EU Nature Restoration Regulation

IUCN Briefing

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Key messages:

- The EU's **first comprehensive and continent-wide legislation** for nature restoration, marking a significant milestone since the Habitats Directive of 1992, and a global pioneer.
- This regulation answers to key commitments made under the **EU Green Deal** and **EU Biodiversity Strategy**.
- Its overarching objective is to put restoration measures in place **to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030** and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.
- A crucial legislation to confirm **EU's ambition on environmental policy** and **demonstrate global leadership**, reach the EU's international commitments and set the bar for global action.
- Priority until 2030 should be given to improving the condition of **Natura 2000 network areas**, with **specific and time-bound commitments** for Member States.
- The regulation includes specific targets on **wetlands, grasslands, rivers and lakes, heath and scrubs, rocky and dune habitats, marine ecosystems, urban ecosystems, agricultural ecosystems, forests, and pollinators**.
- Member States are required to develop **National Restoration Plans**. It will be key for IUCN and its members to support this process to ensure that ambitious plans are developed, implemented and monitored.
- Going forward, IUCN could **support the replication of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation** in other regions of the world.

Background

In December 2019, the European Commission introduced the European Green Deal: a comprehensive collection of policy and legislative initiatives designed to set the EU on the path to a green transition and reach climate neutrality by 2050. The EU Biodiversity Strategy is a central element of the EU Green Deal, dedicated to halting biodiversity loss and setting EU's nature on the path of recovery. Key commitments provided by this strategy are the protection of 30% of EU's land and sea, and a proposal for legally binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems across the EU. The EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) answers to this second commitment, providing the first comprehensive legislation for the restoration of degraded ecosystems throughout the EU, also debuting on the global stage.

The European Commission published its legislative proposal in June 2022, following an in-depth impact assessment to which IUCN contributed. The NRR faced intense negotiations within the EU institutions, leading to significant compromises to the initial proposal (IUCN's call on the EU, June 2023; IUCN statement, July 2024). This process could be understood in the context of current geopolitical developments, farmer protests, and discussions in the run-up to the EU parliamentary elections in June 2024. The concerns of relevant sectors were addressed during the trilogues and reflected in the provisional agreement reached in November 2023, which received strong support

from scientists, civil society, businesses, and citizens across the EU. During this negotiation process, IUCN Members and national committees where actively engaged to advocate for the NRR with national authorities.

On 17 June 2024, after some initial delays, the Environment Council adopted the final text of the NRR, following the European Parliament's approval on 27 March 2024. The final text was published in the official journal of the EU on 29 July 2024 and will enter into force on 18 August 2024. As an EU Regulation, it will then be directly applicable to all EU Member States. The regulation was often referred to as the EU Nature Restoration "Law" during the negotiation process, which responds more to a simplified communication and is not exactly accurate.

EU Nature Restoration Regulation

The preamble outlines the context of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, emphasizing the necessity of rules at Union level for ecosystem restoration, and linking the regulation to the EU's international commitments, including the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). It also highlights the role of nature restoration in advancing on the EU's climate objectives, improving food security, and promoting ecosystem services. Synergies with other EU policies on biodiversity and climate are strongly encouraged. The text also recognises the role of Nature-based Solutions as effective tools to address climate change through the restoration of ecosystems, also providing social and economic benefits for the local communities. In doing so, it cites the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, an EU communication that explicitly mentions the IUCN Global Standard on Nature-based Solutions.

General Provisions

The NRR consists of six chapters: general provisions (1-3), restoration targets and obligations (4-13), National Restoration Plans (NRPs) (14-19), monitoring and reporting (20-21), delegated and implementing acts (22-24), and the regulation's final provisions (25-28). This paragraph will explain the specific targets and provisions of the NRR. Furthermore, the annexes specify the habitat types covered (I–II), specific marine species included (III), description of indicators for agricultural ecosystems & common farmland bird index (IV–V), description of indicators for forests (VI), and examples of restoration measures (VII).

Article 1: sets out the general provisions of the regulation. The goal of the NRR is to establish a framework within which Member States shall put in place **effective and area-based restoration measures which together shall cover at least 20% of the Union's land and sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050**. This is to contribute to "*the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient ecosystems across the Member States'"*, as well as achieving the Union's overarching climate objectives, enhancing food security and meeting the EU's international commitments.

Article 2 & 3: outline the geographical scope and the definitions. The regulation applies to the European territory of Member States to which the Treaties apply, including coastal waters as defined in the Water Framework directive, and the territorial waters of Members States extending to the outmost reach of the area where a Member States has or exercise sovereign rights or jurisdiction, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. According to the preamble of the NRR document, the area to which the NRR applies should thereby align with the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Member States are also encouraged in the Preamble to include, on a voluntary basis, restoration measures tailored to their outermost regions, while considering their remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, as well as their rich biodiversity and the associated costs for

protecting and restoring their ecosystems. This applies to those outermost regions that do not fall within the scope of this Regulation.

Article 4: sets out the restoration targets for **terrestrial, coastal, and freshwater ecosystems**. The specific terrestrial, coastal and freshwater habitat types to which this target refers are listed in Annex I and organised by six groups of habitat types. The corresponding habitat code, as referred to in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, are also included in this annex. This article emphasises the importance of connectivity and requires Member States to ensure continuous improvement and no deterioration once good condition has been achieved.

The article requires Member State to:

- Put in place restoration measures to **improve at least 30% of listed habitat types to good condition** by 2030 (60% by 2040, and 90% by 2050).
- **Re-established habitat types in additional areas** to reach at least 30% of their favourable reference area by 2030 (60% by 2040, and 100% by 2050).
- **Continuously improve the quality and quantity of the terrestrial, coastal, and freshwater habitats of the species** listed in Annexes II, IV and V to the Habitats Directive and terrestrial, coastal, and freshwater habitats of wild birds falling within the scope of the Birds Directive until sufficient levels are reached.

There are some cases where continuous improvement and non-deterioration are exempted, namely in case of a force majeure (including natural disasters), climate change-induced habitat transformation, plans or projects of overriding public interest (within Natura 2000 sites, this needs to be in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, see Article 6 & 7), or caused by action or inaction by third countries. In some instances, compensatory measures for non-deterioration are allowed at the Member States' biogeographical region.

Article 5: sets out restoration targets for **marine ecosystems** and mirrors Article 4. Relevant marine habitat types are listed in Annex II and are organised by seven groups of habitat types. For habitat types listed in Group 7 (soft sediments), Member States may set their own percentage for improving the condition. Member States are further required to continuously improve the quality and quantity of the marine habitats of species listed in Annex III of this Regulation, as well as those listed in Annexes II, IV and V of the Habitats Directive and the marine habitats of wild birds falling within the scope of the Birds Directive. The same exemptions for continuous improvement and non-deterioration as in Article 5 apply, including plans or projects of overriding public interest (authorised under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive within Natura 2000 sites).

Member States are also required to ensure that the condition of at least 50% of the area distributed over all habitat types in Groups 1 to 6 is known by 2030 (all by 2040), and at least 50% of the area of Group 7 is known by 2040 (all by 2050).

Article 6 & 7: describes that **renewable energy plans** (Article 6) and **national defence** (Article 7) are presumed to be in the overriding public interest, meaning that they can be exempted from the continuous improvement and non-deterioration requirements of Article 4 & 5. The renewable energy plans need to be subjected to a strategic environmental assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC) and an environmental impact assessment (Directive 2011/92/EU).

Article 8: sets targets for **urban ecosystems**. It aims to ensure that there is no net loss of urban green spaces and of urban tree canopy cover by 2030. From 1 January 2031, Member States are required to achieve an increasing trend in urban green space and urban tree canopy, measured every six years, until satisfactory levels are reached.

Article 9: sets obligations for Member States to identify and remove artificial barriers to the connectivity of surface waters, contributing to the target of restoring at least **25 000 km of rivers into**

free-flowing rivers (EU BDS), and to complement this with measures improving the natural functioning of associated floodplains.

Article 10: sets the obligation to improve pollinator diversity and reverse the decline of **pollinators** by 2030 and thereafter to achieve an increasing trend in pollinator diversity and populations until satisfactory levels are reached. The recently revised EU Pollinators Initiative (January 2024) outlines the actions to be taken in the EU to reverse the decline of pollinators by 2030.

The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts (in accordance with Article 23) to establish and update a science-based method for monitoring pollinator diversity and populations.

The first delegated act shall establish this methodology and is to be adopted by 19 August 2025, 12 months after the regulation entered into force. This method should provide a standardised approach to collect annual data on the abundance and diversity of pollinator species in different ecosystems, and to assess trends in pollinator populations and the effectiveness of restoration measures. The data should come from an adequate number of sites and promote citizen science, and the Commission is to set up a task force to disseminate relevant information and expertise to Member States.

Article 11: sets out targets for the restoration of **agricultural ecosystems**. Member States are to achieve an increasing trend on at least two out of three of the following indicators, measured in the period from 18 August 2024 until 31 December 2030, and every six years after that, until satisfactory levels are reach:

- Grassland butterfly index,
- Stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils,
- Share of agricultural land with high diversity landscape features.

Member States shall also aim to ensure an increase on the farmland bird index. In addition, Member States are required **to restore and partially rewet drained agricultural peatlands**, namely 30% by 2030 (of which at least a quarter rewetted), 40% by 2040 (a third rewetted) and 50% by 2050 (a third rewetted), with potential exemptions under certain circumstances (such as infrastructure, buildings, climate adaptation or other public interests). Member States are encouraged to provide incentives to make rewetting an attractive option for farmers and landowners, and to provide access to training and advice on the benefits of rewetting peatland.

Article 12: sets obligations for the restoration of **forest ecosystems**. Member States are to achieve an increasing trend of at least six out of seven of the following indicators, measured in the period from 18 August 2024 until 31 December 2030, and every six years after that, until satisfactory levels are reached:

- Standing deadwood,
- Lying deadwood,
- Share of forests with uneven-aged structure,
- Forest connectivity,
- Stock of organic carbon,
- Share of forests dominated by native tree species,
- Tree species diversity.

Non-fulfilment is allowed in case of a large-scale force majeure (natural disasters, including wildfire) or habitat transformations caused by climate change. Member States shall also aim to ensure an increase on the common forest bird index.

Article 13: encourages Member States to contribute to the commitment of **planting at least three billion additional trees by 2030** (EU BDS), considering ecological principles.

Article 14: describes the **preparatory steps** to be followed by Member States to develop their National Restoration Plans, based on the articles described above. Preparatory monitoring and research are highlighted, including the mapping of various ecosystems. By 2030, Member States should have set satisfactory levels for pollinator populations, indicators for agricultural & forest ecosystems, urban green space and tree canopy cover. Member States may develop a methodology by 19 August 2025 for monitoring high-diversity landscape features (Annex IV), for which guidance will be provided by the Commission by 19 September 2024.

Synergies are encouraged with other environmental and climate policies, international commitments and NRPs from neighbouring Member States.

Furthermore, the financing of the implementation of this regulation should not imply the reprogramming of funds under current agricultural and fisheries funding programmes (including CAP & CFP).

Article 15: sets out the **content of the National Restoration Plans** with intermediate deadlines corresponding to the targets and obligations set out in articles 4 to 13, up to 2050. This includes, but is not limited to the following elements:

- The quantification of areas to be restored with indicative maps,
- Justification of derogation if applicable,
- A description of measures planned, including specification which of those are planned within the Natura 2000 network,
- Indications of interventions planned to ensure that areas do not deteriorate,
- The inventory of barriers and barriers identified for removal from Article 7,
- Indicators chosen for agricultural and forest ecosystems,
- Planned contribution to the tree planting of trees, outlined in Article 13,
- Timing for putting in place the restoration measures,
- A dedicated section setting out, as applicable, tailored restoration measures for their outermost regions,
- A summary of the process (taking account of public participation, local communities, and stakeholders),
- Climate change impact scenarios,
- Financing needs, and
- The consideration of synergies with climate policies and other environmental instruments (incl. CFP, CAP).

Article 16 & 17: specify that Member States must **submit their National Restoration Plans** by 1 September 2026, 24 months after the regulation entered into force. The European Commission is required to assess the National Restoration Plan within 6 months after receiving the draft version, and Member States have 6 months after receiving the Commission's observations to consider them and finalise their NRPs.

Article 18: describes the **coordination between Member States for restoration measures in marine ecosystems**, requiring Member States to submit joint recommendations and the expected timing of this submission, based on the regionalisation procedure of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Article 19: outlines the process for the **review and revision** of the NRPs. Member States must review and revise their NRPs and include supplementary measures by 30 June 2032, and subsequently 30 June 2042, and at least once every ten years thereafter. The Commission may request a revised national restoration plan with supplementary measures if progress is deemed insufficient, which should be submitted 6 months after the initial request was made.

Article 20 & 21: set out the required **monitoring and reporting**. Member States are required to start monitoring habitat types and indicators from the moment the regulation enters into force and

continue to monitor and report on the progress every six years, submitting their first report by 30 June 2031. The reporting on the area and condition, as well as quantity and quality of habitats and habitat of species (Article 4 & 5) should be aligned with the reporting cycle under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and the initial assessment under Article 17 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Reporting will be required every three years from 2028 on the following aspects: area subject to restoration measures, areas under significant deterioration or those undergoing compensatory measures, barriers to connectivity of surface-waters and the contribution to the planting of trees.

Annual monitoring (as applicable) will need to take place for: the grassland butterfly index, the common farmland and forest bird indexes, as well as for pollinator species (the latter starting a year after the monitoring method is put in place, in accordance with the delegated act outlined in Article 10).

These efforts will lead to technical reports every three years and an EU-wide progress reports every six years, produced by the EEA. These reports may also use information from the reporting under the Birds and Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The Commission will compile a report to assist Member States in identifying financial resources, and to provide additional information that could be helpful in financing the implementation of the NRPs.

Article 22: empowers the Commission to adopt **delegated acts to amend the annexes** of the regulation. Based on technical and scientific progress, the Commission may, by means of delegated acts, adapt the list of species and the way in which habitat types are grouped (Annexes I – III), the biodiversity indicators used for agricultural and forest ecosystems (Annexes IV & VI), and the list of species for the common farmland bird index (Annex V).

Article 23 & 24: describes the **delegation and comitology procedures**. The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts for a period of five years from 18 August 2024, which can be extended in periods of five years. The delegation of power conferred on the Commission may be revoked by the Parliament or the Council at any given time. Any delegated act may enter into force only if neither the Parliament nor the Council has objected within two months of notification. For delegated acts, the Commission is to consult with experts form each Member State and will be assisted by a specific committee in accordance with the comitology procedure.

Article 25: provides for an amendment to the Regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure ((EU) 2022/869), to include the NRR when considering projects from an energy policy perspective as an overriding public interest.

Article 26: requires the Commission to **review the regulation** by 31 December 2033. This review shall assess the impact of the regulation on the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors, takin into account food production and food security, and the wider socio-economic impact of the regulation.

Article 27: describes the possibility of **temporary suspending** Article 11 (agriculture) for a maximum period of 12 months, with the possibility of extending this period, in case of an unforeseeable, exceptional and unprovoked event which severely impacts the availability of land to produce sufficient food for EU consumption.

Article 28: provides for the **entry into force** of the regulation, 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU, and its immediate application in all Member States.

Annexes

Annex I: lists all terrestrial, coastal and freshwater habitat types and groups of habitat types referred to in Article 4. Six groups of habitat types are provided: wetlands (coastal and inland); grasslands and other pastoral habitats; river, lake, alluvial and riparian habitats; forests; steppe, heath and scrub habitats; and rocky and dune habitats. The corresponding habitat code, as referred to in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, are also provided here.

Annex II: lists all marine habitat types and groups of habitat types referred to in Article 5. Seven groups of habitat types are provided: seagrass beds; macroalgal forests; shellfish beds; maerl beds; sponge, coral and coralligenous beds; vents and seeps; and soft sediments (not deeper than 1 000 metres of depth). The corresponding habitat code, as referred to in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, are also provided here.

The classification of marine habitat types used, and their differentiation by marine biogeographical regions was made according to the European nature information system (EUNIS), which was revised by the EEA in 2022.

Annex III: lists all additional marine species referred to in Article 5.

Annex IV: provides the list of biodiversity indicators for agricultural ecosystems referred to in Article 11, including their description, units, and methodology for determining and monitoring.

Annex V: describes the methodology for the common farmland bird index at national level, making a distinction between Member States with historically more and historically less depleted populations of farmland birds. This annex also provides the lists of bird species used for this index per Member State.

