching doesn't stop now, there will be no more sturgeon left.”*

Photo: Illegal fishing for sturgeon © Evgeniy Polonskiy

WWF-CEE is working hard to protect sturgeon populations in Europe. In 2018, it ensured that protecting this ancient species was high on the agenda of the Austrian Presidency of the EU. This resulted in an action plan on sturgeon conservation, which was consequently adopted by the Bern Convention – a binding international nature conservation agreement.

WWF-CEE is also involved in a transnational project called *LIFE for Danube Sturgeons* that aims to protect the remaining populations on the river. Despite being illegal to catch wild sturgeon, the practice still happens due to the huge gains from the trade of caviar.

To this end, the project is working with law enforcement and is also in contact with local shops, restaurants and markets that sell sturgeon meat or caviar.

*“My team explains to these locals that if poaching doesn't stop now, there will be no more sturgeon left,”* says Jutta Jahrl, manager of the LIFE for Danube Sturgeons project.

The project also carried out a market survey to detect illegal sales of caviar and sturgeon meat in the region. *“We bought caviar and meat in supermarkets, restaurants and from street vendors. We then analysed the genetics and isotope ratios in*

*laboratories in Germany to determine the origin of the eggs,”* explains Jahrl. The findings were grim: some 22% of the samples were from poached wild sturgeon, while 10% were incorrectly labelled.

## Strong opposition

Yet, for people whose livelihoods depend on sturgeon caviar and meat, accepting alternatives is obviously going to be a challenge. Unsurprisingly, the project team has faced strong local opposition. *“A ban on sturgeon fishing was introduced but no-one explained why to local fishers. Their income was suddenly cut, so it took us a long time to regain their trust,”* says Jahrl.

Despite this setback, progress is visible. In Serbia, for example, project funds have been key to developing tourist information points on sturgeon along a section of the Danube. And in Ukraine, the project has created a business model for local cider brewers to help them manufacture and market the beverage.

The project is also training local law enforcement officers, resulting in significant gains. In Bulgaria, for example, these police have removed hundreds of illegal hook lines designed to trap sturgeon.

**More information:**  
[www.wwf.eu](http://www.wwf.eu)

## Representing the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters

*The European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) works with its partners on a range of hunting-related matters, with the aim of maintaining sustainable hunting across Europe. The conservation issues dealt with by FACE cover the ongoing implementation of the EU Nature Directives and new policy developments related to nature and biodiversity.*

*These issues are of importance to FACE as they influence national hunting legislation and in particular habitats and site protection regimes. FACE ensures that the role of sustainable use and incentive-driven conservation is recognised in the creation and implementation of environmental policies.*

More information: [www.face.eu](http://www.face.eu)

# Helping fish reach their final destination



Photo: the Stracha River Dam © CCB

*“If these fish can’t reach a spawning ground on their river, they will die.”*

## Which Fish? campaign

*Overfishing, destructive fishing practices and marine pollution are hampering our oceans’ ability to provide ecosystem services and essential food resources.*

*If this continues, fisheries may collapse entirely by 2050.*

*Launched in 2019, the Which Fish? Campaign, led by the European Association of Zoos and Aquarium (EAZA), focuses on how human activities impact marine species’ conservation. The goal is to make behavioral changes now for a better marine biodiversity management and protection in the future.*

More information:  
[www.eaza.net](http://www.eaza.net)

The Baltic Sea is home to myriad migratory fish species, including salmon and sea trout. In the summer months, these fish swim from the sea up to their freshwater spawning grounds, returning downstream before the winter sets in. But this natural cycle is under threat due to the hundreds of concrete dams that dot the rivers across the Baltic region, blocking the migratory fish paths. Work is however underway, courtesy of Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), to adapt existing sites or remove structures altogether.

*“If these fish can’t reach a spawning ground on their river, they will die,”* says Lennart Gladh, project manager at CCB in Sweden. *“This has already happened in some populations, while others are being artificially sustained using human-managed hatcheries,”* he adds.

## Sweden on top

Sweden is a prime example of a country that has embraced dam bypass channels and other removal projects. And results show that fish populations are returning to breed.

