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Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 29 May 2023

Subject: IUCN calls for a meaningful and targeted EU regulation on nature restoration

Dear President,

I am writing to express the position of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), who firmly supports the adoption of an ambitious EU regulation on nature restoration. In this context, we would like to support the proposal put forward by the European Commission in June 2022, and to ask for further ambition.

This proposal is a very relevant response to the commitments made by the EU under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹, particularly in relation to Target 2 on the restoration of degraded ecosystems, but also to respond to the broader commitments included in the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also crucial to fulfil the ambition expressed under the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Farm to Fork Strategy, and the European Green Deal. This proposed regulation for nature restoration will be a linchpin for the implementation of these commitments and a benchmark for any similar regulation.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to take a bold step towards a better future for European citizens, and to set a best practice example for the rest of the world. There is growing evidence that healthy and diverse ecosystems are vital for a thriving economy as they create new jobs and stimulate sustainable business growth.² Therefore, investing in the restoration of European nature will be crucial for our future wellbeing, as we experience the proliferation of climate change-related threats, such as droughts, wildfires, or floods.³ Nature is an indispensable ally in mitigating climate change and enabling economies to adapt to its impacts.⁴

Some sectors are particularly vulnerable, and therefore have more to gain from an effective nature restoration law. Clear examples of this are agriculture and forestry, due to their high dependence on healthy ecosystems. There is a wealth of evidence in support of sustainable food production systems based on functioning ecosystems, which in turn ensure a stable source of income and employment for farmers⁵ and, by extension, the resilience of our economies in the long run.

It is a matter of serious concern to see that the progression of this crucial piece of legislation is currently facing challenges. Therefore, IUCN calls on the European Parliament, the EU Member States, and the European Commission to work together to find a strong common agreement, in

¹ [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 18 December 2022 \(CBD/COP/15/L.25\)](#), see also [European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties \(COP15\) to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(2019/2824\(RSP\)\)](#)

² Partha Dasgupta, 'The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review' (2021), see also [World Economic Forum, 'Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy' \(2020\)](#)

³ [European Environment Agency, 'The importance of restoring nature in Europe' \(2023\)](#)

⁴ [UNEP and IUCN, 'Nature-based Solutions for climate change mitigation' \(2021\)](#), and [IUCN, 'Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience: Mapping Analysis of IUCN's Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience Projects' \(2021\)](#)

⁵ [Ludovic Larbodière and others, 'Common Ground: Restoring land health for sustainable agriculture' \(2020\)](#), see also [ILO, UNEP, and IUCN, 'Decent Work in Nature Based Solutions 2022' \(2022\)](#)

order to capitalise on this opportunity to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the EU economy through the restoration of nature.

Due to the importance of the proposed EU regulation for nature, the people and economy of the EU, and its prosperous and resilient future, IUCN asserts the urgent need for high ambition at this crucial juncture.

Yours sincerely,



Boris Erg, Director
IUCN European Regional Office

Cc:
President Roberta Metsola
Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson
Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans
Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius