



## PRESS BRIEFING: EU Nature Restoration Law

### I. Need for a NRL

- **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services IPBES:** A quarter of known animal and plant species threatened, half of them critically endangered or endangered. Of a total of eight million species, an estimated one million will become extinct in the near future.
- **European Environment Agency (EEA):** In the EU, 81% of protected habitats, 39% of protected birds, and 63% of other protected species are in poor or very poor condition. EU agriculture relies on healthy soils and ecosystems, as well as clean water and air, for food production. Some 84% of agriculturally grown fruits rely at least in part on pollinating insects.
- **Existing EU nature legislation inadequate:** After around 30 years, still not fully implemented, in some cases massive delays in **EU Birds Directive** and **Fauna-Flora-Habitat Directive**; repeated **rulings by the European Court of Justice (ECJ)** against EU member states for violating existing EU nature conservation legislation.
- **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030:** Target of converting at least 30% of European terrestrial and marine areas into effectively managed protected areas, targets for renaturation and free-flowing rivers, reforestation. Targets of the previous EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 were missed.
- **UN Biodiversity Conference COP15** in Montreal and Kunming (December 2022): EU commits to protect at least 30% percent of land and marine areas by 2030 and restore at least 30% of degraded habitats.
- **No climate action without nature restoration: without restoration and protection of wetlands and forests, the EU will miss its climate target of at least 55% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030.** According to the IPCC, 30-50% of carbon-rich ecosystems need to be restored to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius. Peatlands make up only three percent of the world's land area, but sequester one-third of terrestrial carbon. That's twice as much as all of our planet's forests combined.
- **Broad societal support for the NRL**, including thousands of scientists and businesses.

### II. What will be voted on in July's plenary?

In the lead **Environment Committee ENVI**, the final vote for a proposal on the Parliament's position on June 27 resulted in a **stalemate of 44 votes to 44**. The European Parliament will vote on **amendments to the original Commission proposal**<sup>1</sup> in its plenary vote on July 12. **Member states** have already expressed support for the NRL in their **Council General Approach**<sup>2</sup>.

**Voting procedure on July 12:** The vote begins with a **vote to reject the Commission proposal** as a whole. If the necessary majority for rejection is not reached, the **vote on the amendments** follows. At the end, the plenary must take the **final vote on the parliamentary position** reached by the amendments as a whole. By the deadline for motions, **136 amendments**<sup>3</sup> had been tabled. The **Greens/EFA** have tabled amendments on **higher rewetting targets of drained wetlands, light pollution reduction** and **ecosystem connectivity**. Together with the Left Group, the Greens/EFA tabled an amendment on the creation of a **renaturation network** for knowledge exchange and on access to justice for environmental organizations and citizens, which was deleted by Council.

<sup>1</sup> Commission Proposal NRL: [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/nature-restoration-law\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/nature-restoration-law_en)

<sup>2</sup> Council General Approach: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/65128/st10867-en23.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Amendments for plenary: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/report-details.html?reference=A9-0220-2023>

### III. Compromise of the Constructive Coalition

The Greens/EFA support the compromise of the Constructive Coalition in the European Parliament based on the Council position of the Member States:

- **Non-deterioration and derogation:** Member States' obligations are clarified by focusing on efforts to implement the required measures rather than on ensuring the final outcome only. "Significant" deterioration to be prevented. The start of non-deterioration is linked to the publication of national recovery plans. In addition, the reference to case-by-case reviews for projects of overriding public interest is removed and a specific provision for defense projects is created.
- **Provisions related to renewable energy:** The NRL is aligned with the Renewable Energy Directive RED III and the TEN-E Regulation on Energy Networks. Overriding public interest for renewable energy projects is assumed.
- **Deadlines for closing knowledge gaps on habitats:** The Council proposes to set deadlines by which the status of certain marine, terrestrial and freshwater habitats must be known. The approach includes a risk-based assessment of habitat condition and aims to close knowledge gaps by 2030 and 2040.
- **Changes to restoration goals:** Changes to restoration targets for specific ecosystems, such as soft sediments and urban ecosystems. These changes aim to align restoration efforts with other goals, such as infrastructure development and existing commitments under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- **Introduction of a phased approach to the development of restoration plans:** national plans should include actions through 2032 and a strategic overview for the period through 2050.
- **Removal of the provision on access to justice** for environmental organizations and citizens.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** reporting intervals are extended for certain indicators, e.g. pollinators, butterflies, birds, areas subject to restoration, removed river barriers, and other reporting and monitoring provisions.
- **Introduction of a new article on financing aspects:** The Commission is to launch a report on financing aspects within a certain timeframe.

### IV. Delaying tactics by European People's Party EPP

- **Position paper of the German EPP group<sup>4</sup> and EPP party conference resolution<sup>5</sup>, start of election campaign** in the run-up to national (e.g. Spain) and regional elections (e.g. Bavaria): Demand for the withdrawal of key Green Deal laws, including NRL. Internal party conflict over Commission presidency and top-level candidacy.
- **European Parliament:** The Committees on Fisheries (PECH) and Agriculture (AGRI) could have issued (non-binding) opinions, but instead rejected the NRL in its entirety in their votes.
- **Breakdown of negotiations** on May 31, 2023 by EPP shadow rapporteur Schneider after several months of intensive negotiations, general rejection of the NRL with demand for new Commission proposal.
- **Replacement of one third of the EPP MEPs** in the vote in the lead Environment Committee ENVI by MEPs partly from outside the field. The vote was 44:44. Coalition of EPP, right-wing conservative ECR, far-right ID and individual liberals.

---

<sup>4</sup> Position paper German EPP group 8 March 2023:

[https://www.cducusu.eu/sites/www.cducusu.eu/files/downloads/positionsapiere/evp\\_position\\_paper\\_industry\\_hub\\_europa\\_en.pdf](https://www.cducusu.eu/sites/www.cducusu.eu/files/downloads/positionsapiere/evp_position_paper_industry_hub_europa_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> EPP Resolution 5 May 2023: [https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2023/05/Paper\\_Agriculture\\_Munich.pdf](https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2023/05/Paper_Agriculture_Munich.pdf)

- Commission Vice President Timmermans: **There will be no New NRL Commission proposal!**
- Demand for withdrawal of key Green Deal laws by Commission President von der Leyen, including NRL. Internal party conflict over Commission presidency and top candidacy.
- ***Why does the Commission not present a new NRL proposal?*** A new Commission proposal would have to be based on the latest scientific data and international commitments (COP15). It would take too long to be presented before the end of the legislative term because of new data evaluations to be carried out. In the end, the Commission proposal would probably have to be even stricter than the current one.
- Forderung der Rücknahme zentraler Gesetze des Green Deal von Kommissionspräsidentin von der Leyen, u.a. NRL<sup>6</sup>. Parteiinterner Konflikt um Kommissionspräsidentschaft und Spitzenkandidatur.

---

<sup>6</sup> EVP-Resolution 5. Mai 2023 [https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2023/05/Paper\\_Agriculture\\_Munich.pdf](https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2023/05/Paper_Agriculture_Munich.pdf)