Inspired by the Swedes, CCB in 2018 organised a trip to the country to learn more about successful dam avoidance and removal techniques at first hand. Participants visited the town of Västerås, where a special channel was constructed, enabling migratory fish to avoid a dam in the city centre. They also went to the towns of Guldsmedhyttan and Hammarskogs where dams have successfully been removed. It is expected that this newfound knowledge will be put to good use in their homelands. And there are other success stories. In

Estonia, the Sindi dam was recently removed, opening an entire river basin to migratory salmon and many other river faunae.

Other organisations have followed CCB’s lead. In Belarus, for example, the Friends of Nemen NGO is studying how to improve the aquatic health of its rivers and to help migratory species return to their spawning grounds. The team is looking at the Stracha River in particular. *“Studies on how the dam on the river can be bypassed via a new channel, opening the river to Baltic salmon and sea trout are now underway,”* confirms Nina Palutskaya from Friends of Nemen.

As for the future, CCB members in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia have each developed a list of ten priority rivers, in which they aim to restore natural fish migration routes.

More information:  
[ccb.se](http://ccb.se)



# Ensuring our products are forest-friendly

Cocoa production is linked to forest destruction in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Palm oil, found in a whole swathe of food and cosmetic products, is doing the same in Indonesia and Malaysia. And soya contributes to deforestation in Amazonia. All the while, one football field of trees is felled every two minutes in the tropics. Enter Fern – an organisation pushing for forest-friendly EU imports to slow this worrying trend.



Photos: Socrate's oil palm plantation in Cameroon © Indra Van Gisbergen, Fern

*"It is not the consumer's job to make choices based on product labels. We need to regulate supply chains,"* says Julia Christian, forest policy advisor at Fern. *"We therefore want the European Commission to come-up with a 'due diligence' regulation to ensure that products are not linked to deforestation, ecosystem conversion or human rights abuses,"* she adds.

These rules would require companies to identify the environmental and social risks associated with producing a certain commodity, prevent risks from happening in the first place, and report on their progress. Companies would also be independently monitored, ensuring compliance.

## Protecting forest communities

But it's not just rules that need to be put in place. Fern believes that forest communities can also combat deforestation. These communities are however under threat

from industrial logging and agriculture companies keen to move them out. They need help.

*"Communities are the guardians of the forest. If we protect them, we protect the forests,"* says Indra Van Gisbergen, forest and development campaigner at Fern.

But Indra has seen at first-hand how difficult it can be to support forest communities. In the Cameroon rainforests, she says that communities are extremely vulnerable to the demands and pay-offs from logging and industrial agriculture companies.

To alleviate the situation, Fern is working with local NGOs who are helping locals

develop their products from the forest without destroying them.

*"Most locals don't realise that there are non-timber forest products like oils and honey, but they don't know how to access local and regional markets to make a living,"* Indra says. Fern is helping them realise and meet this potential.

Forests may be the lungs of the world that are crucial to preserving biodiversity and slowing climate change, but Fern's work demonstrates that keeping trees standing is a tall task that needs to be approached from many different angles.

Ensuring that EU consumers are not exposed to forest-risk products and supporting the communities who are best placed to preserve their home can help.

*"It is not the consumer's job to make choices based on product labels. We need to regulate supply chains."*

More information:  
[www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)

# Ecotourism making a real difference

Did you know that you can take a holiday in a beautiful location safe in the knowledge that you are helping protect the environment, while preserving cultural heritage? This is in fact possible and you can choose from 110 sustainable tourism destinations that are part of the EUROPARC network.



*Nature knows no national boundaries, so we need to come together to preserve it. We unite 500 managing authorities from nature parks and Natura 2000 areas to make nature-based tourism sustainable for both ecosystems and local communities,”* says EUROPARC’s Barbara Pais.

From restaurants that run solely on renewable energy, to advance booking systems that allow authorities to minimise the number of tourists on particularly popular trails, there are many ways to boost the sustainability of tourism. To do this in an inclusive way, EUROPARC works with local residents to develop tailor-made park tourism plans and tools that meet the needs of locals, while preserving nature.

