



IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: RELEVANCE FOR EUROPE



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Executive summary

Every four years, IUCN members gather at the World Conservation Congress (WCC) to shape the global nature conservation agenda by democratically voting on IUCN motions. Once adopted, they become Resolutions and Recommendations, forming the foundation of IUCN's policy. As the only international conservation platform that unites governments, civil society and Indigenous peoples' organisations, the IUCN Members' Assembly carries a powerful mandate.

At the 2025 Congress, IUCN reaffirmed its deep and ongoing commitment to multilateralism and global cooperation to address the interconnected biodiversity, climate and health crises that threaten the very future of humanity. It also adopted the first-ever global policy on synthetic biology and nature conservation through Resolution 8.086. The Congress also paved the way for the development of an IUCN policy and guidance on artificial intelligence and conservation, geoengineering and regulating financing mechanisms based on biodiversity certificates and credits.

Sustainable food and agricultural systems remain a core priority for IUCN and a critical focus area for biodiversity conservation and ecosystems services science. The Congress showcased recent results and publications, and steered meaningful conversations to chart the way towards more sustainable and resilient food systems. These outcomes coincided with high-level political debates and agricultural policy processes in Europe, underscoring the universal stakes in preserving the ecosystem services and the need for measures towards holistic food systems approaches that deliver biodiversity, climate and social benefits.

The results from IUCN WCC 2025 discussions provide a strong international mandate to advance nature-positive agriculture, soil security and support for extensive and High Nature Value farming systems. These priorities closely align with ongoing EU policy processes, including the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and the Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive.

The newly adopted resolutions also highlight practical, science-based approaches such as agroecology, agroforestry, hedgerow restoration, and the protection of soil biodiversity — as key enablers of resilient and sustainable production systems. Collectively, they offer a coherent reference framework to support EU efforts on policy coherence, circular bioeconomy development, and incentive schemes that reward measurable environmental outcomes.

Freshwater also featured prominently among the 2025 Congress resolutions, highlighting the growing recognition that water security, biodiversity and climate resilience are inseparable. The resolutions call for stronger protection of springs, headwaters, rivers and wetlands, as well as more integrated, basin-scale and ecosystem-based water management approaches. These messages strongly align with the EU Water Resilience Strategy and related European policy processes addressing water scarcity, ecosystem degradation and climate risks.

Another area in which IUCN strengthened its commitment was Target 3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas, with renewed attention to management effectiveness and connectivity in both marine and terrestrial realms. In Europe, this mandates continued engagement by IUCN EURO in European Union platforms dedicated to protected areas, as well as support for its members in achieving the target at national and subnational levels, in line with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Ocean conservation remained a major focus, with IUCN supporting EU implementation of key marine and ocean policies, including the EU Ocean Pact, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Maritime Spatial planning Directive, the Blue Economy Strategy, the Birds and Habitats Directives, and all relevant EU acquis. As part the EU Global Ocean Programme initiative, IUCN have been entrusted with the implementation of the first component of the programme, which aims to enhance partner countries' capacities to implement and benefit from the BBNJ Agreement. Moreover, IUCN hosts the Secretariat of the BBNJ High Ambition Coalition, co-led by the EU, Palau and Seychelles and funded by the European Commission.

Nature restoration will remain a core priority in the coming years, as reflected in multiple IUCN World Conservation Congress resolutions directly relevant to IUCN Europe's work. Key resolutions include Resolution [8.001](#) on improving tree planting practices, Resolution [8.005](#) on the protection and restoration of diverse native grasslands, Resolution [8.014](#) on promoting hedgerows and trees in agriculture, and Resolution [8.023](#) on prioritising wetlands conservation and restoration. These resolutions collectively promote ecosystem-specific and cross-sectoral restoration approaches and align closely with the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. In this context, IUCN Europe is already providing targeted technical support to four EU Member States through the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument, managed by SG REFORM.

On biodiversity finance, key resolutions relevant to the EU policy agenda address integrating biodiversity conservation into carbon markets and regulating biodiversity credits to ensure positive environmental outcomes. The latter is extremely timely as the EU recently unveiled its [Roadmap towards Nature Credits](#) and as IUCN has been selected as a member of the EU Expert Group on Nature Credits. Furthermore, with the support of the European Commission (SG REFORM), IUCN is working on a project aimed at identifying Environmental Harmful Subsidies (EHS) and [improving biodiversity financing in four EU Member States](#).

Lastly, the resolutions adopted at the Congress in Abu Dhabi are directly relevant to the implementation and strategic orientation of the [BESTLIFE2030 programme](#), as they establish internationally agreed policy mandates and scientific guidance that align closely with the programme's objectives to support biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and Nature-based Solutions in the EU outermost regions and Overseas Countries and Territories.

The collaboration between IUCN and the European Union is stronger than ever. The resolutions and recommendations adopted, together with our new Programme and Vision, are complementary to the EU's commitments to safeguard its natural resources and support international environmental collaboration. In this spirit, a heartfelt thank you goes to the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU who coordinated a joint statement on behalf of IUCN State Members in the EU.

About IUCN Congress



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress - the largest gathering of nature conservation organisations and individuals in the world - took place in Abu Dhabi on 9-15 October 2015. It convened over 12,000 attendees in person and online, with over 1,750 European registrations, including 236 member organisations spanning 29 countries.



IUCN Europe was present in full force and proud to have contributed throughout the Congress in many different ways: sharing our expertise, showcasing our work through numerous events, and connecting with other constituents from around the world to build partnerships for the future.

The Congress this year focused on five key themes, highlighting the most challenging issues of our time and key levers needed to solve the planetary crisis. The themes were: scaling up resilient conservation action, reducing climate overshoot risks, delivering on equity, transitioning to nature-positive economies and societies, and disruptive innovation and leadership for conservation. These topics were front and centre at the Forum, one of the two components of the IUCN Congress, where leaders across the world shared best practices, presented project results and debated on transformative solutions.



