

The State of Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in the EU

**An analysis by national environmental NGOs
in 18 Member States**

March 2018



The State of Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives

The Birds and Habitats Directives are the main legal tool the EU has to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity. These Nature Directives are responsible for the creation of the largest and most coherent network of protected natural areas in the world – the Natura 2000 network. In 2016, the European Commission finalised a Fitness Check on these directives, concluding that they are still fit for purpose. The analysis clearly identified the need for a substantial improvement in their implementation.

In this context, member organisations from four big NGO networks (BirdLife, WWF, EEB and FoEE) have joined their expert opinions to score their Member States¹ on the current implementation of different aspects of the Nature Directives. Scores were given on 11 implementation criteria of the Birds and Habitats Directives, namely on their transposition into Member State legislation, Member State designation of Natura 2000 sites, the presence of management plans and whether they are put into practice, and the availability of funding and resources to put them into practice. Member States were scored on how well they ensure species protection, on their implementation of appropriate assessments, their management of invasive alien species and on the connectivity of the national network of protected areas. They also looked at how Member States are monitoring their habitats and species of Community importance, how they are encouraging research and scientific work on species and habitats, and how they engage stakeholders and ensure public participation in these processes.

Some trends are apparent. The only positive one relates to the transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives into national law, where a majority (67%) of Member States have done so satisfactorily.

It is discouraging to see that no other of the aspects analysed have received a majority of positive scores. In fact, a number of aspects have not received a single green score, including for site management, species protection, appropriate assessments, funding, and stakeholder engagement.

Tellingly, over half of all countries analysed are overlooking the connectivity of their protected areas. Almost half of the Member States analysed have scored red for site management, and for not implementing appropriate assessments properly. What's more, 44% have scored red for species protection.

Overall, Member States need to step up their game regarding most of the implementation criteria analysed, as the traffic lights blink disappointingly amber. A whopping 75% of Member States have a patchy Natura 2000 network, with many sites that should be designated lacking official protection. And almost 90% of the Member States do not engage well enough with stakeholders to ensure real stakeholder dialogue.

Some countries perform relatively well in relation to specific aspects of the Nature Directives' implementation. For instance, Hungary, Luxemburg and the Walloon region of Belgium are amongst the front runners in creating a coherent network of Natura 2000 sites. Most Member States could learn from Croatia, the only Member State analysed with appropriate site connectivity. Belgium, Denmark, and Hungary are doing a good job in monitoring habitats and species, and Belgium and Luxemburg overall perform better than other Member States when it comes to giving support to the scientific community to carry research on the status of threatened species.

With sufficient resources, commitment and willingness to learn from each other, full and effective implementation of the Directives is achievable. Ambition on the side of Member States and the Commission is needed to ensure best practice examples can become the norm across the EU, yielding the much needed results that will ensure Europe's unique natural heritage is preserved for the generation to come.




¹ NGOs scored the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in 18 Member States: Austria, Belgium (both regions, Flanders and Wallonia), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the UK. In the methodology used for this exercise, national NGOs assessed the implementation of the Directives in their own countries; as such this exercise is not intended to compare Member State implementation, but to draw general trends across the Member States.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Austria

Austria has been a member of the European Union since 1995. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 300 sites, covering 12691km², all of which are terrestrial (15,13% of the land area). The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of sites Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directive Site designation Species protection Landscape connectivity Funding Habitats and species monitoring Promotion of research

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN AUSTRIA

Transposition and designation

- Complete Natura 2000-network by finishing the site designation process, and ensuring sufficient coverage of representative populations of species and habitats
- Establishment of a nationwide central coordination unit to ensure the comprehensive implementation of Natura 2000 and other BHD relevant topics

Prevention of negative impacts

- Ensure legal anchoring of public participation and legal protection for recognized environmental organisations in appropriate assessment -procedures in the nature protection laws of the federal states
- Ensure nationally coordinated development and implementation of species action plans in all relevant areas and make sure that issued permits or derogations are based on sound data

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Set specific conservation objectives for all Natura 2000-sites with precise measures for habitats and species in accordance with the relevant EC guidance documents.
- Develop management plans of a homogenous quality, in line with the EC guidelines and BHD specifications for the whole country and ensure their implementation and regular updates via site managers

Funding

- Increase available budget for staff and implementation projects dedicated to Natura 2000 in the authorities reflecting the actual needs. Provide attractive premiums in the rural development program and / or sufficient compensation schemes to increase uptake and participation and acceptance

Monitoring and research

- Increase data availability and data quality by implementing an exhaustive, regular monitoring of species and habitats
- Set up monitoring to ensure adequate implementation of compensation measures and other official requirements of plans and projects to avoid a cumulative negative impact.

Stakeholder engagement

- Ensure comprehensive information and participation of all relevant stakeholders on all aspects of the implementation of the Nature Directives




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Umweltdachverband, WWF Österreich, and BirdLife Österreich. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Belgium

Belgium has been a member of the European Union since 1958. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 310 sites, covering 5.158 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 3.887 km² (13% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 1.271 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Transposition · Site designation (Wallonia) · Habitats and species monitoring · Promotion of research · Non-native species (Wallonia)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Site designation (Flanders + Federal (Marine)) · Management of sites · Species protection · Non-native species (Flanders) · Funding and resources · Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Landscape connectivity · Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN BELGIUM

Transposition and designation

- Re-designation of Vlakte van de Raan
- Clarify status of habitats outside SPA's

Prevention of negative impacts

- Address environmental pressures with an ambitious nitrogen approach (Flanders)

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- More action for species protection (Flanders)
- Strengthen connectivity between sites (Flanders and Wallonia)
- Issue clear guidelines for management of non-native species on the EU list, also in private properties (Flanders)
- Promote voluntary approaches to restore N2000 habitats outside the network and to protect them (Wallonia)

Funding

- More budget and better use of available European funds (Flanders)
- Structurally strengthen the resources through appropriate structures and the human resources available to ensure the implementation of species action plans and Natura 2000 site management plans (Wallonia)

Monitoring and research

- Develop a mapping of the ecological network, identifying natural habitats and species protected under the Birds and Habitat Directives outside the N2000 network (Wallonia)

Stakeholder engagement

- Verify outcomes of computer models with field experts (Flanders)
- Ensure more transparency and strengthen public consultation for authorizations and derogations in Natura 2000 (Wallonia)

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Natagora, Natuurpunt and WWF-Belgium. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Bulgaria

Bulgaria has been a member of the European Union since 2007. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 339 sites, covering 41.048 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 38.222 km² (34% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 2.827 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Funding and resources • Landscape connectivity • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN BULGARIA

<p>Transposition and designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue the designation orders of SCIs • Designate the full Rila SPA and Lower Rila SCI 	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an action plan to address horizontal threats for N2000 • Make legislative changes to give stakeholders the opportunity to raise court appeals • Break the direct connection between investors and experts doing appropriate assessments (AA) • Amend the Ordinance for AA related to the inclusion of criteria for “pre-screening”
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of N2000 staff with experienced experts • Management bodies of N2000 have to be expert administrations, not political bodies 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganise the strategic plan of the Environmental Operational Programme (EOP) to target the real threats to habitat types and habitats of species with unfavourable conservation status • Urgently use the funds from the EOP to buy the most threatened habitats
<p>Monitoring and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and art 17 reporting needs to take into account the negative impact caused to N2000 sites since Bulgaria joined the EU 	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include experts from scientific institutions and NGOs in the decision making on Natura 2000 • Improve the public participation processes and increase the societal support for Natura 2000




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from WWF Bulgaria, BALKANI Wildlife Society and the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation. All details can be found on the full country reports

NATURE SCORE CARD



Croatia

Croatia has been a member of the European Union since 2013. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 779 sites, covering 25.690 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 20.704 km² (36.6% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 4.986 km² (15.5%). The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape connectivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives • Species protection • Funding and resources • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Management of sites • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN CROATIA

Transposition and designation

- Significantly improve designation of offshore marine Natura 2000 sites.

