



Resolution

advocating

an expanded role for scientists in reviewing the efficacy of the EU nature conservation directives, CAP and CFP

At the European Union summit in Gothenburg 2001 and the Rio+10 summit in Johannesburg 2002, nations declared unanimously that the loss of biodiversity should be halted by the year 2010. Yet, as of November 2004, there is no solid evidence suggesting that the loss of biodiversity within the EU is starting to decrease; and this despite the facts that all EU nations have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, that nature conservation directives exist, and that there is potential to allocate significant resources to biodiversity conservation, for example as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by strengthening agri-environment schemes in terms of conservation efficacy. Recently the European Environment Agency and UNEP (http://reports.eea.eu.int/report_2004_1), the IUCN (i.e. <http://www.aembac.org>) and the BioPlatform e-conference on the EU Biodiversity Strategy (<http://www.epbrs.org>) all stress the importance of research and using the CAP for biodiversity conservation.

The Society for Conservation Biology hereby highlights the urgent need for the EU Commission, DG Research, DG Environment, DG Agriculture and DG Fisheries, to initiate and fund an expanded systematic review of the evidence where independent conservation biologists critically examine and assess the effects of the CAP, the EU nature conservation directives and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in halting biodiversity loss. In addition to the review, the process should expand the advisory role and direct involvement of scientists in the planning, accomplishment and evaluation of the practical conservation work.

Initiating this review during 2005 is particularly important since the EU has now grown to include ten more nations, which harbour unique biodiversity and knowledge important for pan-European nature conservation. At the same time a significant shift in agricultural funding policies has been initiated. Will the recent modifications to the CAP suffice to prevent further biodiversity loss and help sustain the small-scale farming practices vital for the conservation of many species in the traditionally managed agricultural landscapes? What changes in the CFP are needed, and how can the EU nature conservation directives become more efficient tools in preserving the great natural heritage inherent in pristine and cultural landscapes throughout the enlarged EU?

The Sixth Environmental Action Programme has identified assessment of programme success as a key priority. We urge the European Commission to apply this key action to nature conservation efficacy. The European Section of the Society for Conservation Biology offers assistance from the direct involvement of independent conservation scientists to make this effort swift and strong – 2010 is only five years away!