Before the Congress, IUCN showed its convening power by bringing together stakeholders from all sectors through four summits:

- [World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature](#)
- [IUCN Business Summit](#)
- [Philanthropy Summit](#)
- [Youth Summit](#)



Members Assembly

The more internal segment of the Congress is the Members' Assembly. This is a core mechanism of IUCN, where its 1,400 Members vote on resolutions that shape our work, elect IUCN's governing bodies, and approve the next four-year programme. A fundamental moment in the Members' Assembly is the election of the IUCN Council, the Union's governing body. For the European region, the following candidates have been elected by the Members:

West Europe	East Europe, North and Central Asia
Ms Sonia Castañeda Rial, Spain	Ms Diana Garlytska, Ukraine
Ms Ann-Katrine Garn, Denmark	Mr Ruben Khachatryan, Armenia
Ms Maud Lelièvre, France	Mr Samad-John Smaranda, Romania

Her Excellency Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak has been re-elected as President of IUCN for a second term.

Lastly, the IUCN Congress has been certified compliant with the ISO 20121:2024 Standard, following an independent audit. Guided by the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 Sustainability Policy, IUCN strived to ensure all aspects of the Congress operations adhere to rigorous sustainability standards.



IUCN 2026-2029 Programme and 20-year Strategic Vision

The Congress is a pivotal moment for IUCN as it sets the direction for the next programmatic period. Through the democratic vote of its membership, each four years IUCN adopts a new programme to guide the work of the Secretariat, Commissions, and Members.

The [2026-2029 Programme](#) has been developed over lengthy Union-wide consultations over 2024 and 2025, which then culminated in the adoption in Abu Dhabi. The goal of the programme is to deliver on three main objectives.



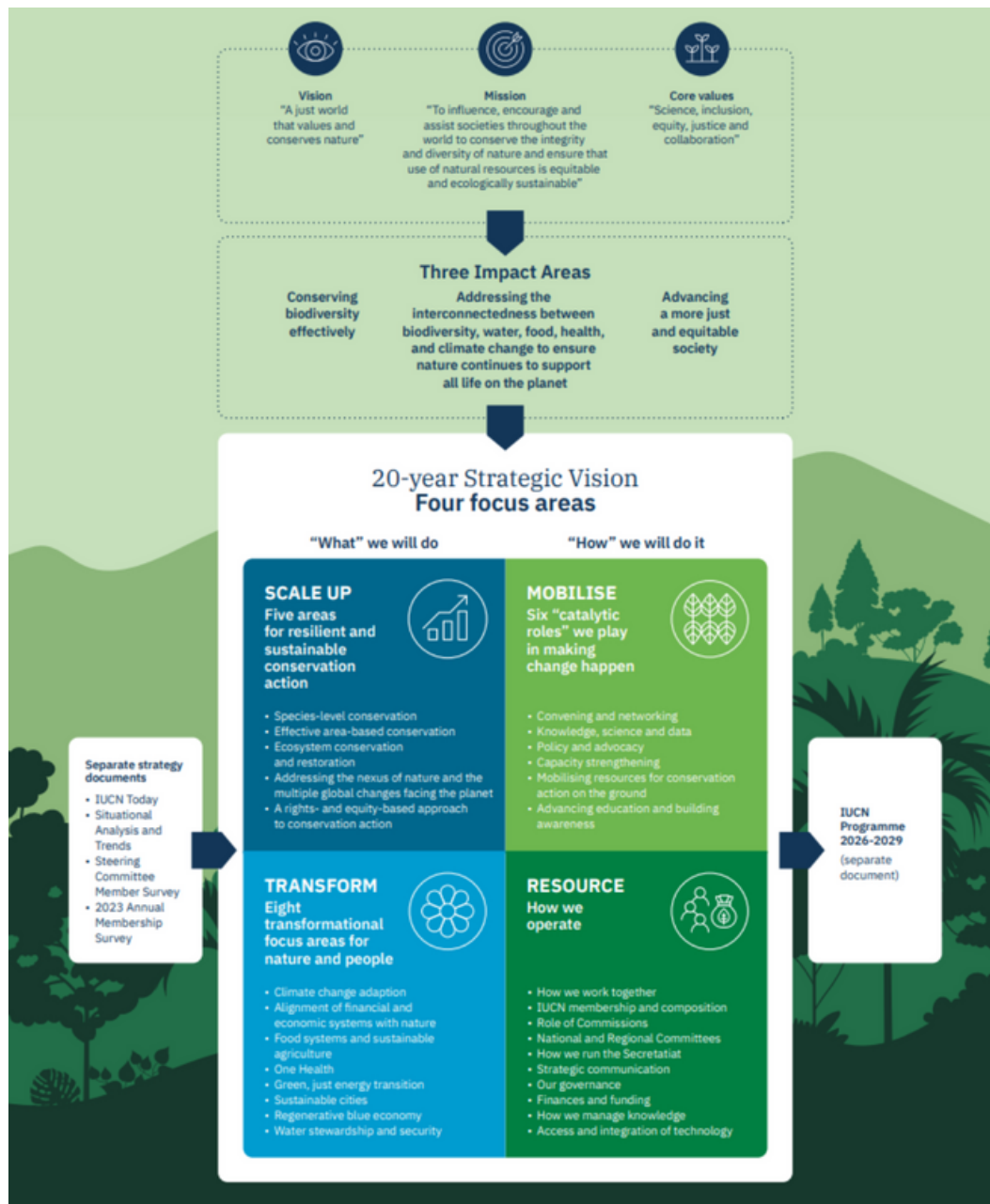
To translate these objectives into reality, the document organises the action to be taken under 24 specific outputs. These are organised around the main objectives outlined above, as well as the major global transformations shaping nature conservation identified by expert analysis. IUCN will thus strengthen and consolidate its work on food systems and sustainable agriculture, water security and stewardship, the alignment of financial and economic systems with nature, sustainable cities, climate change adaptation and mitigation, One Health, green and just energy transition, and the regenerative blue economy.