Prevention of negative impacts

- Raise capacities of the regional administration on appropriate assessment (AA) procedures.
- Improve the system of developing AA studies and transparency.
- Increase the capacity of the nature conservation inspection and invest in citizens "inspection".
- Bring national judicial capacities on a level to be efficient on EU legislation.

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Develop fisheries management measures in marine Natura 2000 sites.
- Enable appropriate measures to be implemented when monitoring shows deterioration of species and habitats.

Funding

- Secure constant national co-financing for the LIFE program regarding Nature and Biodiversity.
- Improve absorption of EU funds through enabling hiring of staff and through co-operation with partners.

Monitoring and research

- Develop national monitoring programs for Natura 2000 species and habitat types.

Stakeholder engagement

- Improve understanding of, and cooperation with other sectors and other actors, like CSOs, etc.

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Association Biom, WWF Adria and Croatian Society for the Bird and Nature Protection. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Cyprus

Cyprus has been a member of the European Union since 2004. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 63 sites, covering 1784 km². Terrestrial sites cover 1653 km² (28,82% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites cover 131 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition • Designation • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Stakeholder engagement, public participation & communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Funding and Resources • Non-native species

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN CYPRUS

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- All Proposals for Management Plans for Natura 2000 sites to be implemented and to have their respective Ministerial Decrees adopted.
- Coordination of Natura 2000 management to be achieved, bridging the split of responsibilities between departments, services and ministries.

Prevention of negative impacts

- Review and strategically assess national policies that recurrently trigger Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- Proper land-use planning that takes into consideration pressures on protected sites to be conducted at a strategic level, to allow for projects proposed in Natura 2000 sites with obvious adverse effects to be rejected by default due to their placement, without the Appropriate Assessment becoming the only way to control them.
- Efforts against illegal trapping and poaching to be enforced and the political will to be shown to effectively combat this issue
- Capacity to be built for proper patrolling, and wardening to be put in place with the authority to respond swiftly to damaging interventions in Natura 2000 sites.

Monitoring and research

Funding of scientific research for protected habitats and species to be promoted and existing available data generated from government-led research to be made publicly available e.g. through publications.

Funding

- Funding to be secured for the implementation of the conservation measures of Natura 2000 sites and to support the employment of relevant personnel, including wardens.

Transposition and designation

- Marine Natura 2000 areas to be identified and designated.

Stakeholder engagement

- Public awareness of Natura 2000 areas to be increased, both on a national scale and in targeted communities and groups, where great disagreements exist. .




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Terra Cypria and BirdLife Cyprus. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Denmark

Denmark has been a member of the European Union since 1973. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 350 sites, covering 22647km². Terrestrial sites are covering 3594km² (8.34% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 19053km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition • Habitats and species monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Management of sites • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication • Funding & resources
	

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN DENMARK

Transposition and designation

- Designate larger proportion of land area to increase connectivity or reduce fragmentation.

Prevention of negative impacts

- More attractive types of agreements for management of sites are strongly needed, in particular, compensation levels in the schemes proposed need to be increased to make these more attractive to landowners.

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Mapping the extent of known threats to habitat nature types such as invasive alien species and address these through adequate measures in the management plans.
- Site specific criteria for achieving "favourable conservation status" should be developed and integrated into management plans, supported with adequate measures in order to move towards the identified objective.

Funding

- Producing additional species action plans and making more funds available for their implementation is urgently needed.
- Include costs and specific financing plans in the Management plans for each designated area. As a first step Danish authorities should update with financing the needs for Natura 2000 in the context of the update of the PAFs.
- The inclusion in national and regional budgets of the value of N2000 and the benefits the network delivers (e.g. TEEB-type analysis) is strongly needed to give a balanced picture of costs associated with meeting Natura 2000 obligations.

