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Subject: Halting the loss of **biodiversity by 2010**
– Council conclusions

The Annex to this note sets out the conclusions that the Council (Environment) adopted on 28 June 2004.

Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010

- Council conclusions -

RECALLING the objective established at Gothenburg by the European Council to halt biodiversity loss by 2010; and RECALLING the priority actions identified in the 6th Environmental Action Programme;

RECOGNISING the continuing alarming rate of overall loss of biodiversity in the EU and at global level and that this loss threatens to undermine the achievement of the Lisbon agenda, the environmental, economic and social goals of the EU, as well as the global Millennium Development Goals;

RECALLING the CBD target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, which the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) endorsed;

CONVINCED that biodiversity has a major contribution to make to sustaining life, sustaining livelihoods, to poverty eradication, to the promotion of human health and to sustainable development;

RECALLING the Council contribution to the Spring European Council in 2004, in the matter of cross-cutting issues such as climate change, energy, transport, and international sustainable development commitments in general, and biological diversity, including biodiversity indicators, in particular;

NOTING that the Council contribution emphasised that implementation of WSSD commitments must continue to have a high priority and be integrated into all relevant internal and external policies of the EU;

ALSO RECALLING the Council Conclusions of 22 December 2003 on the seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the first Meeting of Parties (MOP 1) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD;

WELCOMING the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

NOTING the results of the EPBRS meeting held in Killarney ^{*}, and the Stakeholders Conference held in Malahide ^{**};

These conclusions are without prejudice to the position of the Council on the Commission Communication on Building our common Future: Policy challenges and Budgetary means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013 and related legislative proposals;

THE COUNCIL:

A. The internal dimension

1. TAKES NOTE OF the '**Message from Malahide**' setting out priority objectives and targets in order to meet the overall 2010 targets, as an outcome of broad stakeholder consultations;
2. URGES the Commission to submit, as early as possible in 2005, a Report to Council and Parliament on its assessment of the implementation, effectiveness and appropriateness of each of the objectives and targets set in the European Community Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans taking into account the consultative process now concluded and, notably, the '**Message from Malahide**';
3. WELCOMES the 'first set of headline biodiversity indicators' as outlined in Annex 1 to the '**Message from Malahide**' and urges the Commission further to develop, test and finalise this set by 2006 having regard to their evolving nature;

* European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) meeting on '**Sustaining Livelihoods and Biodiversity – Attaining the 2010 targets in the European Biodiversity Strategy**' at Killarney, Ireland, 21-24 May 2004.

** Stakeholders' Conference on '**Biodiversity and the EU – Sustaining Life, Sustaining Livelihoods**' at Malahide, Ireland, 25-27 May 2004.

4. RECALLS the need to include, as soon as possible and not later than the next review of the Sustainable Development Strategy, an indicator on biodiversity in the list of structural indicators, as called for in particular in the Council conclusions on Structural Indicators of 8 December 2003;
5. CALLS UPON the Commission to take the biodiversity objectives fully into account when reviewing this Strategy and when assessing the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy;
6. WELCOMES the Killarney Recommendations for Research Priorities, and the '**Killarney Declaration**', which STRESSES *inter alia* that knowledge is essential for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the crucial role the European Research Area/7th Framework Programme must play in supporting the achievement of the biodiversity targets;
7. REITERATES the need for Member States and the Commission to consider measures that would strengthen further, through appropriate means including financing, the integration of biodiversity concerns into the policies and programmes of the key sectors relevant to biodiversity, including environment, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, regional and spatial planning, transport and energy, research, tourism, trade and economic and development cooperation;
8. taking into account the principle of subsidiarity, STRESSES the importance of establishing the Natura 2000 network and implementing the necessary technical and financial instruments and measures required for its full implementation and for the protection, outside the Natura 2000 areas, of species protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives; RECALLS that the Sixth Environmental Action Programme identifies these measures as priority actions;

9. insofar as the Habitats Directive provides, *inter alia*, that a contribution by means of Community co-financing for designated sites shall be provided for within the limits of the resources made available under the Community's decisions, NOTES that the Message from Malahide identified, *inter alia*, the importance of Community co-financing for the Natura 2000 network within a thriving wider environment as an important step for achieving the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010; LOOKS FORWARD to debating the Commission's Communication on the financing of the NATURA 2000 network;
10. EMPHASISES the importance of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress towards the 2010 targets, and that it is absolutely vital to communicate biodiversity issues effectively to the general public and to decision-makers in order to provoke appropriate policy responses;
11. URGES Member States:
- to reinforce implementation of the relevant instruments available for achieving the three objectives of the CBD provided under the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as well as within Cohesion Policy and in economic and development co-operation and to support strengthening biodiversity-related instruments within the future rural development policy;
 - to ensure the full and timely implementation of all relevant environmental legislation;
 - to provide enhanced support for the development and monitoring of biodiversity indicators;
 - to provide enhanced support for biodiversity research;
 - to ensure that, in accordance with Article 6 of the CBD, strategies such as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans are focussed, and to have reporting arrangements in place in order to achieve the 2010 targets; and
 - to promote the integration of biodiversity considerations in their National Sustainable Development Strategies, national development plans, national budgets, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs);
12. CALLS upon key stakeholders to commit themselves to the 2010 targets and to work in partnership with Member States and the Commission to achieve these targets;