Moreover, for the first time ever, IUCN also developed a long-term vision, reflecting on the strengths of the Union, as well as the challenges and opportunities ahead. [Unite for Nature on the Path to 2045: A 20-Year Strategic Vision for the Union](#) articulates IUCN's commitment to a just world that values and conserves nature and establishes a clear direction for the next two decades.

Three main objectives:

- Biodiversity (ecosystems, species and genetic diversity) has been effectively conserved, protected and restored in land, freshwater and marine realms and mainstreamed across sectors.
- Effective conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services has contributed significantly to addressing the nature– global change nexus, including through Nature-based Solutions to build ecosystem and societal resilience and reduce the risks to nature of unsustainable responses to anthropogenic global crises.
- Equitable, legitimate, legal and sustainable use of nature and natural resources have contributed to both nature conservation and a just, equitable and sustainable society.

It guides collective efforts to safeguard biodiversity, inspire societal engagement, and drive transformative change toward a sustainable future. While there will not be a regional work plan as has been the case in previous quadrennial periods, the Vision recognises that *“the long-term priorities set in this 20-year Strategic Vision will be regularly updated and tailored to the realities of each region”*.



In terms of membership, as described above, the Congress brought together a large number of European Members. Among them were several new Members coming from types of organisations, such as Indigenous peoples' organisations and zoos. It also refers to the newest sub-category of Members: sub-national entities which comprise municipal or regional governments: *“broadening and deepening the membership – in particular State Members and sub-national governments and Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations – With membership at the sub-national level expected to increase, more cities and states/provinces will be included globally through sub-national representation”* and *“engaging and increasing IUCN’s urban membership to support increased knowledge, action and networks”*.



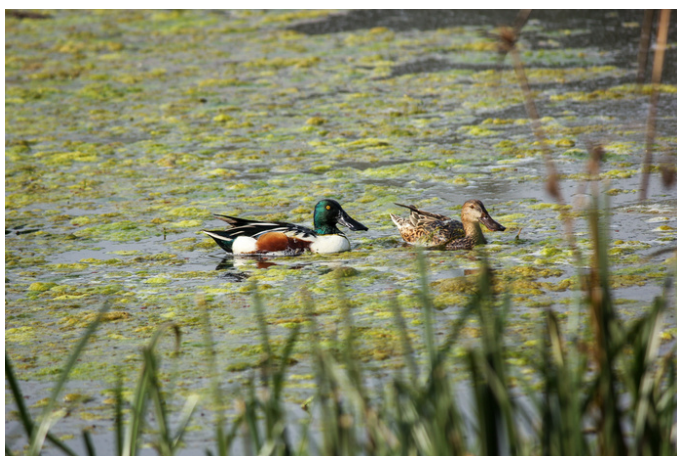
Resolutions alignment with key EU processes

Motions are the mechanism by which IUCN Members influence third parties and guide the policy and programme of IUCN. Members vote to approve motions, and once adopted, they become Resolutions and Recommendations, and therefore the body of IUCN's general policy. As the only international conservation forum that brings governments, civil society and Indigenous peoples' organisations to the same table, the IUCN Members' Assembly carries a powerful mandate.

In Abu Dhabi, IUCN recognised the historic moment in which the world finds itself, reiterated its commitment to science and cooperation, and promoted a solution-oriented approach. The Members Assembly reaffirmed IUCN its deep and ongoing **commitment to multilateralism and global cooperation** to address the biodiversity, climate and health crises that threaten the very future of humanity (8.142). It also adopted the **first-ever global policy on synthetic biology and nature conservation through Resolution 8.086**. Congress also paved the way for the development of an IUCN policy and guidance **on artificial intelligence and conservation (8.140)** and **on geoengineering (8.041)**.

Lastly, in a world fraught with conflict and division, IUCN's vision is to achieve a just world that values and conserves nature. In line with this, IUCN called for peace and collaboration for the benefit of both people and planet. Two resolutions are key in this regard: **Resolution 8.059 - Nature conservation diplomacy: integrating conservation, peace and security through international cooperation and Resolution 8.056 - Ensuring conflict-sensitive conservation and protection of the environment in fragile and conflict situations.**

In the next section, we have analysed the key resolutions and mapped their alignment with major EU policy processes, in line with IUCN programme and policy priorities. This effort is twofold: on the one hand, it shows our Members which policy pathways are available to implement the decisions taken in Abu Dhabi, on the other hand, it signals to partners how IUCN – with its scientific tools and standards – can best support the achievement of the European nature conservation goals and strengthen implementation of environmental laws. **To see the full list of adopted resolutions: [click here](#).**

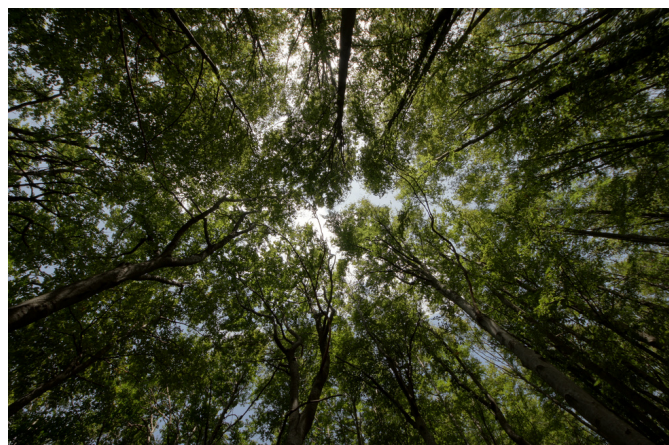


Protected areas

Biodiversity conservation is at the heart of IUCN's mission, and this was confirmed by Members once more through the adoption of several key resolutions in Abu Dhabi. These resolutions are of global reach and importance, nevertheless they are also key for nature conservation processes in Europe. Specifically on protected areas, **Resolution [8.006](#) - Promoting the models of regional or sub-national protected natural areas to achieve the global target of 30% protected and conserved areas by 2030** mandates IUCN to continue advancing the 30x30 target promoting regional cooperation.