Monitoring and research

Stakeholder engagement

- Awareness raising activities on Natura 2000 are needed.




*The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Danmarks Naturfredningsforening
All details can be found on the full country reports.*

NATURE SCORE CARD



Finland

Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 1865 sites, covering 55988 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 48847 km² (14.45% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 7140km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding & resources

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN FINLAND	
<p>Transposition and designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Designation of more sites, especially in Southern Finland. • Increased protection of old-growth forests and peatlands. • N2K network is also inadequate in marine areas (e.g. shallow banks important for water birds) and on agricultural land. 	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the independency of consultants in EIA. • Increased information for municipality's detail of the Habitats and Bird Directives. • Revising the Wolf action plan.
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff working in environmental administration and Natura 2000 sites. Staff: even Metsähallitus (the most important manager) is losing staff and knowledge. • Better management for forest N2K areas. • There are many Natura 2000 areas which are not nationally protected by Nature Conservation Act, but by weaker tools, as Forestry Act, Outdoor Recreational Act. 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater funding for the management and restoration of protected areas, filling the gaps in the protected area network using funding from other programs such as the CAP.
<p>Monitoring and research</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the NGO participation in making of PAFs and regional N2K management plans.

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from BirdLife Finland, WWF Finland and Finnish Association for Nature Conservation. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Greece

Greece has been a member of the European Union since 1981. Its Natura 2000 network consisted of 419 sites, covering 42.946 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 35.747km² (27% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 7.199 km². As recently as December 2017, Greece proposed an expansion of its Natura 2000 network, so that the total number of Natura 2000 sites will reach 446 to cover approx. 28% of the land and 22% of marine territory of Greece. The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Non-native species

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN GREECE

<p>Transposition and designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the designation of the Natura 2000 network with the elaboration of conservation objectives for all sites. 	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure no degradation of habitats and disturbance of species in Natura 2000 sites. • Complete implementation of appropriate assessment of plans or projects which may affect Natura 2000 sites.
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the effective and functionality of the newly established national protected areas system. • Implement management measures via elaboration and approval of site management plans. • Implement species conservation measures via elaboration and approval of species action plans. • Take actions to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network. 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify in more detail the funding needs included in the 2014 Prioritized Actions Framework and increase national funding for the Natura 2000 network.
<p>Monitoring and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national nature monitoring system. • Promote research on nature and biodiversity. 	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen processes for open and participatory consultations and stakeholder engagement.

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Elliniki Etairia – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Mediterranean SOS Network and WWF Greece. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Hungary

Hungary has been a member of the European Union since 2004. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 525 terrestrial sites, covering 19.949 km² (21% of the land area). The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives • Site designation • Habitats and species monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN HUNGARY

<p>Transposition and designation</p>	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved assessment of plans and projects, with great emphasis on cumulative effects, long-term delayed effects and the Precautionary Principle • Consistent enforcement of the Nature Directives and relevant national legislation • On state owned Natura 2000 sites, the goals of Natura 2000 should have high priority and be harmonized with other public interests
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on habitat restoration: FCS has to be restored and then maintained, with dedicated funds available for private and public land owners • Emphasis on climate adaptation and increasing resilience in nature conservation 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper and dedicated financing for the full implementation of the Nature Directives • Elimination of harmful subsidies, and system-wide application of the Polluter Pays Principle • Dedicated financing for various forms and levels of environmental education • Supporting mechanisms for proper maintenance of sites: strengthening regulation and authorities, and targeted subsidies
<p>Monitoring and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination of FRVs (favourable reference values) and FCS (favourable Conservation Status) for species and habitats 	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a Natura 2000 info-hub and regional/site level information centres and/or advisory services




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from BirdLife Hungary, WWF Hungary and Friends of the Earth Hungary. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Ireland

Ireland has been a member of the European Union since 1973. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 595 sites, covering 19.485 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 9.226 km² (13% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 10.259 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Funding and resources • Promotion of research • Habitats and species monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Landscape connectivity • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN IRELAND

