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## Open letter to the leaders of the European Union



NATURAL  
HISTORY MUSEUM  
OF DENMARK

UNIVERSITY OF  
COPENHAGEN



Dear Ministers and Members of the European Parliament,

We, Natural Science Institutes from Europe, are writing to you to ask to show leadership for nature, by protecting and restoring the ecosystems of our continent, for the benefit of all.

We are concerned, very concerned.

As custodians of the natural world's heritage, hosting 80% of the world's described species, we wish to play our societal role: alert European citizens - and you - about the dramatic state-of-play of biodiversity on our planet. With our natural science collections, we know and can show you what we have already lost, what has been lost during the last centuries, mostly because of unsustainable human actions. With currently one million species at risk of extinction we hope you will take the right decisions to avoid nature to be found only in our museums.

In addition to the nature crisis, climate change is accelerating. We see more and more heat waves, droughts, floods and forest fires – extreme weather that is already claiming lives and damaging all ecosystems. With more and more impacts on our crops, worsened by the collapse of insect populations, Europe's food security and the livelihoods of many of its citizens are at risk. Even the global and European economy are being threatened, as half of world GDP is directly linked to biodiversity.

Report after report, from regional or national studies to international organizations such as IPCC<sup>1</sup> and IPBES<sup>2</sup>, the science is clear: we must act now, not only on climate but also on biodiversity, as both are intricately and inseparably linked. That is why we are addressing you today.

There is still hope but this is our last chance. To counteract natural disasters, to ensure our future on Earth, we have a powerful ally on our side: nature.

All over Europe there are hundreds of examples of pioneering projects and initiatives to protect and restore nature, from our coasts to our soils, our forests to our cities. They create win-win situations: they benefit local communities, our biodiversity and protect us against climate change. With more nature on our side, we ensure our own health, our well-being, our economy and our future on Earth.

We are restoring river systems, wetlands, forests and marine environments everywhere in Europe to once again enjoy natural environments, with wildlife flourishing and providing access to clean water. And that is important and needs to continue. But this is not enough. Biodiversity cannot be protected if we focus only on Natura 2000 areas alone. Nature is all around us, in our cities, in our agricultural areas, even in our industrial zones. We need to find a way to live and work together with nature. Not just protect it, but regard it as our partner. Our most important partner, influencing our wellbeing and our economic development. Living together with nature will provide thousands of jobs and income all over Europe and is the only way forward towards a sustainable future.

We urge you to vote in favor of an ambitious and strong Nature Restoration Law, as proposed by the European Commission<sup>3</sup> and, by doing so, respect the commitments under the Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>4</sup> adopted by you at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 in Montréal last December.

We are convinced the legislative package proposed by the European Commission is the right approach, based on science. All Europeans will enjoy plentiful benefits if you support the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law, which sets legally binding targets for ecosystems restoration. You have the chance to ensure that humans and nature can continue to live together in harmony.

We are counting on you to ensure this. You hold the power in your hands. Let's restore nature, now! We will be on your side to solve these global challenges, together.

Yours sincerely,

Director from each institute

[1] <https://www.ipcc.ch/about/>

[2] <https://www.ipbes.net/about>

[3] [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law_en)

[4] <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/>

## Signatures

| Name                  | Affiliation  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Nicola Schoenenberger | Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de Genève                             |
| Florian Mombrial      | Conservatoire et Jardin Botanique de Genève                              |
| Alma Kolleck          | KIT  |
| Manuela Knapp         | Deutsch  |
| Jacobia Dahm          | citizen  |
| Georg Schwede         | Campaign for Nature  |
| Eva Schichl           | Citizen  |
| Sampaio Iris          | CIIMAR-UP  |
| Jakub Kaspar          | The Krkonose Mts. Museum, The Krkonoše Mts. National Park, Czechia       |
| Jan Květ              | Emerited from Institute of Botany, Czech Academy of Sciences, Třeboň, CZ |
| Katja Kaiser          | Museum für Naturkunde Berlin   |
| Jana Slaboňová        | The Krkonose Mts. Museum, The Krkonoše Mts. National Park, Czechia       |
| Jose Alonso           | Naturalis Biodiversity Center  |
| Jan Jirátko           | Justice for Nature, Czech Republic / Costa Rica                          |
| Jitka Botkova         | Citizen  |
| Aleš Zabranský        | Czech Republic   |
| Jana Faifrova         | Czechia  |
| Zdeněk Kouba          | citizen  |
| David Jiránek         | Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem, Czechia              |
| Jiří Troneček         | Private naturalist Czech republic  |
| Gabriele Zaidyte      | Arts historian   |

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**Affiliation \***

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Museum für Naturkunde Berlin  
Leibniz-Institut für  
Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung  
2016-2019

