



European Regional Office

A SNAPSHOT OF IUCN EUROPE'S SUCCESSES

2021-2025



About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of about 1,500 Member organisations and some 17,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

About IUCN Europe

Through its European Regional Office in Bonn and the EU Representative Office in Brussels, IUCN in Europe focuses on Programme implementation, membership engagement, and EU policy. It provides credible knowledge and valuable contribution to policy-making and action on biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, and nature-based solutions thanks to its broad membership and convening capacity.

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Foreword



Since the last IUCN World Conservation Congress took place four years ago in Marseille, the nature conservation landscape amid shifting priorities has been extremely dynamic, coinciding with a major evolution in the structure and activities of IUCN Europe which keeps successfully adapting to changing circumstances.

Major organisational development happened in late 2022 with the launch of the European Regional Office in Bonn. Ever since, IUCN Europe has operated out of two locations, the European Regional Office (EURO) in Bonn and the EU Representative Office in Brussels. Apart from growing its own capacity, IUCN Europe is also proud of hosting numerous global thematic teams in both offices, ranging from biodiversity assessment and knowledge to protected and conserved areas, forest and grasslands, climate change and energy transition, and knowledge management, to name just a few.

On the membership front, we continue to expand and retain the highest number of members of any IUCN region (428 at time of writing). A notable development since the last Congress has been the rise of subnational entities comprising municipal or regional governments: Europe is also taking the lead here with 15 cities and regions. Overall, the membership numbers in our Region show positive trends, and the emphasis over the next years will be on retention through enhanced engagement of members, as well as outreach to countries with few or no members. Below you can read some of the inspiring examples of our members who used the IUCN Contributions for Nature platform to document their projects.

No less than 13 National Committees along with several country focal points, the regional Working Group on National Committee Development (WGNCD) and the Interregional Committee for Europe, North & Central Asia (ICENCA) continue to do excellent work to enhance our membership experience. At the Secretariat level, a new inter-regional collaboration titled EUCANA (Europe, Central Asia and North Africa) which encompasses 3 IUCN offices and aims to enhance synergy across corporate and programme and policy areas, demonstrates our desire to maximise collaboration between the offices: watch this space!

In terms of our programme and policy portfolio in Europe, there has been a visible expansion thanks to proper resourcing and in order to remain aligned with major EU policy developments. Our thematic focus now includes new areas of work on nature restoration, sustainable food systems and biodiversity finance, examples of which you can find below.

In terms of major policy developments, the EU's adoption of the Nature Restoration Regulation in summer 2024 was a breakthrough moment, prompting IUCN's stronger engagement on restoration across Europe. Recognising the vital role of healthy ecosystems for all sectors of society, IUCN was actively engaged throughout the discussions that led to this success, encouraging EU institutions to adopt an ambitious, science-based legislation.

IUCN continued to be an important partner in the sustainable agriculture discussion by convening inclusive dialogues and advancing critical knowledge in the field through flagship projects with key partners and presence in strategic fora. Furthermore, IUCN has maintained the voice of biodiversity in the EU's circular economy discussions, aiming to ensure the best results for nature during the implementation of this important concept. Meanwhile, NetworkNature stands as one of Europe's key initiatives on NbS, with IUCN playing a central and ongoing role in shaping its direction and impact.

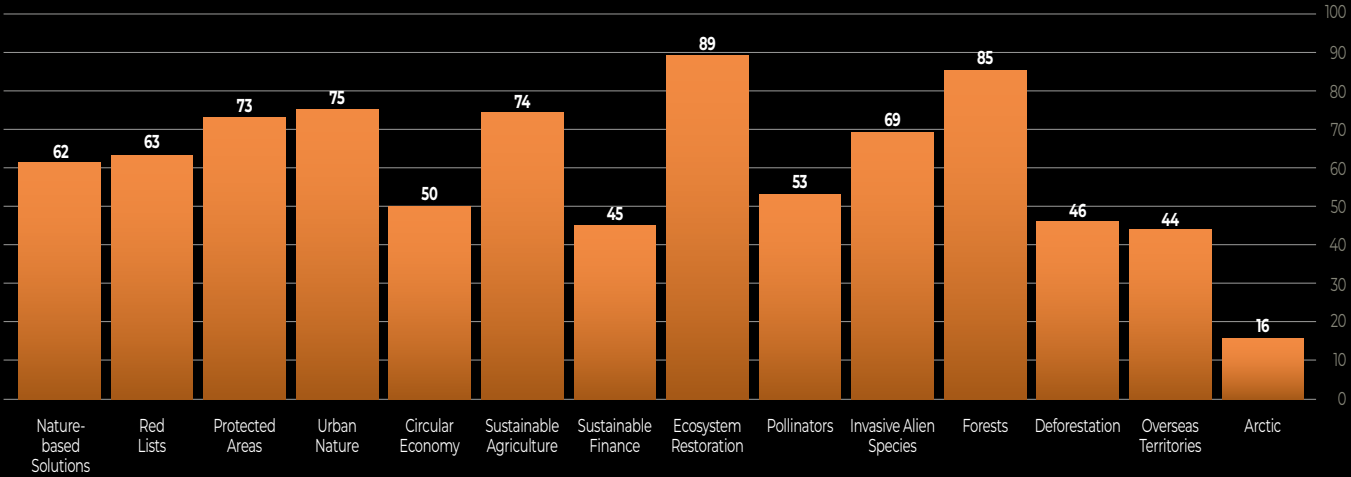
All of this wouldn't have been possible without an excellent collaboration amongst all the IUCN constituents and so we would like to warmly thank all those who were instrumental in implementing the IUCN Programme and European Work Plan 2021-2024: the members and member committees, expert commissions, partners, secretariat and other stakeholders, and look forward to further collaboration!