Transposition and designation

- Designate offshore Natura 2000 sites and MPAs
- Finalise terrestrial SAC and SPA designation

Prevention of negative impacts

- Enforce national and EU laws that protect species and habitats both inside and outside N2K network.
- Develop effective monitoring and reporting of mitigation measures for developments
- Increased awareness, training and capacity building at a national level of ecology, Article 6(3) and other important articles of BHD in the planning processes
- Tackle wildlife crime
- Adoption of marine spatial strategies
- Develop a national action plan to tackle invasive species

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Finalise development of detailed conservation objectives and develop management plans for sites with actions which are time bound and financially supported with clear indication of responsible authorities.
- Undertake site-based surveys to determine threats to red-listed birds during breeding period.
- Promote the development of innovative solutions that help to support farm and marine food income e.g. biodiversity branding and certification

Funding

- Increase funding for conservation, law enforcement and training
- Strengthen the capacity of the national nature conservation administration
- Provide a new financial mechanism to allow non-farmers to access funds for conservation in Natura sites.

Monitoring and research

- Fill knowledge gaps especially on species and interaction with e.g. aquaculture, forestry, renewable energy etc.)
- Development of national species-specific ecological survey methodologies and standards

Stakeholder engagement

- Awareness raising campaigns targeting the general public and policy makers on the importance of our internationally important species, habitats and sites




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from BirdWatch Ireland, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Irish Wildlife Trust, Coastwatch, Bat Conservation Ireland and An Taisce. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Italy

Italy has been a member of the European Union since 1957. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 2596 sites, covering 63.979 km². Terrestrial sites cover 57.173 km² (19% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites cover 6806 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Species protection • Funding and resources • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN ITALY

Transposition and designation

- Ensure coherence between rules of different regions

Prevention of negative impacts

- Properly apply the Appropriate Assessment
- Introduce adequate administrative and penal sanctions
- Ensure vigilance and enforcement

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Complete Natura 2000, particularly offshore
- Draft site-specific management plans and/or conservation measures for all Natura 2000 sites
- Ensure coherence in the regional management of Natura 2000 sites
- Ensure the integrated management of Natura 2000 sites with other sectors and policies
- Set habitat restoration goals and avoiding damage to the sites
- Concretely ensure connectivity

Funding

- Earmark specific funds for the monitoring and management of the Natura 2000 network

Monitoring and research

- Set up for detailed monitoring plans for habitats and species and allocate appropriate ring-fenced funding for their implementation

Stakeholder engagement

- Earmark suitable funds for concrete and large-scale project to improve citizens' knowledge, awareness and sense of belonging with regards to Natura 2000 network

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from FAI, Federazione Pro Natura, Legambiente, Lipu, and WWF. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Latvia has been a member of the European Union since 2004. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 333 sites, covering 11833km², all of which are terrestrial (11.53% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 4387km².. The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directive • Site designation • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Habitats and species monitoring • Species protection • Landscape connectivity • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Funding & resources • Promotion of research

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN LATVIA

<p>Transposition and designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientifically justified conservation objectives have to be set on the site level for each Natura 2000 site. 	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites has to be the process that is done based on scientific criteria, without the influence from economic sectors. • Protection of species and habitats outside of Natura 2000 sites should be ensured
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity of institution supervising the Appropriate Assessment procedures should be increased. • The connectivity of Natura 2000 sites have to be considered and measures taken to ensure it. 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal thresholds for national financing for Natura 2000 should be set, based on coverage of Natura 2000 in each country. • General expenditure of nature conservation authorities (for day-to-day operation) should not be counted towards national Natura 2000 funding, unless they can prove that it is DIRECTLY targeted at reaching the goals set for Natura 2000 network in a systematic manner
<p>Monitoring and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring should be continuous and should provide clear answers in regards to the status of habitats and species of EU importance 	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve NGOs and private sector in implementation of the Natura 2000 network, develop and implement mechanisms related to financial and social incentives for the local communities.