Supplementary to it, **Resolution [8.012](#) - Advancing the IUCN Green List Standard of protected and conserved areas to enhance effective and equitable in situ conservation** encourages countries and organisations to invest in using the Green List Standard in supporting protected area support programmes, monitoring effectiveness, and reporting achievements. The focus for protected areas is thus not only on quantity, achieving the international goal of protecting 30% of our planet, but also on quality in terms of management effectiveness. These resolutions are fully in line with the EU efforts under the Birds and Habitats Directives, as well as the block's international commitments. It is important to note that many IUCN tools and standards are already included in the [EU's Criteria and guidance for protected areas designations](#).

The rights of Indigenous Peoples were also reaffirmed by the adoption of **Resolution [8.130](#) - Protecting the Sápmi Forest: safeguarding biodiversity and Indigenous livelihoods**, which calls on IUCN to support actions to protect Boreal Forests in the Sápmi region, recognise the leadership of Sámi peoples, and uphold their right to free, prior and informed consent in all decisions affecting their lands.





The Congress is also an opportunity for IUCN members to highlight the conservation needs of specific species or regions. For example, **Recommendation 8.052** calls for **the inscription of the Forest of Fontainebleau on the UNESCO World Heritage List**. It was indeed an IUCN resolution that laid the groundwork for the World Heritage Convention in 1966 and to this day IUCN is named advisor on nature to the World Heritage Committee.

Marine conservation also featured prominently in the resolutions adopted in 2025. Members voted in favour of resolutions calling for **strengthening the knowledge and protection of oceanic mesophotic ecosystems (8.028)** and **Resolution 8.035 - Protection of mesopelagic ecosystem integrity**. Moreover, calls for an enhanced focus on coastal restoration was received by the landmark adoption of **Resolution 8.036 - Facilitating synergistic delivery of multilateral commitments on conserving coastal ecosystems**

and **Resolution 8.062 - Strengthening the protection of Posidonia in the Mediterranean: legislation, monitoring and capacity-building**. The latter build on years of expertise in Blue Carbon Ecosystems from IUCN, such as from the first edition of the Mediterranean Blue Carbon Strategy released in 2025. Lastly, **Resolution 8.128 - Global conservation strategy for the high seas based on area-based management tools, including marine protected areas**, which asks IUCN to propose a global conservation strategy for the high seas, incorporating, where appropriate, technical and expert contributions from other international organisations.

IUCN's work on ocean and marine ecosystems can strongly support the EU's efforts in strengthening protection both at home and abroad. Internally, IUCN is committed to supporting Member States in implementing the EU Ocean Pact, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, the Blue Economy Strategy, Habitats Directive, and all relevant EU acquis. As part the EU Global Ocean Programme initiative, IUCN have been entrusted with the implementation of the first component of the programme to enhance partner countries capacities to implement and benefit from the BBNJ Agreement. This component will focus on enhancing institutional capacity for ABNJ governance, strengthening technical capacity, and reinforcing regional ocean governance and coordination mechanisms. Moreover, IUCN hosts the Secretariat of the BBNJ High Ambition Coalition, co-led by the EU, Palau and Seychelles and funded by the European Commission.

Restoration

Nature restoration remains a fundamental line of work for the coming years, which has been reflected in the number of adopted resolutions that are directly relevant for the work IUCN Europe is doing in the field of restoration. **Resolution 8.001 - Improving tree planting practices - Planting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose** calls on Members to ensure that rigorous biodiversity and social safeguards are applied to all forest restoration initiatives and to support tree planting, restoration and landscape regeneration initiatives by promoting the use of native species, including threatened native tree species.



Resolution 8.005 - Protection and restoration of diverse native grasslands calls upon States to encourage landscape-scale restoration and calls upon grassland managers to effectively conserve and manage natural grasslands, including by recognising the role of managed livestock grazing and other grassland management systems as a necessary aspect of maintaining grassland habitat and protecting it from benign neglect or abandonment. **Resolution 8.013 - Management and restoration of areas affected by Eucalyptus monocultures in regions outside their natural distribution** calls upon Members to elaborate guidelines for the sustainable management and ecological restoration of areas affected by Eucalyptus monocultures outside their natural range and to prioritise the recovery of native forests and promote diversified forestry models.

Meanwhile, **Resolution 8.014 - Promoting hedgerows and trees in agriculture to foster biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience and mitigate climate change** requests the IUCN Secretariat to support the dissemination and implementation of practices linked to the multifunctionality, sustainable management, conservation and planting of hedgerows and trees in agricultural areas within its projects and programmes, and encourages Members to develop policies and strategies for the wider development of hedgerows and trees and other high-diversity landscape features in agriculture and to fulfil their international goals.

Resolution 8.023 - Prioritising wetlands conservation and restoration to tackle the dual climate and biodiversity crises encourages all IUCN Members to acknowledge and prioritise the conservation and restoration of all wetlands as one of the strategic actions for climate and biodiversity solution and invites governments and local authorities to incorporate ambitious wetland targets and actions into their national plans and strategies, which includes EU Members' National Restoration Plans. Besides these resolutions that directly relate to restoration of different ecosystems, other resolutions focusing on novel approaches also relate to restoration measures.



Resolution 8.040 - Mitigating the impact of disasters caused by natural hazards on wildlife by implementing specific measures (prevention, rescue, restoration) encourages IUCN Members to support scientific research on post-natural disaster monitoring and the restoration of animal populations, while **8.071 - Recognising the Model Forest Act to enhance forest protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests** encourages States to consider adopting or adapting the Model Forest Act (once agreed), to strengthen forest protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests.

