EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030

On 20th May 2020 the European Commission published the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, its next ten-year plan for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the European Union.

The Communication on the strategy states that nature is in a state of crisis and lists five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss: changes in land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species.

The EU wishes to show ambition and be a world leader in adopting a "transformative" post-2020 global framework at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The ambition is to ensure that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected. The EU's ambition is to ensure that Europe's biodiversity is on the path to recovery by 2030.

The strategy has been designed in tandem with the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy, and many of the targets set are replicated in both.

There are many measures proposed in the strategy, including those for maritime, forestry, urban and peri-urban areas, but those most relevant to agriculture are:

➢ A greater surface area – at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea – will have to be protected in the EU (currently 26% of EU land is already protected under Natura 2000 or national schemes) and at least 10% of EU land and 10% of EU sea should be strictly protected.

➢ Member States will be asked to commit to ensuring that at least 30% of species and habitats which are not in favourable status will achieve such status by 2030 or at least show a strong positive trend.

➢ The Commission will take actions to reduce by 50% the overall use and risk from chemical pesticides by 2030 and reduce by 50% the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030.

➢ There is an urgent need to bring at least 10% of utilised agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features, such as buffer strips, rotational or non-rotational fallow land, and landscape features including hedges, non-productive trees, terrace walls, ponds.

➢ At least 25% of the EU's agricultural land must be under organic farming by 2030. The future Commission Action Plan on organic farming will include measures to stimulate demand for organic products.

➢ This strategy will work in tandem with the new Farm to Fork Strategy and the revised Common Agricultural Policy, including through the promotion of eco-schemes and result-based payment schemes

- ➢ The Commission will update the EU Soil Thematic Strategy in 2021 to achieve EU and international commitments on land degradation neutrality.

- ➢ The Commission will promote the goal of zero pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus flows from fertilisers through reducing nutrient losses by at least 50% while ensuring no deterioration of soil fertility. This target will result in the reduction of use of fertilisers by at least 20%. This will be achieved by applying balanced fertilisation and sustainable nutrient management.

- ➢ The Commission will assess in 2023 whether a legally binding approach to the EU biodiversity governance framework is needed and if so, will present proposals to that effect by 2024.

- ➢ The Commission will establish in 2020 a new Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency. The Centre will: track and assess progress by the EU and its partners including in relation to implementation of biodiversity related international instruments; foster cooperation and partnership, including between climate and biodiversity scientists; and underpin policy development.

- ➢ The Commission will ensure full implementation and enforcement of the biodiversity provisions in all trade agreements. The Commission will better assess the impact of trade agreements on biodiversity, with follow-up action to strengthen the biodiversity provisions of existing and new agreements if relevant.

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