



## IUCN World Conservation Congress: What does it mean for Europe?



Wednesday 16 March 2022, 14:00 – 16:00 CET  
Online Event

Hosted by MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri & MEP  
Catherine Chabaud

### Speakers

- **MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D)**, Co-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development'
- **MEP Catherine Chabaud (Renew Europe)**, Co-Chair of the Working Group 'Ocean Governance' within the European Parliament Intergroup
- **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, EU Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
- **Dr. Bruno Oberle**, Director General, IUCN
- **Alberto Arroyo Schnell**, Head of Policy & Programme, IUCN European Regional Office
- **Dr. Philippe Tulkens**, Head of the Climate and Planetary Boundaries Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission
- **Giulia Carbone**, Natural Climate Solutions Alliance Director, World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- **Giulia Testa**, Biodiversity Youth Representative

## Welcome Remarks

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### *MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri*

**“Having a Commissioner, youth and business representatives present underlines the importance for conservation of having everyone on board.”**

**MEP Ms. Miapetra Kumpula-Natri** started by emphasizing that the presence of a **diversity of stakeholders** - including the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, IUCN, business, and youth representatives - shows the wide commitment to the essential topic of conservation. She stressed how crucial it is to **gather more knowledge** on nature, as it plays an indispensable role in maintaining a habitable earth. **Youth** has a big part to play, but lessons from the past about how to live in harmony with nature, must not be forgotten as they can be very valuable. Using the **latest scientific knowledge gathered at the IUCN World Conservation Congress**, the relationship between people and nature must be built back up in Europe. The **message from the Congress** must be delivered to as many people as possible including policymakers, businesses and youth.

### *MEP Catherine Chabaud*

**“There is an imperative need to be more than ever invested and committed to the biodiversity and climate challenges.”**

**MEP Ms. Catherine Chabaud** initiated her welcoming remarks by stating that, in the light of the latest IPCC reports, **a commitment to tackle the challenges of climate and biodiversity are now as important as ever** and must come to the forefront of conversations. Furthermore, the health and political crisis the world is experiencing are rooted in climate and biodiversity disruptions. **Quick action** is thus required, taking into account the **links** between climate, ocean pollution, food poverty, economic development and especially biodiversity. MEP Chabaud reminded the audience that the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are an underutilized tool to **strengthen the coherence of public policies**. The **resolutions from the IUCN World Conservation Congress** show the engagement of all types of actors. Additionally, **other commitments** are progressing as well, like the negotiations on a global plastic treaty

and the Great Blue Wall project. Finally, it was highlighted that it is imperative for the EU to resolutely turn its conservation efforts towards the sea.

## Introductory Remarks

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### *Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius*

**“We must continue tackling the existential crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss.”**

**Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius**, EU Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, stressed that while the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a seismic event, it must not turn attention away from the **existential climate and biodiversity crisis**. Political leaders worldwide must still take their **responsibility** by taking **urgent action**, as called for by IPCC scientists. The **resolutions of the IUCN World Conservation Congress** are a good way to contribute to this. Mr. Sinkevičius identified **three areas** where the IUCN resolutions may be especially useful. **First, for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework** which needs to be approved at COP15. Its adoption has been postponed for too long, as it is now more urgent than ever to stop the extinction of species and start the process of restoration. **Second, for the area of nature restoration**. The European Commission’s **upcoming proposal for a regulation** on this topic illustrates that restoration is at the core of biodiversity strategy and of the Green Deal. The proposal will respond to calls from many stakeholders including IUCN for **more ambitious nature restoration**. The aim is to revive degraded ecosystems, sequester carbon, and most importantly **allow the EU to act quickly** with measurable results by 2030. This regulation will show that the EU is acting at home and is delivering the change it hopes to see in the new global biodiversity framework. **Third, for deforestation**. Following two resolutions from the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the Commission presented a **legislative proposal to tackle deforestation** in November 2021. This marked a **decisive turning point** in the fight against deforestation and forest degradation. In short, the EU needs to deliver **more security for the future** and get the world on board.