## On top of the world

Nestled in the Arctic Circle, one of the EUROPARC’s 10 cross-border parks spans three different countries. The Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park comprises six nature protection areas: *Pasvik Zapovednik* in Russia, *Vätsäri* in Finland and *Øvre Pasvik National Park*, *Øvre Pasvik Landscape Protection Area* and *Pasvik Nature Reserve* in Norway. Park managers work together

across three different sets of legislation and nature protection rules, different cultures, languages, currencies, and time zones to protect biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The park is a vast wilderness, hosting a variety of ecosystems including pine forests, bogs, streams, frozen lakes in winter and alpine heath. It is known for its rich birdlife, reindeer populations and the rare sighting of brown bears. But it is also home to locals, including the northern Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami. These communities offer visitors sustainably managed hiking trips, boating activities on Lake Inari in summer, skiing and husky safaris in winter. Tourists can also learn about local life and history at visitor centres.

National authorities from the three countries also cooperate on ecosystem monitoring by sharing satellite images and survey data. *“We are monitoring species like the elk, brown bear and waterfowl. All of us have a common responsibility to look after them and their ecosystems,”* says Riina Tervo who works for the Metsähallitus Parks and Wildlife, Finland.

*“Nature knows no national boundaries, so we need to come together to preserve it.”*

## Recognising sustainable businesses

While preserving nature is key, EUROPARC also recognises that local tourism is vital for keeping rural economies alive.

Therefore, each year, it awards businesses that have the best sustainable tourism ideas. One previous winner is the *Parco delle dune Costiere* – a coastal dune regional park in Italy – that offers visitors electric cars to explore the area. Another is *Hotel Caminetto* in Italy that manages all of its energy, water and waste sustainably.

With an array of high-quality and sustainable options to choose from, where will you go on holiday next?

**More information:**  
[www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)

# How nature is saving our coasts

Imagine going for a walk along a windy coastline. The waves are crashing into a towering, ugly concrete sea wall, sending huge amounts of spray into the air. Now imagine you are on a different type of coastline where salt marshes extend in front of you before they reach the sea. Here the angry waves are far-away, and the marshes are a buffer between you and the sea's energy.

Eurosite realises that these natural climate buffers can help mitigate some of the impacts of climate change, such as severe storms and rising sea levels. The NGO is therefore studying the potential of such buffers across Europe.

*“Nature can defend us against the effects of climate change and these buffers are an excellent example. Natural solutions are as good, if not better, than human-designed concepts, and they can even be more economically viable,”* says Kristijan Čivić, Network Development Manager at Eurosite.

## Learning from the low countries

Nearly 17% of the Netherlands surface area is below sea level and much of its flat land has been reclaimed by the sea.



Photo: People beside the river IJssel at the Vreugderijkerwaard nature reserve in the Netherlands. © Eurosite

*“Natural solutions are as good, if not better, than human-designed concepts, and they can even be more economically viable.”*

In some of its protected areas to the north, site managers have put nature in charge of reinforcing the coastline's defences against the sea – a move which can mean modifying existing manmade structures.

In 2018, Eurosite and the Dutch Natural Climate Buffers Coalition, organised a climate buffers study tour to several different nature-based solutions in the country. The tour showcased several different water management solutions to a group from 11 different countries.

For example, in Groningen, a town which experienced a lot of flood damage both in 1998 and 2012, participants saw how devoting a large area of previously drained peatland used for grazing back to marshland, effectively creates a huge natural sponge which can store water.

Meanwhile, near the Wadden Sea, participants witnessed how salt marshes can lessen the power of the waves. Here, the sea enters several times a day creating the

right habitat for mussel and cockle banks, which in turn, attracts birds, boosting local biodiversity. The removal of so-called summer dykes in this area allows the sea to wash on to the land, carrying suspended sediment with it, which it then deposits, gradually increasing the height of the land.

## Peat for carbon storage

Following the success of the Dutch tour, Eurosite organised a second outing in Scotland, attended by 20 participants from eight European countries. This tour visited peat restoration sites in the Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve – one of the last fragments of the bogs that once covered much of Scotland. The tour illustrated how well managed peatlands can help mitigate climate change as they are considered carbon sinks, helping reduce CO2 concentrations.

