



Luxembourg, 31st October 2024

PRESS RELEASE

UN Biodiversity Conference: Luxembourg must finally take responsibility for the preservation of its foundation of life!

The 16th United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is currently taking place in Cali, Colombia.

The aim in Cali is for the global community to establish effective measures to protect and restore nature. The situation is dramatic: due to the massive extinction of species there is a global threat of ecological collapse and the disappearance of human livelihoods. What is needed, as demanded by nature conservation organisations worldwide, are clear guidelines for monitoring the state of nature, secure funding for global biodiversity protection and respect for human rights.

Luxembourg's Minister for the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity Serge Wilmes also took part in the World Biodiversity Conference.

It is extremely perplexing, however, that only a month before the international biodiversity conference, EU member states voted to lower the protection status of the wolf — Luxembourg was among the supporters. It almost seems hypocritical when we know that, at the World Biodiversity Conference, countries of the Global South are being urged to step up efforts to protect their large predators...

Now it is indeed easier to preach water while drinking wine: the wealthy Luxembourg has failed to meet all the set targets for curbing rapid biodiversity losses for years, even as we try to convince other countries to do so. There is no indication that the Minister for Biodiversity is taking responsibility here at home.

Some examples:

- In the discussions on the orientation of agricultural policy, aspects relating to biodiversity are left out of the equation, and both ministries are a long way from the necessary interdepartmental approach;

- Protected habitats, such as lowland hay meadows, have declined sharply despite their protected status, and the situation of meadow breeding birds has also continued to deteriorate, as the latest edition of the Red List shows;
- The measures set out in the National Nature Conservation Plan, which are to be achieved by 2030, are progressing extremely slowly: 570 hectares of lowland meadows should be restored every year, but in reality, not even 10 % of these are;
- The government is planning to dispense with compensation measures in urban areas without any technical basis - at the expense of already endangered species and without regard for the quality of life of local residents;
- Ecosystem services are still not sufficiently recognised and valued. Farmers are still subsidised on the basis of mere agricultural area and not on the basis of ecosystem services for society - the economic, health and social benefits of biodiversity conservation are still flagrantly misjudged;
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It is also a fact that Luxembourg continues to fuel the biodiversity crisis through a misguided subsidy policy - subsidies that are harmful to nature - and offensive nature conservation measures are only making slow progress.

Accordingly: Conferences like the one on global biodiversity are important.

But: political credibility - and success in protecting biodiversity - is achieved above all through concrete action at home. This is where Minister Wilmes, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, is finally called upon to take consistent action.

Contact:

Claire Wolff, Mouvement Ecologique, Responsable biodiversité : 43 90 30 35

claire.wolff@oeko.lu

Background:

"From 21 October to 11 November 2024, around 200 parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity will meet in Colombia for their 16th conference (COP16). The negotiations will focus on the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This agreement on biodiversity was adopted in China and Canada in 2022 and formulates new targets for the protection of nature by 2030. It is important to agree on roadmaps and instruments to actually get closer to these targets. There is also a lack of sufficient funding to implement the targets, particularly in financially weak countries. At the same time, global spending on environmentally harmful subsidies far exceeds the funding required to save nature. The countries of the Global South are calling on those of the Global North to take responsibility for the destruction of global nature, which is being driven by the immense ecological footprint of industrialised countries."

- Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz, press release from 21st October 2024.