13. WELCOMES the **Countdown 2010** initiative, launched by a partnership of civil organisations, including the Irish Presidency, the Commissioner for the Environment and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and other key actors at the Malahide Conference, as an important sensitising initiative to the significance of biodiversity loss across the globe and as a means to act as an independent monitor of progress towards the 2010 targets and ENCOURAGES Member States, Commission and civil society to support the **Countdown 2010** initiative;
14. ACKNOWLEDGES the need to address the EU's impact on third countries' biodiversity as well as the EU's particular responsibility in contributing to the achievement of the 2010 targets at the Pan-European and global levels;
15. EMPHASISES the need for urgent action to eliminate imports of illegally harvested timber into the EU as a contribution to fostering sustainable development by halting the loss of biodiversity and protecting the environment; STRESSES the need to continue work on implementation of the Community's Action plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT); URGES the Commission to present its reports and proposals on the issue without delay, taking account, *inter alia*, of existing multilateral mechanisms, as requested in the Council's October 2003 conclusions on the FLEGT Action Plan;

B. The international dimension: Outcome of the seventh ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the first meeting of the Parties (MOP 1) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

16. STRONGLY WELCOMES the outcome of COP 7 and MOP 1;
17. FURTHER WELCOMES that the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration*, which was adopted by consensus by Ministers who attended the High Level Segment of COP 7 and MOP 1, reflects the EU priorities on protected areas, on indicators and on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol;

18. SUPPORTS the focus at COP 7 on the achievement of the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and on the need to move from the policy development phase to concrete implementation; in this respect WELCOMES the agreement at COP 7 on a core set of biodiversity indicators to be tested, identified or developed in order to monitor the progress of the CBD towards the 2010 target;
19. RECOGNISES the importance of broadening the financing basis for implementation, from both the public and the private sector, and elaborating innovative strategies such as self-financing and refocusing actions;
20. URGES the Commission and Member States to implement the new Programmes of Work adopted at COP 7 on Protected Areas, including actions regarding marine and coastal protected areas, Mountain Biodiversity, and Technology Transfer, as well as the other decisions of COP 7 and MOP 1;
21. WELCOMES the initiative of the Commission to come forward with its Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation by the European Community of the "Bonn Guidelines" on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing under the CBD;
22. WELCOMES the creation of an open-ended working group on review of implementation of the CBD, an open-ended working group on protected areas and the agreement on the terms of reference for an open-ended working group to negotiate an international regime on access and benefit sharing; and COMMITS itself to contributing constructively to the successful work of these groups and to strengthening implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan;
23. RECOGNISES the need fully to implement the CBD Strategic Plan, with the aim of achieving its Mission and its four Goals by 2010; NOTES the expanded workload of the CBD, having particular regard to the fact that there are less than six years for the achievement of the CBD 2010 target and, therefore, EMPHASISES that the EU will need to strengthen the implementation of the CBD, and to continue to be a driving force in international work and activities in support of the CBD;

24. RECOGNISES the need to strengthen biodiversity research and monitoring as an important contribution to the implementation of the various CBD work programmes, initiatives and action plans;
25. REITERATES the importance of strengthening sectoral integration of biodiversity issues at all levels to help to achieve the 2010 targets;
26. AFFIRMS that the three objectives of the CBD are closely inter-linked with the concepts of sustaining life, sustaining livelihoods, poverty eradication, the promotion of human health and sustainable development and are essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals; INVITES the Commission and Member States, UN agencies and international financial institutions to work with their developing country partners to support measures to achieve the three objectives of the CBD in their National Sustainable Development Strategies, national development plans, national budgets, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and in country and regional strategy papers for international development co-operation;
27. URGES Member States, the Commission, other Parties and countries, the G8, the GEF, the World Bank and other relevant agencies and donor organisations to seize the opportunity of the proposed meeting of donors to discuss options for mobilising new and additional funding for developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing states to implement the programme of work on protected areas;
28. WELCOMES the concrete steps taken at COP 7 regarding co-operation with other Conventions and organisations, including the establishment of a biodiversity liaison group, and EMPHASISES that the EU will further contribute to these initiatives at national level and in the relevant fora;
29. WELCOMES the key decisions made at MOP 1 for the purpose of giving operational effect to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; RECOGNISES that the Protocol is the key international legally-binding instrument in the area of biosafety and the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs resulting from modern biotechnology and SUPPORTS its full and effective implementation; and in this regard:

- a) LOOKS FORWARD TO the work of the open-ended ad hoc working group on liability and redress, and COMMITS itself to contributing constructively to the successful completion of the group's work within the agreed four-year time frame;
 - b) STRONGLY SUPPORTS the procedures and mechanisms adopted at MOP 1 to promote compliance and to address cases of non-compliance, and COMMITS itself to their full implementation;
 - c) WELCOMES the further development at MOP 1 of documentation requirements for the transboundary movement of LMOs and SUPPORTS the establishment of an open-ended technical expert group to specify these requirements, including the requirements for identification, with a view to adopting a decision at MOP 2; and COMMITS itself to contributing constructively to the work of the group;
 - d) URGES the Commission and Member States to put in place and maintain the EC Biosafety Clearing House which would be globally accessible and interlinked with national Biosafety Clearing Houses;
30. URGES countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Cartagena Protocol and INVITES non-Parties to adhere to the objectives of the Protocol;
31. EMPHASISES that the EU will need to continue to be a driving force in international work and activities in support of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD.