Furthermore, **Resolution 8.126 - Recognising and Reporting Ecological Corridors** calls on the Secretariat and Members to engage appropriate governance authorities and other partners to identify potential ecological corridors in line with the IUCN Connectivity Guidelines. These potential areas for ecological corridors could be recognised as areas in need of restoration to restore their connectivity function.

Meanwhile, cross-sectoral **Resolution 8.141 - Mobilise urgent action to prevent and combat wildland fires calls upon authorities to identify and map areas of high conservation value**, including areas that are difficult to restore after fire and integrate them into wildfire prevention and response plans, and further to integrate post-fire restoration activities and prevent conversion into other land use types, while prioritising natural regeneration. All the above-mentioned resolution relate directly to the work is doing in terms of supporting EU Member States with their National Restoration Plans within the framework of the Nature Restoration Regulation.

IUCN Europe is already supporting four EU Member States in the development of some elements of their national plans, in the context of the Technical Support Instrument of the European Commission, managed by SG REFORM.

Biodiversity finance

Biodiversity finance was also one of the topics where IUCN agreed that further action from the Union was needed, with a **human-rights-based approach underpinning IUCN's efforts (8.135)**. The alignment of financial and economic systems with nature is one of the key areas of work in the new IUCN programme.

In this regard, members call for the **definition of a robust Nature Positive for Business framework**, to mobilise corporate, civil society and government support for high-integrity nature positive contributions aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (**8.072**). Similarly, IUCN was tasked to work with businesses and governments to develop **guidance and encourage the use of tools that support compliance and incentives business to assess and disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity**, while recognising threatened species and areas of importance for biodiversity such as KBAs, including areas of high ecological integrity (**8.079**).

The role of the private sector in a **nature positive economy (8.084)**, in resourcing the **maintenance and development of the IUCN Red List (8.132)**, and supporting the economy transformation towards a **regenerative economy (8.080)** were also adopted.

Without a doubt, the resolutions most relevant to the EU policy agenda in this context were **Resolution 8.043 - Integrating biodiversity conservation in carbon pricing and trading programmes for climate change mitigation** and **Resolution and recommendation 8.078 - Regulating financing mechanisms based on biodiversity certificates and credits and guarantee positive effects on nature**.

The latter is extremely timely as the EU recently unveiled its Roadmap towards Nature Credits and as IUCN has been selected as a member of the EU Expert Group on Nature Credits. Furthermore, with the support of the European Commission (SG REFORM), IUCN is working on a project aimed at identifying Environmental Harmful Subsidies (EHS) and improving biodiversity financing in four EU Member States.

Nature-based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) were addressed in multiple Congress resolutions, covering urban areas, forests, freshwater systems, wetlands and agricultural landscapes (**8.001**, **8.005**, **8.008**, **8.013**, **8.014**, **8.016**, **8.023**, **8.040**, **8.077**, **8.126**, **8.102**). These resolutions emphasize the critical role of ecosystem protection, restoration, and sustainable management in supporting biodiversity recovery, strengthening climate resilience, and delivering broader societal benefits.

Together, they provide practical guidance on how to design and implement high-quality NbS effectively across all ecosystem types.

Some of the resolutions adopted do not focus on the immediate implementation of NbS on the ground, but strengthen the conditions needed to scale high-integrity NbS by **improving governance, accountability, finance, private-sector engagement and social legitimacy (8.011, 8.071, 8.080, 8.084, 8.127)**. These address recurring challenges in European NbS delivery, such as inconsistent monitoring, fragmented governance, short-term funding cycles, and the need for stronger private and community engagement.

Many resolutions, directly or indirectly, reinforce NbS as a practical delivery pathway for biodiversity recovery, climate resilience and human well-being, with direct relevance for the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, the Water Framework Directive, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy as well as the EU Forest Strategy, the EU Deforestation and the EU's Sustainable Finance Framework.

Resolution 8.102 Reinforcing and developing urban and peri-urban forests in line with the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions is the clearest and most explicit NbS mandate adopted in 2025, as it frames urban and peri-urban forestry directly in line with the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. The resolution emphasises protecting existing urban woodlands, restoring degraded forest fragments, planting diverse native species, ensuring ecological continuity, and establishing robust monitoring systems. This aligns particularly with the NRR urban ecosystem targets, the EU Mission on Climate Adaptation, and the EU Urban Agenda.

Resolution 8.077 Encouraging agroforestry and mycorrhization practices that promote soil biodiversity - strengthens the NbS narrative in productive landscapes by explicitly linking soil biodiversity, water retention, and crop resilience with ecological farming practices. This is highly relevant for the design of CAP eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate measures (AECMs), and the EU Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive, by providing a clear international reference for incentivising multifunctional agricultural NbS that improve drought resilience, carbon storage and biodiversity.

Resolution 8.080 on circular economy situates NbS within a broader transformation of economic systems, moving beyond harm reduction towards ecosystem regeneration. The resolution calls for clearer definitions, criteria and monitoring frameworks for regenerative activities, which is highly relevant for the EU's work on sustainable finance, the emerging EU Nature Credits Roadmap, and efforts to align financial flows with biodiversity recovery and climate resilience.

Whereas **Resolution 8.127** highlights that NbS cannot be delivered through technical solutions alone; they require public support, cultural acceptance and meaningful participation. This aligns with EU initiatives on environmental education, public participation under the Aarhus Convention, and community involvement in restoration planning and urban greening.

Finally, **Resolution 8.016 Springs under threat: mobilising urgent action for neglected freshwater systems** calls for improved inventories, monitoring and restoration of these often-overlooked ecosystems.

In an EU context, this supports the Water Framework Directive and emerging EU Water Resilience Strategy, as well as the NRR freshwater targets, by highlighting that effective NbS must also include small but ecologically vital systems that underpin water security, species conservation and climate adaptation.