Annex VI: provides the list of biodiversity indicators for forest ecosystems referred to in Article 12, including their description, units, and methodology for determining and monitoring.

Annex VII: lists examples of restoration measures for the preparation of Member States' NRPs.

Some relevant points of the final agreement

The key ambition of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation remained during the negotiation process, offering a valuable opportunity to keep biodiversity high on the agenda for the next EU legislative term. This is a timely outcome, demonstrating EU's commitment to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, and to advance on its global commitments, including those of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ahead of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP16) later this year.

The amendments made during the negotiations focused on providing more flexibility to Member States, including for peatlands rewetting, as well as through effort-based requirements for non-deterioration of habitats, an emergency brake (related to food availability, see Art. 27), a stepwise approach for the NRPs, and the possibility for Member States to take national characteristics into account. These changes were also aimed at reducing the burden on farmers, for instance by making the rewetting of peatlands voluntary for farmers and landowners[1].

The main contribution of the NRR is considered to be its focus on effective and area-based restoration measures, adding time-bound targets for specific ecosystems, habitats, and species, and thereby also supporting the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Water Framework Directive[2]. Some organisations claim that planning and allocating land allocation for nature restoration will be a challenge for Member States, given the many other policies that will

[1] Council of the EU (November, 2023). Nature restoration: Council and Parliament reach agreement on new rules to restore and preserve degraded habitats in the EU.
[2] Think2030 (September, 2022). Restoring EU ecosystems: recommendations for the successful implementation of the proposed EU Nature Restoration Law.

require land. The regulation's holistic approach to restoring nature and the promotion of synergies with other policies is therefore considered to be key for its successful implementation[3]. The focus on the effectiveness of restoration measures, connectivity, and the inclusion of non-deterioration can be seen as more positive elements of the document when it comes to restoration.

The target on pollinators provides a strong legal basis for enhancing pollinator biodiversity and reversing their decline in Europe, as well as a Union-wide monitoring method for pollinators, supporting ongoing efforts at EU level such as the EU Pollinators' Initiative[4].

The document introduces legally binding targets for urban greening, recognizing the importance of biodiversity in cities and contributing to the urgent need for EU cities to adapt to climate change[5]. The regulation also raises the level of ambition for the conservation of the marine environment, according to some marine organisations. Particularly with regard to the management of Marine Protected Areas, improving the knowledge on the conditions of marine habitats, and the coordination between Member States where restoration efforts conflict with fishing activities, with some links to the Common Fisheries Policy[6].

The National Restoration Plans will require strategic planning by Member States, for which some considerations have already been offered by organisations. For instance, Member States will need to identify and address knowledge gaps by working with national experts, civil society organisations and other Member States to obtain key information about habitats, sites, and species, and to identify opportunities for restoration. Participatory processes with civil society and relevant sectors are also considered key to ensure successful implementation on the ground. Particularly improving the capacity of farmers, foresters, and fishers to implement restoration measures (incl. financial incentives, guidance, and training) are considered crucial to achieve the NRR's targets and provisions[3]. Another important component for the successful implementation of the NRPs mentioned, is the requirement for Member States to assess and consider the financial needs and sources for the NRPs[2]. According to WWF, the European Commission's ability to review the plans and request updates from Member States in case of insufficient progress strengthens implementation and enhances the accountability and transparency[7].

Next steps: towards implementation

Member States are required to **submit their National Restoration Plans by 1 September 2026, two years after the regulation entered into force**, displaying how they are planning to deliver on the targets. This period will be an important time for Member States, when relevant tools, best practices and lessons learned will be useful to them in their task of developing these plans. According to IEEP, given the political process prior to the regulation's adoption, a positive narrative for nature restoration will help to keep ambition. Both the scientific base of the NRPs and stakeholder participation are furthermore considered to be key for the successful development and implementation of the NRPs[8]. Member States will also need to advance on monitoring methods on several elements (incl. pollinators, agricultural & forest ecosystems, and marine habitats), and there is a need for Union-wide monitoring methods to analyse the progress made under the NRR[9].