Boris Erg
Director of the IUCN European Regional Office,
15th September 2025

Alberto Arroyo Schnell
Head of Programme and
Policy of the European Regional Office

European Work Plan 2021-2024

The European Work Plan 2021-2024 featured fourteen areas of programmatic work (or regional priorities) for IUCN Europe. In 2025, a survey was sent to all members asking them if they had undertaken activities related to the 14 areas during that timeframe. In total we received responses from 165 out of 390 members (42%). Rather than a prioritisation, the results shown on the right simply provide an overview of the number of members following each of the areas of programmatic work identified in the Work Plan.



Some highlights from our Members



Assessment of 5 nature national parks in Denmark according to IUCN’s guidelines for Protected Areas

IUCN Member: Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark

Danish IUCN commission experts have on behalf of the Danish Nature Agency assessed 5 nature national parks according to IUCN’s guidelines (Tranum, Stråsø, Fussingø, Gribskov, and Almindingen). These are the first of a total of 15 new parks to be established on state-owned land. The 5 have been designated (3 cat. II, 2 cat. V), with Fussingø near Randers in Jutland having officially opened on 21st June 2025, and the others to follow over the coming few years.



Biodiv’Educ - environmental education in Auvergne

IUCN Member: Play for Nature, France

This pioneering educational project, the aim of which is to raise awareness among children about biodiversity conservation using innovative, playful methods such as new technologies and video games, has, since 2020, instructed more than 1,000 courses to over 16,000 children. Plans are to expand this initiative to the rest of France.



Un árbol por cada nacimiento / A tree for each birth

IUCN Member: Savia Foundation for Commitment and Values, Spain

In collaboration with about seventy municipalities across Spain, the activity consists of planting a tree for each child born during the year, with the aim of restoring and creating new green spaces and native species. This activity is carried out in collaboration with the family. To date, an estimated 10,500 trees have been planted!



Enhancing the Conservation of Turkish Steppe Ecosystems

IUCN Member: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye

The project laid the foundations to identify and conserve biologically critical steppe habitats at national level. It successfully raised awareness on the importance of steppe ecosystems for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, food security, plant and animal richness of steppes, and animal husbandry at national and local levels, through plans, strategies, printed and visual materials, and best practices.

The IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for Europe, North and Central Asia, which gathered around 400 delegates in Bruges, Belgium in 2024



Some highlights from our Secretariat programme & policy activities

Agriculture and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) ▶

In 2024, two IUCN publications were launched: “Assessing the biodiversity-agriculture nexus” and “Sustainable agriculture and Nature-based Solutions”. The former underscores the critical role of standardised metrics in measuring biodiversity on farms, providing a comprehensive review of 12 key tools selected through a wide stakeholder consultation process, while the latter demonstrates how NbS, guided by the IUCN Global Standard for NbS™, can transform agriculture into a triple-win solution for people, nature, and economies.



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◀ Nature Restoration

Following the EU’s adoption of the Nature Restoration Regulation in 2024, IUCN has been drawing on its technical and policy expertise, convening power and extensive membership, to support the European Commission and EU Member States in its effective implementation. Notably, IUCN is supporting France in developing its National Restoration Plan through the European Commission’s Reform and Investment Task Force, with further engagements with EU Member States underway.



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NetworkNature ▶

As a key partner of NetworkNature, IUCN helps drive the mainstreaming of NbS across Europe - bridging science, policy, and practice to meet the EU Green Deal and broader sustainability goals through a network of over 90 projects. IUCN contributes through leadership, policy guidance, and capacity-building, gathering a broad range of stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The impactful NetworkNature Annual Event organised by IUCN serves as a cornerstone of engagement, offering a high-level platform for dialogue, learning, and showcasing innovation, building on the concept of NbS.



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◀ Sustainable finance

2025 marks a pivotal year for biodiversity finance in the European context with the proposal of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (the EU budget running from 2028 to 2034) and the publication of the European Roadmap towards Nature Credits by the European Commission. IUCN provides analysis and input to guarantee adequate financing for biodiversity. In addition, IUCN delivers advice to a set of Member states to elaborate their National Biodiversity Finance Plans as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.



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