Sustainable food and agricultural systems

Resolutions adopted in Abu Dhabi echo the EU policy debates on agriculture: reinforcing the need to shift from single-issue measures towards holistic food and agricultural systemic approaches that deliver biodiversity, climate and social benefits.

Resolution 8.002 on nature-positive, sustainable agriculture and food systems mandates IUCN to strengthen its agri-food partnerships, mobilise funding and create Union-wide expert groups on agriculture and food systems, including on soil biodiversity. For the EU, this aligns with the ongoing discussion on the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and the need to improve policy coherence across food, climate, biodiversity and soils.

Complementing this, **Resolution 8.007 on a Soil security law** provides a clear mandate to advance legal and governance approaches that recognise soils as a critical resource. This links directly to the EU's Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive and broader efforts to bring soil health into agricultural policy and investment decisions.

Members also highlighted the importance of extensive production landscapes and the people managing them. **Resolution 8.008 on rangelands and pastoralism** recognises the contributions of pastoralist communities and calls for greater awareness and support for sustainable management of rangelands is an issue that resonates with European debates on maintaining semi-natural grasslands, High Nature Value farming, and climate resilience.

Resolutions also underlined specific practices, with **Resolution 8.014 - Promoting hedgerows and trees in agriculture to foster biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience and mitigate climate change** and **Resolution 8.077 encouraging agroforestry and mycorrhization practices to enhance soil biodiversity, water retention and crop resilience**.

Finally, **Resolution 8.083 calls for a circular and sustainable bioeconomy for food and agriculture**. Together, these provide a useful international reference point for EU work on agroecology, agroforestry, nutrient cycling, and the design of incentives that reward environmental outcomes, including through CAP eco-schemes and rural development interventions. This last resolution strongly echoes the newly released Strategy for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy by the European Commission and the expected discussions on circular economy.



Water

Freshwater featured strongly across the 2025 resolutions, reflecting the growing recognition that water security is inseparable from ecosystem health. This is directly relevant for the **EU Water Resilience Strategy**, as well as implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Nature Restoration Regulation, including emerging initiatives such as the forthcoming EU Water Resilience Stakeholder Platform aimed at supporting action-oriented implementation of the Strategy.

Resolution 8.016 on springs calls for urgent action on these often-overlooked freshwater systems, including improved inventories, monitoring, restoration, and recognition of springs as groundwater-dependent ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots. **Resolution 8.021** similarly stresses **the need to safeguard watershed heads and headwaters** to protect water quality, connectivity and resilience in a changing climate.

At basin scale, **Resolution 8.018** urges the **development of a voluntary river conservation tracking system** to complement existing global reporting and calls on governments to embed river conservation targets and indicators in national plans. This reinforces the EU's need to better track pressures and ecological status, and to strengthen the protection of free-flowing rivers and associated corridors.

The Congress also adopted resolutions that underline the links between freshwater ecosystems, food security and livelihoods, including **Resolution 8.019 on sustainable inland fisheries** and **Resolution 8.020 promoting an integrated aquascape approach for fresh and saline water ecosystems**. **Resolution 8.023 on wetlands** (also reflected under the restoration section) further highlights the role of wetlands as key Nature-based Solutions for both climate adaptation and water security.

Finally, the adoption of **Resolution 8.143 on hydropower impacts** calling for more transparent, participatory decision-making, respect for rights, and alignment with best practice is relevant for European discussions on energy transition infrastructure and its footprint on rivers. **Resolution 8.017 on glaciers and post-glacial ecosystems** adds an additional reminder of upstream climate impacts on water availability and hazards, which matter for European mountain regions.



EU outermost regions and overseas territories

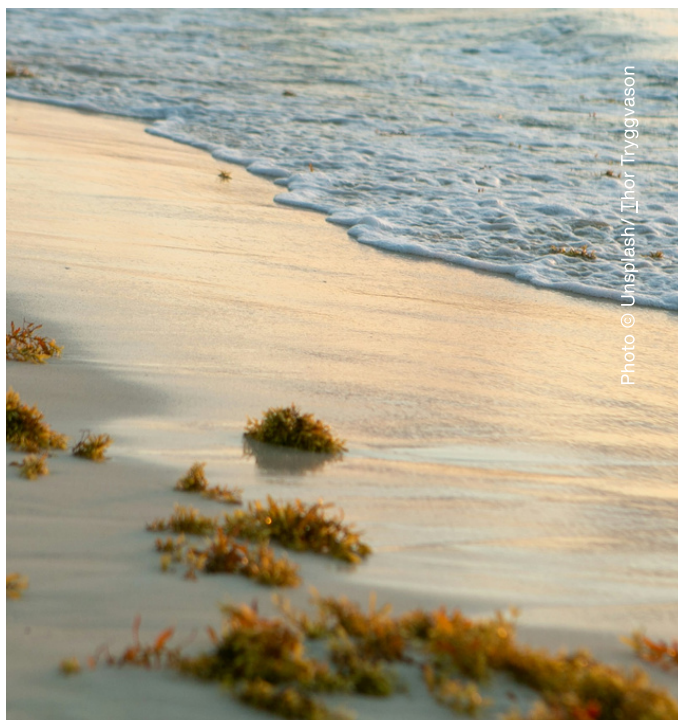
The resolutions adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress are directly relevant to the implementation and strategic orientation of BESTLIFE2030 programme, as they establish internationally agreed policy mandates and scientific guidance that align closely with the programme's objectives to support biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and Nature-based Solutions in the EU outermost regions and Overseas Countries and Territories.

A targeted suite of resolutions adopted in Abu Dhabi focuses specifically on islands, coastal and marine ecosystems, which constitute the core geographic and ecological scope of BESTLIFE2030. **Resolution 8.070: Calling for a United Nations Decade of Island Resilience** provides a strong global framework for advancing resilience in island ecosystems and communities. This directly reinforces BESTLIFE2030's integrated approach to biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation and sustainable livelihoods in insular territories, positioning BESTLIFE-funded actions as concrete contributions to a globally endorsed agenda.

