

Cities and regions demand national action on nature



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In an urgent appeal to heads of state and environment ministers, a coalition of cities, regions, environmental authorities, and partners of the Urban Agenda Partnership on Greening Cities has called for the immediate adoption of the EU Nature Restoration Law. The signatories of this open letter express their grave concern over the ongoing delay in enacting this legislation, warning of serious consequences for nature.

There is no time to delay adapting our cities to climate change; there is no time to delay restoring nature,” said André Sobczak, Eurocities Secretary General, upon the release of the letter. “That’s why cities, regions, and environmental authorities are coming together in an open letter to call for an end to the delay of the adoption of the agreed Nature Restoration Law. For liveable cities today, and the democracy of our European Union tomorrow.

Read the open letter [here](#).

A triple planetary crisis with cities on the frontline

The world faces a triple crisis of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change. Over 70% of Europeans live in urban areas, where these crises severely impact ecosystems essential for health and wellbeing.

- Wildlife populations have plummeted by nearly 70% since 1970.
- Europe has warmed twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s.
- Cities can be up to 10-15°C hotter than rural areas, contributing to significant mortality rates from extreme temperatures.
- One-third of Europeans experience water stress annually, and 97%

are exposed to harmful levels of fine particulate matter.

The EU Nature Restoration Law

The proposed EU Nature Restoration Law is vital for safeguarding urban green spaces and adapting cities to climate change. Urban areas are home to diverse plant and animal species, with many including Natura 2000 sites within city boundaries. However, land-use change remains the largest driver of biodiversity loss. By establishing a legal framework for restoration, the Law would support cities in creating resilient, sustainable environments.

The Law would facilitate collaboration across government levels and stakeholders, promoting mental and physical health for citizens. The cost of inaction is too high, and immediate adoption is crucial to avoid further degradation and to support urban efforts in greening and biodiversity conservation.

A threat to the democratic process

The continued delay in adopting the Law, despite a provisional political agreement reached last November, undermines the integrity of the European Union. It jeopardises future inter-institutional negotiations and Europe's commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework. The signatories of the letter urge the Council to finalise the law without further delay.

- ACR+ (Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management)
- CCRE-CEMR (The Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
- ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability Europe)
- Polis (Cities and Regions for Transport Innovation)
- Utrecht (as a partner to the Urban Agenda Partnership on Greening Cities)

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Website: <https://eurocities.eu/>

Primary Email: info@eurocities.eu

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