[3] IEEP (February, 2024). Successfully navigating the Nature Restoration Planning process.
[4] De Vlinderstichting (July, 2023). EU Pollinator Initiative.
[5] EEA (April, 2024). Urban adaptation in Europe: what works? Implementing climate action in European cities.
[6] Fair Seas (March, 2024). EU Nature Restoration Law – A Deep Dive.
[7] WWF – EURO (June, 2022). EU nature restoration law: Huge opportunity to fight biodiversity and climate crises.
[8] IEEP (July, 2024). The Nature Restoration Law – A hard-fought victory for biodiversity and society.
[9] IEEP (June, 2022). The proposed EU Nature Restoration Regulation: the path to nature's recovery.

The Commission is required to assist Member States through implementing acts (comitology) in several ways, including:

- A method for monitoring pollinator populations, by 19 August 2025 (Art. 10(2)),
- A unified format for NRPs, to be submitted to the committee referred to in Article 24(1) by 1 December 2024 (Art. 15(7)),
- A framework for setting satisfactory levels re. urban, pollinators, agriculture by 31 December 2028 (Art. 20(10)), as well as forests (Art. 20(12), no specific timeframe),
- Methods for monitoring indicators for agriculture and forest ecosystems (Art. 20(11)),
- A format to be used by Member States for reporting (Art. 21(3)).

The Commission is also required to submit a report on the financial aspects for the NRR to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU by 19 August 2025, 12 months after the regulation entered into force (Art. 21(7)), including financial resources, funding needs & gaps, financial measures.

Stakeholders' perspectives

European environmental organisations welcomed the adoption of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, naming it a "historic win for Europe's nature, climate action, citizens and future"[10]. These organisations praised the regulation's overall ambition to restore 20% of EU's land and seas by 2030 and particularly the specific, time-bound and enforceable targets for terrestrial and marine habitats[11]. The reintegration of agricultural ecosystems, including restoration of drained peatlands, was rendered a positive development after the trilogue negotiations. However, concerns have been raised by these organisations on the increased flexibility granted to Member States, which could limit the effective implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. These concerns include loopholes to limit the amount of area to be restored, weakened requirements to prevent deterioration, and an emergency break in case of unforeseeable events, which can temporarily suspend the obligations for agricultural ecosystems[12]. During the political process, the #restorenature coalition (consisting of WWF EU, BirdLife Europe, ClientEarth and EBB) spearheaded a large mobilization of citizens, scientists, businesses, and civil society in support of the regulation. Overall, political will, public participation and significant funding are considered essential for the successful implementation of the regulation[13].

European foresters expressed their concerns (CEPF) about the NRR proposal, while the European Forest Institute (EFI) cautiously welcomed the NRR proposal. The main criticism from forest owners was that the NRR did not take sufficient account of the heterogeneity of Europe's forests and those who own or manage them, and they also expressed concern about the lack of financial support for implementation. The steps taken to increase flexibility (including prioritisation of Natura 2000 sites, flexibility for non-deterioration, compensation at biogeographical region) were seen as positive developments, while continued opportunities for flexible implementation at national level are considered crucial for its implementation[14, 15]. According to EFI, the negotiation process resulted in some positive additions to Article 12 (Forests), such as the consideration of forest fire risk, and the introduction of native tree species composition and species diversity as indicators.

[10] #RestoreNature Coalition (June, 2024). Historic win for EU's nature: EU Council seals the deal on Nature Restoration Law.
[11] #RestoreNature Coalition (September, 2023). #RestoreNature joint statement September 2023.
[12] #RestoreNature Coalition (November, 2023). Nature Restoration Law one step closer to becoming reality – but with loopholes.
[13] FACE (June, 2024). Nature Restoration Law Adopted.
[14] CEPF (November, 2023). Provisional agreement on Nature Restoration: A disappointing outcome.
[15] CEPF (February, 2024). Nature Restoration Law passes its final Stage in the Parliament: a disappointing outcome.

For the effective implementation of NRPs for forests, it was considered important to have a thorough understanding of forest conditions, a landscape perspective (social-ecological), provide a cost evaluation, and to rely on the expertise of local forest managers among other aspects[16,17].

Both agricultural and landowner organisations acknowledge the need for nature restoration in the EU but expressed their criticism towards the format of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. During trilogues, clauses were added to provide flexibility to farmers and landowners to account for climate change and the social and economic needs of rural areas. Rewetting drained peatlands became voluntary for them, while the text promotes incentives to encourage participation. Autonomy and flexibility, appropriate compensation for efforts, and participation remained essential components for both groups[18, 19].