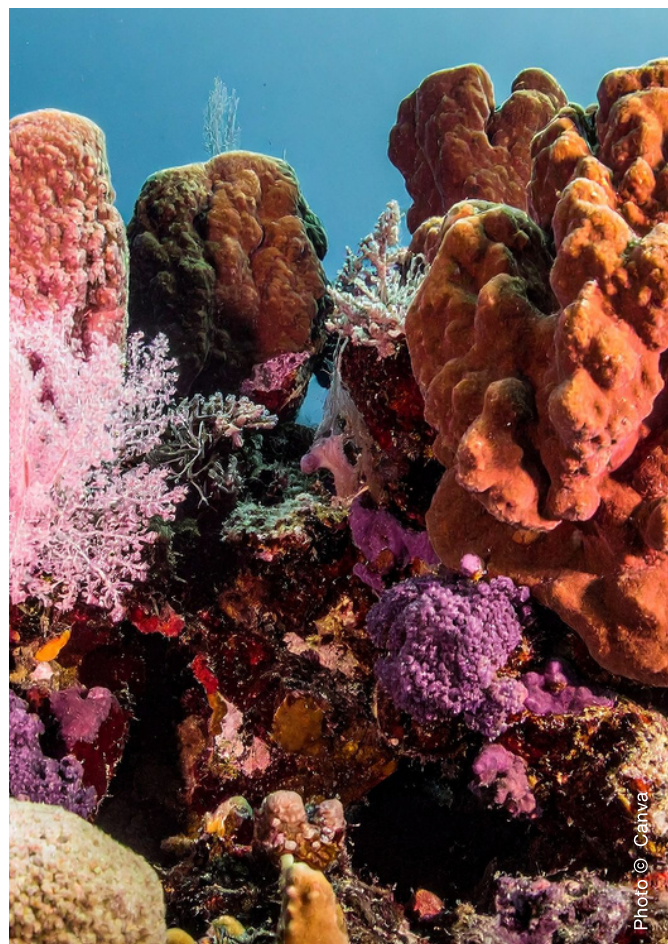
Resolution 8.027 - Establishment of a Marine Biodiversity Conservation Area in Macaronesia is particularly relevant for BESTLIFE2030 as it explicitly supports transboundary marine conservation in EU outermost regions. It urges all States with Exclusive Economic Zones in the Macaronesia region, including Cabo Verde, Portugal and Spain, to establish a transboundary Marine Biodiversity Conservation Area.

Moreover, it offers a powerful policy reference for BESTLIFE investments in marine protected areas, ecosystem connectivity, and cooperative governance across Macaronesian waters.

Similarly, **Resolution 8.022: Sustainable management of freshwater resources in atolls** addresses critical water scarcity challenges that affect several BESTLIFE2030-eligible overseas territories. It aligns closely with BESTLIFE actions promoting ecosystem-based water management, watershed protection and Nature-based Solutions as tools for resilience and biodiversity conservation.



Resolution 8.029: Establishing international governance for the management of Sargassum seaweed in the Caribbean basin responds to a rapidly escalating ecological and socio-economic threat affecting multiple BESTLIFE2030 territories. The resolution provides an international mandate for coordinated monitoring, research, ecosystem restoration and adaptive management, directly supporting BESTLIFE-funded responses to emerging marine pressures.



Finally, **Resolution 8.037: Fourth global coral bleaching event: urgent action to reduce the risk of catastrophic loss of the world's coral reefs** underscores the critical urgency of coral reef protection. This resolution strongly underpins BESTLIFE2030 supported actions for reef conservation, restoration, long-term monitoring and climate resilience, particularly in tropical overseas territories.

Together, these resolutions provide political legitimacy, scientific direction and policy coherence for BESTLIFE2030 interventions, ensuring that locally implemented projects are aligned with globally recognised conservation priorities while responding to the specific vulnerabilities of Europe's outermost regions and overseas territories. They also align with the EU's vision of safeguarding people and nature outlined in the European Strategy for the Outermost Regions.

IUCN Europe events

Together for Nature Pavilion

From sustainable agriculture and circular economy to ecosystem restoration and Nature-based Solutions, IUCN Europe teams worked hard to bring Europe's voice and solutions to the global stage. The IDEA Campaign and IUCN ENCA (Europe, North and Central Asia) co-hosted a Together for Nature Pavilion – an exhibition space, highlighting conservation priorities and innovations from Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.



Over the course of the Congress week, the Pavilion hosted 22 sessions featuring 70+ speakers from civil society, government, science, business, and youth networks, covering all five Congress themes across diverse geographies and ecosystems.

The Western Europe Members meeting

European Members were highly visible at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, hosting 15 booths and pavilions, in addition to numerous other contributions across the Forum. The Western Europe regional members' meeting provided a valuable opportunity for in-person connection and strategic dialogue. Members received updates on significant developments at the regional office over the past four years.



Photo © / IUCN Europe

The launch of the NbS European Hub

A big announcement relevant to Europe was the launch of the European Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Hub. Hosted in Bonn, Germany, the Hub will work closely with IUCN global and regional NbS teams to scale up knowledge management, partnerships, and resource mobilization around NbS in the region.



Photo © / IUCN Europe

Discussions ranged from circular economy and ecosystems restoration, to technology, mental health, and careers in conservation, reflecting the full spectrum of what it means to work together for nature. Beyond the formal sessions, the Pavilion became a meeting place, offering opportunities for networking, partnership building, and reconnecting with colleagues and friends.

