



What's next for biodiversity, globally and in Europe?

Follow-up of the CBD COP14

Event Summary Report

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At CBD COP14 last November in Sharm El Sheikh 196 Governments agreed to scale up investments in nature and people towards 2020 and beyond. Governments agreed on accelerating action to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020 and on a comprehensive and participatory process to develop a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. On this account, the next two years will be decisive for mobilising for accelerating implementation of short term action and increasing national ambition to meet the interlinked and interdependent challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. This event, hosted by **MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos** gathered stakeholders and policy-makers to inform them about the CBD COP 14 outcome and provide a platform to discuss follow-up and imminent next steps. The panel included:

- **MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos**
- **MEP Guillaume Balas**
- **Anne Burrill**, Adviser for Natural Capital, DG ENV
- **Roby Biver**, Rapporteur of the European Committee of the Regions on biodiversity
- **Alberto Arroyo Schnell**, IUCN European Regional Office
- **Guido Broekhoven**, Head, Policy Reach and Development, WWF International

In his opening remarks, **MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos** stressed various facts regarding the loss of biodiversity by pointing out that humanity is occupying and modifying up to 70 % of the surface of the planet. Furthermore, all human kind has crossed four out of nine planetary boundaries including the boundaries of biodiversity. Thanks to the protection of habitats, there are success stories for a few species which have been upgraded in their status. However, we need to be more active on nature-based solutions and catalyse corporate actions. Mr. Serrão Santos welcomed a discussion

about the Action Agenda for Nature and People, which should lead the way from Sharm El Sheikh COP 14 to Beijing COP 15. In his conclusion, Mr. Serrão Santos emphasized that there is no need to be too pessimistic as long as ambitious work is done regarding the targets and their implementation.

In her keynote speech, **Anne Burrill** from DG Environment pointed out how timely the debate about biodiversity is right now. A lot of citizens, especially the youth, are worried about the condition of the nature, the planet and the environment. Consequently, there is an urgent need to step up actions. To reach the post2020 targets, commitments at the highest level are essential and biodiversity needs to be high on the political agenda from now on. As follow-up of the COP 14 in November 2018, Ms. Burrill illustrated the way towards the post 2020 biodiversity framework. The preparation towards the framework started directly after the conference in Sharm El Sheikh, when many stakeholders submitted their views on what needs to be done. A [discussion paper](#) was published on 25 January and regional consultations will take place over the next three months. The first negotiation session will then take place later this year. According to Ms. Burrill, the mission henceforth will be to fully mainstream biodiversity into all sectors. “There is a need to communicate that biodiversity is closely linked to the personal concerns of the citizens”, she added. To her, this can only be realized in close cooperation with the European Parliament and other stakeholders. Furthermore, Ms. Burrill highlighted the importance of making the vision “to live in harmony with nature” measurable and visible. Top scientists are working together on the three dimensions that will help us to measure the progress of the vision: extinction risk, abundance and intactness of ecosystems. The post 2020 targets are going to be built on the Aichi targets but in the light of a better communication they could be structured differently. Moreover, a stronger focus should be given to the drivers of biodiversity loss. Ms. Burrill highlighted the need of an effective monitoring framework for the post 2020 targets, a new package on resource mobilisation as well as a long-term strategy on capacity building. In summary, Ms. Burrill stressed the need to address the loss of biodiversity and climate change action in an urgent and integrated manner and invited all parties and stakeholders to make voluntary commitments to meet the global biodiversity challenge.

In his intervention, **Alberto Arroyo Schnell** from the IUCN European Regional Office stressed the importance of the work MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos is doing by contributing an environmental voice towards different committees (PECH & AGRI) and sectors. In his view, COP 14 meant a transition towards a decade of eco-systemic restoration, in which the implementation of the post 2020 targets is crucial. He welcomed that the United Nations General Assembly had designated the period 2021-2030 as UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Mr. Arroyo Schnell stressed the recently by IUCN adopted definition of the sensitive issue of synthetic biology, which was high on the agenda in Egypt. On protected areas IUCN published two guidelines, which are highly relevant for the European Union: 1. [Guidelines for privately protected areas](#) – and 2. [Tourism and visitor management in protected areas](#). In Mr. Arroyo Schnell’s opinion, implementation and communication are and will be the key challenges of the Aichi targets and the post 2020 targets. According to Mr. Arroyo Schnell a new narrative needs to be created in order to reach the society. He also stressed that the EU has a crucial role in the future of biodiversity as well as in defining ambitious post 2020 targets. “We have a strong community, a passion and an energetic and positive issue we are dealing with – I do not think we need much more than use all of this”, he concluded.