Related IUCN's work

Ecosystem restoration is at the core of IUCN's efforts. One of the five pathways of transformative change included in the IUCN Nature 2030 Programme is: "***Restore*** *the condition of species and ecosystems, and the full suite of benefits that nature provides to people which have already been lost or degraded, capitalising on the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration*". Within this programme, ecosystem restoration is highlighted in impact target 4.2.1 (Programme area - Land), 4.3.1 (Programme Area - Water), and 4.4.1 (Programme area - Ocean). The IUCN European Regional office Work Plan 2021-2024 dedicates a programmatic area to ecosystem restoration, namely: *5.2.5. Support the restoration of European ecosystems to bend the curve of biodiversity loss*.

Relevant IUCN tools that could help support Member States and the European Commission include, but are not limited to: European Red List of Species & Habitats, IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, IUCN Green List, IUCN Global NbS Standard, IUCN STAR metric, IUCN Urban Toolbox, IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology.

IUCN EURO will assist the French government, together with the European Commission, and with support of the IUCN French National Committee, in the drafting of some elements of their National Restoration Plan (including exploring relevant restoration measures in the context of climate change; analysing the socio-economic costs, benefits, and impacts of restoration measures; and a methodological framework to quantify them; and identifying financial resources to support nature restoration). Results / discussions from this project are expected to be presented to the rest of the EU Member States, which could help their own efforts in the preparation of their own National Restoration Plans. In addition, the IUCN EURO aims to host **a Nature O' Clock Webinar on the EU Nature Restoration Regulation** by the end of 2024.

The IUCN MED and EURO offices are also working jointly with other organisations on a Horizon project called "REST-COAST", which aims to provide knowledge and tools for the upscaling of coastal restoration practices in the EU.

[16] EUSTAFOR (March, 2023). EUSTAFOR's policy asks1 for the European Parliament's Position on the EU Nature Restoration proposal.
[17] SUPERB, project coordinated by EFI (May, 2023). SUPERB's Policy recommendations for the EU Nature restoration Law.
[18] Copa-Cogeca (June, 2024). The law on the restoration of nature passes, but its application dead-ends remain.
[19] ELO (February, 2023). OPEN letter to MEPs on Draft report on the proposal for a regulation of the EU Parliament and the Council on nature restoration.

Relevant IUCN Congress resolutions & recommendations:

- WCC-2020-Res-008: Protecting rivers and their associated ecosystems as corridors in a changing climate,
- WCC-2020-Res-009: Protecting and restoring endangered grassland and savannah ecosystems,
- WCC-2020-Res-017: Protection of natural flows of water for the conservation of wetlands,
- WCC-2020-Res-025: Ecosystem conservation, restoration and remediation in the ocean,
- WCC-2020-Res-030: Enhancing the resilience of coastal areas in the face of climate change, biodiversity crisis and rapid coastal development,
- WCC-2020-Res-034: Ecological integrity in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,
- WCC-2020-Res-035: Promoting IUCN leadership in the implementation of the UN Decade on Restoration 2021–2030,
- WCC-2020-Res-056: Biodiversity Financing,
- WCC-2020-Res-073: Ecological connectivity conservation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: from local to international levels,
- WCC-2020-Res-112: Planning of maritime areas and biodiversity and geodiversity conservation,
- WCC-2020-Res-114: Integrated solutions to the climate change and biodiversity crises,
- WCC-2016-Res-043: Securing the future for global peatlands,
- WCC-2016-Res-045: Protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes,
- WCC-2012-Rec-158: Support for the Bonn Challenge on restoration of lost forests and degraded lands,
- WCC-2012-Res-037: The importance of nature conservation criteria in land-use planning policies,
- WCC-2012-Res-044: Implementing ecological restoration best practices in and around protected areas,
- WCC-2012-Res-058: Ecosystem management for disaster risk reduction (DRR),
- WCC-2012-Res-059: The importance of adaptation and disaster risk reduction in coastal areas,
- WCC-2012-Res-084: Promoting ecosystem-based adaptation,
- WCC-2004-Rec-100: Reef-fish spawning aggregations.