**More information:**  
[www.eurosite.org](http://www.eurosite.org)

# More wetlands. Less flooding

Some 85% of the Rhine river's floodplain has been artificially drained to make way for urban developments and agriculture. These wetlands' natural flood mitigation function has largely been replaced with concrete flood defences, water storage and other manmade infrastructure. Wetlands International Europe wants a return of the spongy wetlands in the Rhine basin as a nature-based solution to floods and droughts.

*“Nature-based solutions use wetland to provide services like flood mitigation, increased biodiversity and carbon storage.”*

*“Nature-based solutions use wetland to provide services like flood mitigation, increased biodiversity and carbon storage. Instead of a concrete structure like a flood defence, nature offers the best solution,”* says Eef Silver, policy officer, at Wetlands International (WI) Europe.

## Starting small on the Saar river

WI Europe aims to launch a pilot project to remove or block some of the artificial drainage canals on a stream in the catchment area of the Saar river, a Rhine tributary in Germany. The NGO believes that rewetting parts of the Rhine's floodplain would help retain excess rainfall, slow the release of water during droughts, boost carbon storage in the soil and allow for the recovery of natural habitats and ecosystems that have been lost along the river.

*“Flooding should not be seen as something that should be stopped – it has a purpose. We have cut off floodplains creating a risk to society, but we can reverse some of the damage already done,”* says Silver.

As a first step, the NGO carried out extensive studies, including cost-benefit analyses and calculations of water flow and retention if the drainage infrastructure were to be removed. One major finding was that peak water flows could be reduced by 20-30% in the local area through wetland restoration.

The project is now working on developing a business model, securing funding and getting relevant German authorities, land-owners and farmers on board.

## Leave peatlands to store carbon

Another key area of work for WI Europe is protecting intact peatlands and restoring degraded ones. *“Peatlands cover only 3% of the world's land surface but hold 25% of the global soil's carbon, making them the world's most effective carbon stores. However, if drained, they emit a lot of carbon rather than storing it, due to the decomposition of organic matter.”* explains Lea Appulo, policy and advocacy officer at WI Europe.

Ideally the peatland should be left intact, but paludiculture – a form of ‘wet’ agriculture that does not involve drainage – could be an effective compromise between farming and restoration. This method could be used for farming water buffalo for beef production, growing alder trees for furniture and cultivating cattail and reeds – plants whose fibres can be used to make building bricks, boxes and other products.

*“The popularity of paludiculture is growing, especially among younger farmers and even EU decision-makers. However, it is vital that this method is applied to peatland that has been seriously damaged by draining and not peatland that is currently unfarmed,”* warns Appulo.

More information:  
[europe.wetlands.org](http://europe.wetlands.org)

# Keeping our food free from gene-editing

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) pose environmental risks and can cause biodiversity decline. In the EU, consumers can be sure that the food they buy is free from GMOs unless the product label explicitly states otherwise. And in organic foods, the use of GMOs is strictly forbidden in the production process. But this situation could change due to a new gene-editing technique that has recently emerged. An organic food movement is combatting this threat.



The EU's stringent biosafety rules ensure that all GMOs undergo a risk assessment, an authorisation process, are fully traceable and clearly labelled before they are cultivated or put on the market. But now the biotechnology industry is able to edit genes directly within the organism without the need to insert them, effectively rewriting a plant's DNA on the spot.

*"The biotechnology industry says that such plants should not be classified as a GMO because there is no insertion of genes. This is a major risk – if gene-altered plants are not considered GMOs they could be released into the environment and the food chain with no oversight and there would be no way to get them back,"* says Eric Gall, deputy director of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU (IFOAM EU).

## Court ruling saves the day (for now)

The issue went all the way to court, and in 2018, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the new genetic engineering techniques must be subject to the same regulations as older gene-insertion GMOs.

In the run-up to the ruling, IFOAM EU provided extensive evidence on the implications of relaxing the rules on GMOs. It also carried out campaigns at EU and national level on the potential threats to plants, animals and biosafety.

*"We can create agro-ecosystems based on beneficial interactions between species, insects, plants and weeds."*

While the decision has kept these new GMOs off EU markets for now, the European Commission is still under industry pressure to exempt these new techniques from GMO regulations.