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Latvian Fund for Nature (LDF), Latvian Ornithological Society (LOB). All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Luxembourg

Luxembourg has been a member of the European Union since 1958. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 66 sites, covering 702km² (27% of the land area). The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives • Site designation • Promotion of research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Habitats and species monitoring • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN LUXEMBOURG

Transposition and designation	Prevention of negative impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved environmental impact assessment • Prosecution of environmental crimes esp. in relation to Natura 2000
Active management to achieve favourable conservation status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Implementation of management plans, conservation measures and Species Action Plans • Compensation measures must be fully implemented • Restoration of ecosystems and their services • Improved connectivity 	Funding
Monitoring and research	Stakeholder engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved collaboration with agriculture • Improved communication strategy • Improved collaboration at government level between their services and stakeholders

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from natur&ëmwelt a.s.b.l. and Mouvement écologique. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



The Netherlands

Netherlands has been a member of the European Union since its founding. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 195 sites, covering 20603km², all of which are terrestrial (13.29% of the land area) while marine NATURA 2000 sites are covering 15083km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Management of sites (terrestrial) • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments (terrestrial) • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species protection • Management of sites (marine) • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments (marine)

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Transposition and designation

- Complete the process of the designation of Natura 2000 sites, including the identification and designation of marine SPAs (Brown Bank and other qualifying sites).

Prevention of negative impacts

- Determine and execute management plans for all sites As soon as possible.
- Take action on species protection
- Climate change adaptation and nature have a natural synergy.
- Evaluate the nitrogen and nitrates policy on the Natura2000 targets taking into account the accumulating long term effects in the soil.

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Put results in management plans with automatic back-up actions

Funding

- Finance true management costs

Monitoring and research

- Take action on surveillance, control and enforcement.
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Stakeholder engagement




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Natuurmonumenten, Vogelbescherming, and WWF Netherlands. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Portugal

Portugal has been a member of the European Union since 1986. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 165 sites, covering 50.895 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 19.010 km² (21% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 31.885 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Funding and resources • Landscape connectivity • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN PORTUGAL

Transposition and designation

- Designation of sufficient and representative Natura 2000 marine areas and ensuring the connectivity between areas
- Designation of IBA's not covered by N2000 as SPA's must be a priority

Prevention of negative impacts

- Revision and effective implementation of the national legislation on IAS, ensuring that the necessary management plans (and resources) are in place
- Implementation of more transparent methodologies and easier access to monitoring and implementation reports for mitigation measures and compensation measures issued from environmental impact assessment processes.

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Implementation of management plans for all N2000 areas
- Approval and effective implementation of national action plans for the conservation of priority species and habitats
- Better integration of international policies in the national implementation of the Directives, especially for the marine environment

Funding

- Ensuring sufficient resources for the adequate management/conservation and enforcement of the Directives, both through a national budget and EU money
- Production of a more detailed, adequate and better targeted PAF for the funding period post-2020

Monitoring and research

- Implementation of effective monitoring schemes for habitats and species, including the collection of sufficient baseline data

Stakeholder engagement

- Better governance and stakeholder participation, to ensure effective involvement of all parties
- Better communication and public awareness regarding Natura 2000 with special attention to the marine Natura 2000 areas and habitats/species.

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from SPEA - Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves, LPN - Liga para a Proteção da Natureza, WWF Portugal, QUERCUS, GEOTA and FAPAS. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Romania

Romania has been a member of the European Union since 2007. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 597 sites, covering 60.577 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 54.214 km² of the land area (22,74% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 6.362 km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site designation • Management of sites • Species protection • Habitats and species monitoring • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Promotion of research • Non-native species

