



Time's up for the planet!

No development without biodiversity

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Summary Report



Recent scientific evidence underlines the scale of the global biodiversity crisis and its impacts on economic development and prosperity, food security, health, migration flows and stability. The event explored the case of Asia through the recent publication of the Report '[Larger than Tigers](#)' and presented current discussions on the future EU Biodiversity Strategy after 2020, as well as the challenges in mobilizing partners around the world for the crucial follow-up to the Global Biodiversity Targets post-2020.

The panel included:

- **MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos**
- **MEP Guillaume Balas (by video message)**
- **Perrine Orosco-Le Fournis, on behalf of MEP Maurice Ponga**
- **Chantal Marijnissen, DG DEVCO, European Commission**
- **Humberto Delgado Rosa, DG ENV, European Commission**
- **Conrad Aveling, EU Biodiversity for Life**
- **Anouska Plasmeijer, IUCN European Regional Office**
- **Marine Braud, WWF**

Opening the event, **MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos** stressed that we are living in a distorted planet, which is overpopulated. Moreover, our capacity of innovation is not fast enough in relation with the current population growth. Mr. Serrão Santos reminded the audience that we have already crossed 4 out of the 9 planetary boundaries, and biodiversity is one of the very critical ones. The rate of species extinction on Earth is related to our human activities, and its consequences are also affecting our wellbeing, as underlined by the MEP. He further referred to a recent paper, "Moving in the anthropocene", which elaborates on how the global loss of biodiversity alters mammals' mobility. This key ecological trait of animals affects not only population persistence but also ecosystem processes, he added.

Chantal Marijnissen from **DG DEVCO** shared the European Commission's views on how biodiversity conservation is contributing to stability and development. Although there is clear evidence that ecosystem services are under pressure, she made clear that we do not give enough attention to its conservation. Land loss, species extinction or population growth leading to deforestation will be the more and more at the origin of migration and conflicts. The latest IPCC report was a timely wake-up call, reminding us of the devastating consequences that the 2°C increase in global temperature would have, while UN Secretary-General António Guterres called this "a truly 'use-it or lose-it' moment". DG DEVCO's role with reference to the above is to help partner countries in a just transition implementing the Paris Agreement and the Agenda 2030, which is also stated in the European Consensus on Development.

In DG DEVCO, there is a clear focus on the link between biodiversity and security, while a new report on the wildlife-security nexus will be published soon. Actions on the ground include support for job creation (e.g. Virunga National Park in DRC), close cooperation with local communities, support to improve governance and to implement Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and help with tackling wildlife trafficking. In the new EU External Investment Plan, Ms. Marijnissen felt that mainstreaming of the environment could be strengthened, also addressing programmes on natural capital. She further called for a strong coalition with stakeholders and partner countries to foster partnerships to jointly tackle the upcoming challenges towards the post2020 global biodiversity targets.

Conrad Aveling from **B4LIFE**, presented the "Larger than Tigers" report, which has been the result of a large collaboration of over 400 people from 140 organizations providing input and 28 authors involved. The analysis covers 25 countries in the region, excluding high developed countries in Asia. Asia's rich diverse ecosystems have witnessed rapid population and economic growth and a large number of species is on the brink of extinction. The conversion of natural habitats to intensive agriculture, escalation in wildlife trafficking and a growing demand for minerals, energy, food and water are some of the greatest environmental challenges on the continent. In Asia like in other regions, biodiversity remains an irreplaceable component of livelihoods and its loss undermines community resilience and security. The Report compiles lessons learned from past and present activities, and proposes priority actions. Governance of natural resources is weak, thus, ensuring protected areas are well managed and foster capacity-building should be a high priority. A full stakeholder engagement to balance the needs of the local population, government, private sector and NGOs is key to halt biodiversity loss. Mr. Aveling admitted that mainstreaming sustainability into different sectors is challenging, and requires government support, plus technology and financing also from the private sector. He further explained that illegal wildlife trade is growing, and wildlife enforcement mechanisms (including implementation of CITES) needed to be strengthened. It currently seems to be a "risk-free crime", however, civil society has a key role to play and awareness raising campaign could help in behavioral changes. Although the report paints a dramatic picture of the state of biodiversity, the speaker wanted to conclude with optimism: "There is a way forward". We have made progress in understanding what we have in terms of biodiversity and natural resources, and decision-makers have started to recognize the economic and social benefits of ecosystem services and it is slowly feeds into policy actions.