## Transitioning to agro-ecology

With mounting evidence of the detrimental effects of industrial agriculture – including a 76% decline in insect populations in the EU over the last 30 years – the organic movement is calling for a transition to agro-ecology and more organic farms.

*"Instead of relying on GMOs and pesticides used on huge fields of crops of the same species, we can create agro-ecosystems based on beneficial interactions between species, insects, plants and weeds. We need to help farmers transition from input intensive to knowledge intensive agriculture based on processes like nutrient cycling, improving soil structure, crop diversification and longer rotations,"* explains Gall.

## Leading the Bee Coalition

*Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe brings together organisations working to replace the use of hazardous pesticides. Its network has 46 member organisations from 28 countries.*

*PAN Europe launched its Bee Coalition, gathering more than 100 NGOs across the EU in order to ensure a full ban on neonicotinoids. The Coalition mobilised citizens who urged their governments to ban the bee-killing pesticides.*

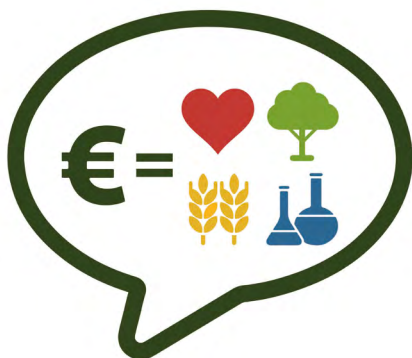
*Following the publication of a new European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report in February 2018 confirming the high risk posed by these substances on bees, member states voted to ban these harmful neonicotinoids.*

More information:  
[www.pan-europe.info](http://www.pan-europe.info)

Further improvements can be made by working with nature for pest control, pollination and reducing erosion.

More information:  
[www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)

# Budgeting for the planet



## EU Budget for the People

From investing in energy efficiency projects to paying farmers to improve the environmental conditions on their land, the EU funds many projects that benefit our planet. The EU does however also support gas pipeline infrastructure and road construction projects that could result in high CO2 emissions, thereby undermining its efforts to stop biodiversity decline. CEEweb for Biodiversity is aware of this and has set out to boost the sustainability of the EU budget.

The NGO has launched a campaign to highlight the potential environmental and social conflicts EU funds could cause. For the 2021-2027 budget, CEEweb would like to see so-called sustainability mainstreaming included in all EU funded activities. This means integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognising their interlinkages, to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

CEEweb believes that one of the campaign's biggest successes is a change in mindset among policymakers. "We've managed to convince them that sustainability needs to be part of all EU policies," says Orsolya Domaniczky, policy officer at CEEweb.

### Last chance for biodiversity

The next EU budget accounts for only about 1% of the EU's Gross National Income but it can trigger big changes if designed in a coherent and efficient way. Now is the time to make a difference in how the EU funds its projects.

*"In seven years time, when the budget will be discussed again, it will probably be too*

*"In seven years time, when the budget will be discussed again, it will probably be too late for the climate and for biodiversity. We need to act now."*

*late for the climate and for biodiversity. We need to act now,"* Domaniczky says.

The recently launched European Green Deal is a step in the right direction. "We've seen a big push for sustainability in the Green Deal and we are optimistic that our proposals will be included in the final budget," she says.

She is also confident that the budget will provide greater support for climate action and help communities in Europe's existing coal regions in Central and Eastern Europe, who are facing a major transition as the coal industry is phased out.

### A budget for the people

One of the campaign's demands, known as the 'partnership principle' has already been incorporated into the European Commission and European Parliament's budget proposals. The principle states that "the EU budget should work for the people and with the people, with greater transparency, and respectful of diversity and meaningful participation of the citizens."

Despite these notable successes, Domaniczky points out that there are still significant obstacles to overcome. "For example, the exclusion of fossil fuel infrastructures from EU funding is still not ensured – this would create a fossil-fuel lock in and delay the transition to a zero-carbon economy," she says.