*Dr. Bruno Oberle*

**“The IUCN World Conservation Congress breathed new life into nature conservation in Europe.”**

**Dr. Bruno Oberle** stated that the **IUCN World Conservation Congress created new momentum for nature conservation. European leaders** such as Mr. Sinkevičius had access to a **global platform** to reinforce their commitments to biodiversity as previously laid out in the Green Deal. They reiterated that **nature** would be placed **at the heart of their decision-making**, emphasizing that **economies are dependent on biodiversity**. Dr. Oberle shared how **the IUCN Congress provided continent-wide momentum** as the first global environmental gathering since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Marseille IUCN members fully supported European action on promoting nature-based solutions and updating the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Commitments to environmental action** as laid out in the Green Deal have been **strengthened**. The Congress created space for all types of stakeholders to come together and set concrete actions for the future, **uniting these different actors** and preparing Europe to play a key role in global discussions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations. All this means that **IUCN** was given a strong mandate to **continue its work promoting nature conservation** by convening the global community.

## Panel Discussion

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Speakers that took part in the panel discussion:

- **Alberto Arroyo Schnell**, Head of Policy & Programme, IUCN European Regional Office
- **MEP Catherine Chabaud** (Renew Europe, France)
- **Philippe Tulkens**, Head of the Climate and Planetary Boundaries Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission
- **Giulia Carbone**, Natural Climate Solutions Alliance Director, World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- **Giulia Testa**, Biodiversity Youth Representative

**Mr. Alberto Arroyo Schnell** kicked off the panel discussion by giving a presentation about the **IUCN World Conservation Congress** in Marseille and its relevance for Europe. He started by

echoing Dr. Oberle's observation that the Congress breathed new life into conservation policy, acting as a **bridge to the upcoming COP15 meeting in Kunming**. Concretely, the **IUCN Europe Work Plan** was adopted during the Congress. Most importantly however, the **IUCN resolutions** were agreed to. These are the **key outcomes of the Congress**. For instance, several resolutions are related to the "30-by-30" targets. Finally, Mr. Arroyo Schnell highlighted **other results**, such as the advancement of discussions with stakeholders on how to achieve the conservation targets. Businesses' commitments and the IUCN Youth Summit were especially key in these efforts.

Then, **MEP Chabaud** shared some essential **ensuing steps that can be derived from the international One Ocean Summit in Brest**. For instance, marine and coastal ecosystems must be considered on par with terrestrial nature. It was emphasized that biodiversity conservation should be a driving force behind **sustainable tourism and fisheries**. **Oceans** must also be considered a **global common good**, a moral notion promoted by MEP Chabaud at the global level to place collective responsibility for the oceans on humanity. Indeed, to reach the 30-by-30 target, ocean protection must become the duty of all stakeholders, not just the government. Finally, the **UN Ocean Conference** held in June was mentioned as a key opportunity to provide science-based solutions and move forward in the UN Ocean Decade.

**Mr. Philippe Tulkens** continued the panel discussion by focusing on his **impressions of the Congress**. It was needed for **advancing an ambitious and global biodiversity framework**. The focus on knowledge and technology was especially appreciated, as the main route towards halting biodiversity loss must come from an **evidence-based approach**. Regarding the **Congress' outcomes**, the resolutions referring to the removal of investment barriers and to business innovations were identified as particularly indispensable. A final contemplation of Mr. Tulkens was the Congress highlighting the need to understand which drivers are transforming ecosystems. The **research and innovation department of the Commission** contributes to these objectives by proposing science-based solutions to policymakers under the umbrella of Horizon Europe

**Ms. Giulia Carbone** talked about how the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development** has participated in several IUCN World Conservation Congresses. She has observed an **evolution in how businesses are part of the Congress**; in Marseille, all events

seemed to have a **broad representation of actors**, highlighting the capacity of IUCN to convene **multi-stakeholder conservations**. Ms. Carbone explained that businesses contribute to conservation by **integrating nature and biodiversity practices in their business activities**.

Next, **Ms. Giulia Testa** analyzed that many **cross-cutting but interlinked issues** were touched upon at the Congress. This is definitely the **right approach towards conservation** in order to reach **the long-term effectiveness** of policies. Within the European context, the priorities that were set align with some of the issues that the European youth has been calling for. **Youth organizations really welcome the key points that were discussed at the Congress** and hope that policies for transformative change and urgent action were set in motion.

**Mr. Tulkens** addressed the role of research and innovation in promoting the implementation of **nature-based solutions**. He emphasized that such solutions are **essential** in reaching the ambitious climate targets set in the **Green Deal**, which is why they were identified as one of the **priorities of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe**.