MEP Guillaume Balas, co-sponsor of the EP resolution on the CBD COP14, stressed that in his views, the past political actions regarding biodiversity did not succeed because we did not question the economic model on which relies the destruction of biodiversity. As a result, biodiversity as a whole is under attack, apart from a few species that could recover. Furthermore, Mr. Balas expressed his concerns about populist governments in power all over the planet, which do not care about biodiversity at all. As no private sector representative was in the audience, the MEP highlighted that this is part of the problem, because the real decision makers when it comes to the economy and employment are not around the table. Moreover, those who cause major threats to biodiversity do not feel committed to the targets and treaties, but rather see constraints and put in the balance of employment versus environment, a behaviour that Mr. Balas described as “economic blackmailing”. Consequently, the MEP recommended a change in the balance of power. First, there is no way in protecting biodiversity without changing the economic model, the way we are producing. Secondly, wealth needs to be redistributed differently because biodiversity cannot be protected without social justice. Thirdly, there can be no protection of biodiversity without global justice, also having the agreement by unprivileged population, otherwise “we will continue signing treaties which are not going to change anything.”

Speaking on behalf of WWF, **Guido Broekhoven** quoted the CBD Executive Secretary at the opening of the CDB COP 14: “We are failing”. We are failing to achieve the Aichi targets and nature and biodiversity loss continues to be unabated. Mr. Broekhoven pointed out that there are many reasons for this, but that he wanted to focus on two of them: first, the insufficient political relevance of nature and biodiversity, as reflected in the relative absence of high-level representation from politics, the private sector and media at the COP 14. Secondly, synergies are key, as nature is only one aspect of a complex system. Climate change, SDGs and nature need to be addressed in a coherent and collaborative manner. [In view of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#), Mr. Broekhoven stressed the importance of fairly and equally addressing all three objectives of the CBD - conservation, sustainable use and equitable access and benefit sharing - in the new framework. Furthermore, Mr. Broekhoven agreed with the previous speakers to the urgent need to increase the political relevance of biodiversity as well as improving the communication to the public and all stakeholders. The benefits and values of nature need to be better articulated in messages that are targeted to specific groups. A logical framework for the goals and targets of the post-2020 framework, that clarifies the causal linkages between drivers, pressures, goals, etc., is needed to help avoid that parties cherry-pick the ‘easy’ targets. The framework should focus on synergies and on the drivers of biodiversity loss. Last but not least, Mr. Broekhoven stressed the key role of robust implementation and accountability mechanisms, including a ratchet approach to setting national ambitions.

Last but not least, **Roby Biber** from the Committee of the Regions provided an insight into the view of cities and regions on biodiversity and the COP 14. He highlighted the importance of including the experiences of local and regional authorities into the negotiations during the COP 14, referring also to the recently published [factsheet on the opinion](#) of the Committee of Region to the COP 14. Furthermore, Mr. Biber presented the positive outputs of the Committee of Region contribution to the COP 14. First, all partners communicated the wish towards the European Union to take over the lead in protecting nature and biodiversity. Secondly, the COP 14 was a productive networking

success where partnerships were established and strengthened. Mr. Biwer emphasized the agreement between all parties to address the urgency of biodiversity loss, to speed up with actions and to restore biotopes, ecosystems and habitats. The Committee of the Region will continue to mobilise local and regional authorities to put loss of biodiversity on top of their agendas because they are also the closest decision-makers when it comes to habitat restoration and species protection.

During the discussion, **MEP Mark Demesmaeker** underlined the need to take all stakeholders on board to reach biodiversity targets as well as to ensure a good implementation within the EU Member States. A discussion arose around the capacity of the European Union to mainstream biodiversity. The panellists agreed on the fact that mainstreaming will not be easy and a broad support within the European citizens is needed to fully mainstream biodiversity. **MEP Guillaume Balas** stressed the need for a green transition within the European Union through investments. **Guido Broekhoven** highlighted again the crucial role of communication. As part of its efforts to increase understanding of the values of nature, WWF is producing in collaboration with Netflix a series “Our planet” which will be published in April 2019. **Josefina Enfedaque** from DG Research, emphasised the importance and necessity of involving science and innovation in all steps of the biodiversity-related policy-making cycle, from scoping to implementation and monitoring of different policies, including input/output from EU projects, R&I programming at EU and MS levels, and citizen science. In addition, **Karin Zaunberger** from DG Environment briefly introduced the project [Drawdown](#) to the audience. Drawdown is the point in time when the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere begins to decline on a year-to-year basis. The project ranks 100 solutions to reverse global warming that are in place and in action and are scalable, including technological, societal and natural/nature-based solutions. She emphasised the need to also accelerate the implementation of short term actions, prioritizing actions which deliver multiple cascading benefits. A “European Drawdown Hub” community is evolving, led by German DENA and Climate KIC.