**More information:**  
[www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

## NGOs featured in this brochure



### BirdLife Europe

BirdLife Europe is a biodiversity conservation NGO with member organisations in all EU countries. Its mission is to conserve wild birds, their habitats and global biodiversity by working closely with its network of partners.

More information:  
[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)



### World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is an international NGO founded in 1961. Its Central and Eastern European arm, WWF-CEE works towards the restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems in the Danube-Carpathian region.

More information:  
[www.wwf.eu](http://www.wwf.eu)



### Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) is an environment NGO that spreads knowledge and best practices on how to remove or bypass dams in rivers that block the paths of migratory fish species like Baltic salmon and Sea trout.

More information:  
[ccb.se](http://ccb.se)



### Fern

Fern is an organisation that is protecting forests and the rights of people who depend on them. It focuses on climate, consumption, development aid and trade and has offices in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

More information:  
[www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)



### EUROPARC FEDERATION

The EUROPARC network is the umbrella organisation of Europe's Protected Areas such as Natura 2000 sites, national parks, biosphere reserves and marine protected areas. It has 388 members in 37 countries including all EU member states.

More information:  
[www.euoparc.org](http://www.euoparc.org)



### Eurosites

Eurosites is a European network of protected site managers, including Natura 2000 areas. The NGO helps put nature-based solutions into action by sharing solutions and organising study tours among its 59 members in 21 countries.

More information:  
[www.eurosites.org](http://www.eurosites.org)



### Wetlands International Europe

Wetlands International Europe is an association of 10 European NGOs from 6 European countries raising awareness about wetland ecosystems and their value for people and nature.

More information:  
[europe.wetlands.org](http://europe.wetlands.org)



### International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU (IFOAM EU)

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU (IFOAM EU) is the European umbrella association for organic food and farming. It advocates for farming based on the principles of organic agriculture: health, ecology, fairness, and care.

More information:  
[www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)



### CEEweb for Biodiversity

CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of 53 NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe working on biodiversity conservation projects. As part of the SDG Watch network of NGOs, it is leading a campaign on improving the environmental sustainability of the next EU budget.

More information:  
[www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

**LIFE** "L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement" / The financial instrument for the environment

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action

Period covered 2014-2020

EU funding available approximately €3.46 billion

### Allocation of funds

Of the €3.46 billion allocated to LIFE, €2.59 billion are for the Environment sub-programme, and €0.86 billion are for the Climate Action sub-programme. At least €2.8 billion (81% of the total budget) are earmarked for LIFE projects financed through action grants or innovative financial instruments. About €0.7 billion will go to integrated projects. At least 55% of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported through action grants under the sub-programme for Environment will be used for projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity. The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of NGO operating grants is €12 million each year.

### Types of projects

Action Grants under the Environment and Climate Action sub-programmes are available for the following:

- > "Traditional" projects – these may be best-practice, demonstration, pilot or information, awareness and dissemination projects in any of the following priority areas: LIFE Nature & Biodiversity; LIFE Environment & Resource Efficiency; LIFE Environmental Governance & Information; LIFE Climate Change Mitigation; LIFE Climate Change Adaptation; LIFE Climate Governance and Information.
- > Preparatory projects – these address specific needs for the development and implementation of Union environmental or climate policy and legislation.
- > Integrated projects – these implement on a large territorial scale environmental or climate plans or strategies required by specific Union environmental or climate legislation.
- > Technical assistance projects – these provide financial support to help applicants prepare integrated projects.
- > Capacity building projects – these provide financial support to activities required to build the capacity of Member States, including LIFE national or regional contact points, with a view to enabling Member States to participate more effectively in the LIFE programme.

### Operating grants

The LIFE programme also supports the operations of EU-level environmental NGOs through the competitive and transparent awarding of operating grants. This funding aims to strengthen the participation of NGOs in the dialogue process in environmental policy making and in its implementation.

### Further information

More information on LIFE is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/life>.

### How to apply for LIFE funding

The European Commission organises annual calls for proposals.

Full details are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

**Internet** <http://ec.europa.eu/life>, [www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme](https://www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme),  
[twitter.com/lifeprogramme](https://twitter.com/lifeprogramme), <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lifeprogramme>

**LIFE Publication** / Together for biodiversity