Humberto Delgado Rosa, **DG ENV**, presented the preparations within the Commission for the post 2020 biodiversity targets. Referring to the SDGs' 'wedding cake' model, he stressed that if the ecosystem services provided by the biosphere would keep degrading, the other layers (society and economy) would be doomed to fail. Furthermore, as European Parliament Intergroup on "Climate Change, Biodiversity & Sustainable Development"

the recent IPBES report proved that all biodiversity indicators are down, Mr. Delgado Rosa made it clear that the loss of biodiversity is a European issue too, and there is an urgent need for a transformational change. For the post 2020 framework, it is of paramount importance to have smart, ambitious and measurable targets, so that countries can come up with national commitments. Biodiversity is high on the political agenda, in view of the upcoming IPBES 7 Plenary, the CBD COP14 in Egypt and also the political will of France to put biodiversity into the spotlight for G7. However, there is still a need to raise public awareness about biodiversity, and a campaign for citizen could be one action to take. Within DG ENV, work has already started to feed the international CBD process into the proposal on the next EU biodiversity strategy.

Marine Braud from **WWF** [presented](#) the NGO's perspective on mobilizing efforts for an ambitious post-2020 biodiversity agreement. She reminded us that biodiversity loss is a threat for all of us and we can see that is collapsing: 58% of global populations of fish, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles disappeared between 1970 and 2012. In their "Global deal for nature and people", WWF works with five key actors (governments, sub-national authorities, businesses, private sector and development banks), to jointly act to make a commitment for nature by 2020. Ms Marine called upon the EU to lead by example, by supporting an ambitious Beijing Agreement with voluntary commitments and ratcheting mechanism. A way of doing this would be to ensure a 50% target for environment and climate in the next EU budget, to invest in non-bankable projects and to stop subsidies harmful projects for biodiversity. Furthermore, mainstreaming the environment and climate throughout all EU policies including CAP should be a key priority, alongside putting environment and climate at the heart of the future EU leaders' priorities, she concluded.

In her statement, **Anouska Plasmeijer** representing the **IUCN European Regional Office** welcomed the report, to which IUCN had also contributed. Ms. Plasmeijer acknowledged that the report is going beyond iconic species, and that the role of local communities and their valuable knowledge is highlighted in the strategic approach. Furthermore, the impact of wildlife trafficking on the livelihoods of the poor was highlighted, alongside the need for increased collaboration between protected areas' managers and local communities. Ms. Plasmeijer also mentioned the IUCN Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme, a strategic funding mechanism which aims to save tigers in the wild, their habitats and to support human populations in key locations throughout Asia. Launched in late 2014, this is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) via KfW. Last but not least, IUCN stressed that it is important to have sufficient financial resources allocated to implement the Larger than Tigers strategy now and within the next MFF, since it will support sustainable development in Asia.

In a reaction on behalf of **Maurice Ponga MEP**, Vice-Chair of the DEVE Committee and chair of the working group on "Islands and Overseas Entities" of the Intergroup, **Perrine Orosco-Le Fournis** highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach for a sustainable development. The link between biodiversity loss, migration, food security and conflicts is obvious. Moreover she stressed the fact SIDS (small islands developing countries) faced bigger challenges regarding biodiversity loss, as they are most of the time biodiversity hot spots. The European overseas entities, including ORs and OCTs, are also extremely rich in biodiversity and face challenges to protect its ecosystems, such as the SIDS, so the need for biodiversity protection is high. In this context, she felt that financing support for biodiversity actions in these entities is still too low and called for enhancing the support, especially on the LIFE Programme.

In his video message, **Guillaume Balas MEP**, co-sponsor of the EP resolution on CBD COP14, called this COP a turning point. For its overall success, several elements need to be affirmed, he added. Firstly, he stressed that we must define now what type of framework we would like to have after 2020. We cannot only discuss our actions for the remaining years until 2020. Biodiversity is a long process and if we want to rebuild and protect it we cannot put date so close to limit our discussions. Secondly, the post 2020 Framework should at least set objectives per country, as it was the case for the Paris agreements. This is essential if we want to engage societies and raise visibility on concrete objectives. Last but not least, Europe cannot pretend to defend biodiversity without thinking about the constraints

weighing on emerging and developing countries. For the overall success of this COP, we should also be able to take decisions based on concrete data regarding the implementation of our objectives. “We need to use the remaining years to define tools, to set qualitative and quantitative criteria, indicators that will allow us to monitor biodiversity”, he concluded.

During the **discussion with the audience**, **Ms. Marijnissen** said the debate reassured her in the Commissions work, but now it should be highest priority to convince the public that biodiversity protection cannot be postponed to the next generation. A remaining challenge would be to ensure that private sector money is not only used for large scale infrastructure projects, but also for natural capital investments. It is on us to demonstrate also the clear link between environment, climate and security and migration. Also the future CAP was debated. **Mr. Delgado Rosa** mentioned that the Commission proposal is a start for the transition towards a sustainable agriculture in the EU, as it has been clear that the intensification model of agriculture is reaching its limits. The perception of the farming community that biodiversity is also good for them was challenging to date. A representative from NABU further called for a more integrated approach within the Parliament and the different committees and policy coherence, also within the Commission. In Europe, we should focus on the enforcement of management plans of Natura 2000 protected sites, he said.

[Documents of the meeting can be found here.](#)