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN ROMANIA

<p>Transposition and designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asses and finalize the designation of new protected areas based on biodiversity gap analysis • Insure the stability and integrity of the legal framework 	<p>Prevention of negative impacts</p>
<p>Active management to achieve favourable conservation status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive and realistic protected area strategy for Romania • Review the management type for the protected area system and ensure the qualification of the specialized personnel 	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a dedicated budget for the management of PAs , especially Natura 2000 sites • Develop proper mechanisms for financing the conservation measures aiming to implement the management plans • Create and implement mechanisms related to payments for ecosystem services
<p>Monitoring and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create data coherency and transparency. Create a unified data base with management plans and scientific studies, available for public 	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement mechanisms related to financial and social incentives for the Protected Areas local communities • Develop, support and implement conservation enterprises in the PAs local communities




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from NGO Federation "Coalition Natura 2000 Romania All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



Sweden

Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1995. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 4084 sites, covering 75509km². Terrestrial sites are covering 55280 km² (13.32% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 20229km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition • Site designation • Management of sites • Species protection • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Habitats and species monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication • Funding and resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape connectivity

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN SWEDEN

Transposition and designation

- Sweden still has some insufficiencies to deal with. For example the most valuable site Södra Midsjöbanken was excluded from the recent designation of the very large N2000 site “Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna”.

Prevention of negative impacts

- A better and more thorough implementation (enforcement and compliance) of the general species protection provisions in both Birds Directive and Habitats Directive, especially in forestry/forest landscape

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Connectivity and green infrastructure are key words here, and in Sweden lacks sufficient tools to deal with this challenge.

Funding

- Fairly good basis is available for such a “Bird monitoring investment”. However, sufficient grants from state government to enforce the monitoring program in this direction are still missing.

Monitoring and research

- Expand and develop the national and regional monitor programs in order to better cover how conservation status of the listed habitat types and species evolve over time.

Stakeholder engagement

- Full implementation and enforcement of the Aarhus Convention, in order to establish generally better conditions for environment-NGOs to support and push implementation of Birds Habitats Directive. This goes especially for the sectors forest/forestry and game and hunting.




The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from Naturskyddsforeningen, BirdLife Sweden WWF Sweden. All details can be found on the full country reports.

NATURE SCORE CARD



United Kingdom

United Kingdom has been a member of the European Union since 1975. Its Natura 2000 network consists of 925 sites, covering 108153 km². Terrestrial sites are covering 20989 km² (8.57% of the land area) while marine N2000 sites are covering 87164km². The below analysis and recommendations suggest that national authorities still need to make further efforts in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives and effective conservation of threatened species and habitats to be achieved on the ground.

	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition • Site designation • Avoid deterioration of sites, disturbance of species and implementation of appropriate assessments • Species protection • Management of sites • Landscape connectivity • Funding and resources • Monitoring • Promotion of research • Non-native species • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication
	

ACTION PLAN FOR NATURE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Transposition and designation

- Fully implement Birds (Art 3, 4, 7(4), 10) and Habitats (Art 6(1), 6(2), 10, 11, and 18) Directives, and correct all transposition failures.
- Introduction of new governance arrangements to ensure robust regulatory, monitoring, enforcement and other functions currently provided by the EU institutions.

Prevention of negative impacts

- Set, identify and publish definitions of Favourable Conservation Status for each protected species and habitat at a national and individual site level.
- Crack down on wildlife crime and end the persecution of protected species

Active management to achieve favourable conservation status

- Address conservation in the wider countryside, in particular avoiding the pollution or deterioration of habitats outside SPAs as required by Article 10 of the Birds Directive, and using land use planning and development policies to encourage the management of landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna as required by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Funding

- Reform incentives for farming to deliver public goods for public money.
- Designate funding for nature as protected funding A report publish by RSPB provides a figure for how much nature needs: it is estimated that the total cost of achieving our environmental ambitions (for example to meet targets for species and habitats) on land are £2.3 billion per year.

Monitoring and research

- Introduce a rolling programme of monitoring for protected species and habitats on land and at sea.

Stakeholder engagement

The information in this scorecard is based on expert analysis from RSPB. All details can be found on the full country reports.



The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the European Commission and the Mava Foundation for this publication. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the authors and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of the funders mentioned above. The funder cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information this document contains.