Regarding the **role of the private sector** at the Congress, Ms. Carbone emphasized that **businesses** were at **the center of many conversations**. In the context of the **global biodiversity framework**, the targets of the business sector are matching with the global targets. It was remarked that the business sector has to be efficient in dealing with the challenges of **food, transport**, and the **built environment**.

Ms. Testa highlighted that the **Youth Summit** proved that young people are well-informed and are **experienced stakeholders**. The Summit made clear that youth must be **involved in decision-making in a meaningful way**. Another conclusion of the Summit implied the importance of explicit consideration and facilitation of economic opportunities for youth. The **youth manifesto** was used as a **tool** during the Congress to **inform** people, organizations, leaders, and decision-makers about **the future young people want**. Finishing the panel discussion, Mr. Arroyo Schnell addressed how the Congress can contribute to the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Ms. Carbone followed up on this by emphasizing that **the business sector** had well-structured dialogues during the Congress with several delegations and stakeholders. The business sector is interested in implementing the **biodiversity framework**;

however, the focus should be on how they will accomplish this. . Mr. Tulkens addressed this topic by emphasizing that the Convention on Biological Diversity has proposed **a way forward for business participation: creating corporate determined contributions**. However, he highlighted that the traditional costs and benefits analysis of the business and financing institutions make long-term investments problematic. Ms. Carbone replied by emphasizing that the private sector wants **financial institutions** to facilitate **transformative change**.

## Q&A Session

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In answering the question of what the efforts are of the youth on being engaged on topics that are on the top of the policy agenda, Ms. Testa stressed that the youth should not only be considered as a **reactionary force**, organizing protests and signing petitions. The youth is also **engaged in drafting policy briefs and having discussions with decision-makers**.

Mr. Arroyo Schnell replied to a question about how the Congress dealt with the **One Health approach** and the linkages between biodiversity and health. He referred to **resolution 135** of the **IUCN Congress**, which promotes human, animal, and environmental health and preventing pandemics while also addressing the drivers for biodiversity loss.

Mr. Tulkens answered a question regarding the **role of citizens** in reaching the new targets. He underlined the **importance of consistency** in the **objectives** set by different actors in society. He highlighted that there is a gap between what science says and what is done in practice regarding climate change and biodiversity policies. A **framework** is needed where all the actors converge to the same objectives. Ms. Carbone replied to these questions by underlining the role of the private sector in influencing consumers.

Ms. Carbone elaborated on how to bring smaller businesses on board regarding nature-based solutions. She highlighted that the **drivers for transformative change** for businesses are **access to markets and resources, a new regulation, or the support of consumers**. This means it is hard for SMEs to invest in nature-based solutions. **Specific funds** or **knowledge** from large corporations are needed so they can invest in such solutions or in decarbonization. Mr.

Tulkens was then asked how countries can be convinced to act. He responded by emphasizing that the **EU is taking the lead through the Green Deal**. The role of businesses was addressed by underlining their contribution to the transformation. **Nature-based solutions should happen on the ground**. Finishing the Q&A, Mr. Arroyo Schnell replied to a question if Europe is going to take into consideration the **need for the conservation and management of the Geoheritage**. He underlined that **geodiversity** can play a role in reaching the **30-by-30 target** in Europe. Ms. Testa follows up on a previous question asked about how to **enable transformative change and promote more effectiveness**. She highlighted that **transformative education regarding** biodiversity has to be integrated in the curriculum and that **an intergenerational debate** needs to be promoted.

In her final remarks, Ms. Carbone underlined the need for **systemic change** and emphasized the role of IUCN in the Congress, bringing different stakeholders together. Mr. Tulkens **encouraged IUCN** to reach out to the **EU-funded projects** working on biodiversity and nature-based solutions to help them in defining the EU standards for nature-based solutions. Mr. Arroyo Schnell concluded by reiterating that **transformative change** can only happen when **different stakeholders** are brought together. Last but not least, Ms. Testa acknowledged that protests are part of the way that **youth advocate** for more ambitious goals. She concluded by emphasizing that it is important to **include and empower youth** trying to make a difference.

## Closing Remarks

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In her closing remarks, Ms. Hilde Eggermont showed how the IUCN WCC had an impact on investments and nature conservation actions on the ground. Indeed, many resolutions that have been presented during the webinar can be used as tools to scale up sustainability actions in the terrestrial and marine ecosystem. Finally, Ms. Hilde Eggermont closed the event highlighting that strong collaboration between EU institutions, industries, youth and civil society will be key for achieving a successful **post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**.