Here are some of the events in which IUCN Europe took part:

- **European farming Living Labs perspective for Climate Change and Biodiversity in Food Systems:** In the context of the Eco-ready_project, this session highlighted the role and potential of Living Labs in providing bottom-up and recent data on mitigation practices from agricultural activities and sustainable soil management towards climate change, food security and biodiversity loss crisis. After a presentation from Living Labs concrete case studies and lessons learnt so far, the audience was invited to engage in policy-related problematics from the Living-Labs context.
- **Agriculture and Biodiversity science-based policy development in Europe:** Following the development of the newly constituted European Commission and the current dialogue on the next Common Agricultural Policy, this session offered an in-depth look into innovative perspectives on science-based policy recommendations in Europe for agriculture, climate and biodiversity. This dialogue between policy experts brought participants rich references to catalyse action and transformative initiatives on how to deliver European level policies for a safe, robust and fair transition toward sustainable agri-food systems.
- **Circular economy as a vehicle for nature-positive economy:** Circular economy offers a transformative solution by shifting from wasteful linear processes to regenerative systems that preserve environmental and economic value. However, unlocking its full potential requires strong policy frameworks, smart business incentives, and a clear alignment with nature-positive principles. The session brought together key policymakers, researchers, and industry leaders to explore how circular economy strategies can contribute to biodiversity conservation. The key takeaway was that biodiversity and circularity must not be treated as parallel goals. To scale impact, we need a unified narrative backed by robust metrics that show how circular practices drive real biodiversity outcomes.
- **Beyond boundaries: overcoming institutional, physical, and social boundaries to reconnect nature conservation with society:** in the context of the RECONNECT_project, this session explored three critical, interrelated aspects where conservation could strengthen connections: ecological shifts in landscape dynamics, societal appreciation and support, and the ability to bridge institutional and administrative divides.



- **Bridging agriculture and biodiversity through policy and practice:** At the Learning Zone, IUCN Europe showcased its latest work on sustainable agriculture and Nature-based Solutions, presenting key insights from the reports Assessing the biodiversity-agriculture nexus (IUCN, 2024) and Sustainable Agriculture and Nature-based Solutions (IUCN, 2024). Report's authors Tommaso Demozzi and Facundo Odriozola highlighted how both publications advance the evidence base for integrating conservation practices into farming systems, sparking discussions with Congress participants on aligning agricultural policy, biodiversity monitoring, and NbS implementation. The presentations reflected IUCN Europe's efforts to connect science, policy and practice by offering practical frameworks, rigorous assessment tools, and pathways to make food systems more resilient and nature positive.

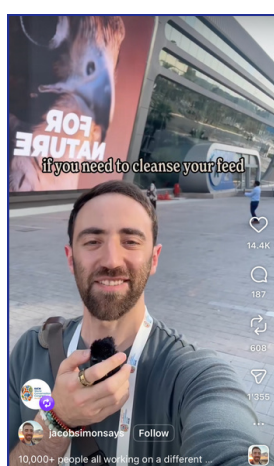
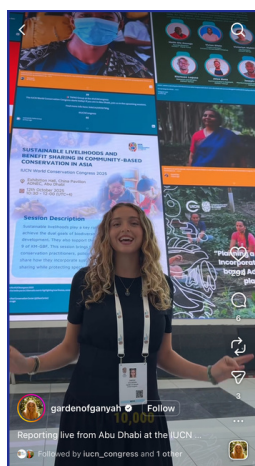


- **Measuring the Pulse of European Biodiversity: Scaling-Up Red List Applications to Guide Policy and Action:** The IUCN Red List new assessments were a major milestone at the World Conservation Congress. In Abu Dhabi it was unveiled how nearly 100 additional wild bee species in Europe have been classified as threatened, with more than 20% of species in groups such as bumblebees and cellophane bees now facing a risk of extinction. The publication of the bee and butterfly assessments follows the first Europe-wide assessment of hoverflies, another crucial pollinator group. Published in 2022, it revealed that 37% of all hoverfly species in Europe are threatened with extinction. Together, these IUCN Red List assessments make an essential contribution to the knowledge base that underpins the implementation of the EU's New Deal for Pollinators, especially in tracking progress towards the pollinator targets under the Nature Restoration Regulation.
- **Advancing Large Scale Restoration Programmes through Sharing Insights of EU Funded Nature Restoration Projects:** This event convened leading actors from government agencies, international conventions, research initiatives, NGOs, and stakeholders to explore the challenges and opportunities of upscaling restoration efforts in Europe and beyond. At the event, the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands outlined how the convention is essential in guiding concrete action on the ground and how the EU Nature Restoration Regulation can be a ground-breaking instrument to put nature on the path to recovery. Drawing on targeted research and practical restoration experience across Europe, participants learned how the RESTCOAST project knowledge products provide valuable insights for designing and implementing effective restoration frameworks, engaging stakeholders, mobilizing resources, and monitoring restoration outcomes.

Communication

The Congress achieved significant media reach, generating coverage across 30,000 articles. Over 350 journalists from leading global outlets - including CNN, Associated Press, AFP, and many others - attended the event in person, providing extensive on-the-ground reporting.

Among the key announcements was the release of a new Red List assessment revealing mounting risks to wild European pollinators - a finding with critical implications for European biodiversity policy. The assessment was formally presented at a press conference and garnered substantial interest from European media.



Social media

IUCN global social media channels generated over 1.87 million impressions. The official Congress hashtag [#IUCNcongress](#) saw over 5,200 mentions in October and an estimated reach of more than 210 million. This year, for the first time, IUCN launched a partnership with digital influencers from multiple regions, extending the Congress's reach to new and diverse audiences.

Strategic partnerships

Media partnerships, including a collaboration with BBC Media Action and CNN, amplified key messages and broadened the event's visibility across different channels.

Resolution 8.089 - Developing knowledge of biodiversity issues among the media and general journalists - was developed, which asks scientists to partner with interested journalists to jointly develop guidelines on how to cover biodiversity and climate crises, and calls for the governments to provide the necessary resources.

Regional engagement

The IUCN European Regional Office provided daily [LinkedIn](#) recaps, offering Congress highlights through a European lens. This regional coverage generated over 20,000 impressions across social media platforms, effectively engaging European stakeholders and members.

