

A large, leafy tree stands in a grassy field. In the background, a city is visible under a clear blue sky. The scene is captured during the golden hour, with warm light illuminating the landscape.

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Biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture in everyone's interest

The biodiversity crisis is one of the greatest threats to humanity. At the same time, nature is also essential to our well-being.

In the interests of all, protecting nature is therefore a top priority for the Mouvement Ecologique, which will place particular emphasis on awareness-raising projects in 2025.

Biodiversity is also the foundation of forward-looking agriculture, and environmentally friendly and sustainable agriculture is in turn necessary for the preservation of biodiversity.

Reconciling the protection of biodiversity with the promotion of agriculture was therefore also a major concern for the Mouvement Ecologique in 2025.

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD BIODIVERSITY DAY: AN ANALYSIS OF LUXEMBOURG’S AGRICULTURAL POLICY: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS?

“It is not the silence of the insects, but that of politics that should alarm us.”

Luxembourg provides several hundred million euros in support for its agriculture; the majority of these funds come from the EU. In addition to supporting farmers, these funds are also intended to combat biodiversity loss and climate change. In the context of European and national agricultural subsidies for the 2023–2027 funding period, Mouvement Ecologique commissioned a study to determine whether these funds are actually linked to effective programmes for strengthening biodiversity in the country – that is, whether they are invested in the public interest – and where improvements are still possible.

The analysis carried out by Nadja Kasperczyk (a biology graduate from Justus Liebig University in Giessen) was published to mark World Biodiversity Day on 22 May 2025 and showed that: Although the state of the natural environment in Luxembourg is alarming and continues to deteriorate, agricultural practices that contribute to worsening the situation are currently subsidised by taxpayers’ money.



ACCELERATING CONSTRUCTION – AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT NEW NATURE CONSERVATION LAWS – THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE NATURE CONSERVATION ACT ARE UNACCEPTABLE

In 2024, the government proposed an amendment to the Nature Conservation Act, which Mouvement Ecologique analysed in detail in early 2025. This reform forms part of the government’s ‘Build Ever Faster’ initiative.

Following more general analyses carried out in 2024, this new publication from 2025 specifically addressed the various articles of the reform text and, in a constructive spirit, also presented concrete proposals for improvements deemed important by Mouvement Écologique.

The Mouvement Écologique’s objectives: whilst procedures must certainly be simplified, the preservation of biodiversity and green infrastructure in urban areas must not be compromised to this extent.

Following a thorough review (and requests for information from the Ministry), the Mouvement Écologique concluded that the draft, in its current form, is not based on scientifically verifiable grounds, **contravenes European nature conservation directives**, could **undermine the principle of equality among citizens**, and guarantees **neither the preservation of biodiversity nor genuine administrative simplification**.

Mouvement Écologique has reaffirmed its long-standing support for the **simplification of procedures in the field of housing construction**, but has emphasised that a reform of the Nature Conservation Act must be compatible with European law and protect the quality of life in local communities, for both people and animals. In a constructive spirit, specific amendments to the text have been proposed.

The reform is not yet complete; the Mouvement Écologique will continue to oppose any deterioration and will contribute constructively.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU’S ‘NATURE RESTORATION REGULATION’ IN LUXEMBOURG – PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL PLANS

In October 2025, Mouvement Écologique took part in an information meeting organised by the Ministry of the Environment on **national restoration plans**, which must be submitted to the European Commission by September 2026 in accordance with the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

During the discussion, Mouvement Ecologique emphasised that a **reform of agricultural policy** is essential, as it is on agricultural land that the need for restoration is greatest. At the same time, the risk was raised that the plans would remain ineffective without concrete support for their implementation. Mouvement Ecologique will continue to actively monitor the process.





NGOs call on European environment ministers not to weaken the wolf's protected status

On 17 December 2025, Mouvement Ecologique, in collaboration with more than 200 European environmental organisations, signed an open letter addressed to all EU environment ministers. The letter called for the wolf's protection status not to be downgraded at national level – even though the EU has recently downgraded it from 'strictly protected' to "protected".

The signatories emphasised that this decision contradicts scientific evidence, as the wolf remains in an unfavourable conservation status in six of the EU's seven biogeographical regions. The European Court of Justice had also confirmed in June 2025 that each Member State must independently ensure a favourable conservation status. Instead of calls for culling motivated by political considerations, the NGOs advocated for cooperative coexistence strategies – including livestock protection, preventive measures and fair compensation agreements. The wolf, as a conservation success story and an important element of European biodiversity, should continue to be protected in Luxembourg on the basis of scientific evidence.

CONFERENCE ON THE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ON THE FUTURE OF EU AGRICULTURE

In April, Mouvement Ecologique organised a well-attended conference on the theme of the 'Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture'. Around 45 experts from the environmental and agricultural sectors took part.

The agricultural sector was represented, notably by representatives from NGOs, public authorities and research institutes.

The speaker was Faustine Bas-Defossez, Director of Nature, Health and Environment at the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and co-author of the Strategic Dialogue. She presented the key elements of the final report, published in September 2024, and explained the historic consensus-building process involving 29 different stakeholders from the agriculture, environment, trade and civil society sectors.

The conference specifically addressed the organisation and conduct of the dialogue, the possibilities for compromise in a polarised environment, and the development of shared visions for a sustainable European food system. It was particularly emphasised that the consensus had been built over the course of a large number of meetings (around 100) over a period of seven months, including informal exchange formats that fostered a common understanding.

The discussions following the conference also demonstrated the strong willingness of all parties present to work together constructively to reconcile environmental, climate and agricultural objectives. The event was recorded and a podcast was produced with the speaker.

SCHOOL FRUIT SCHEME 2025/2026 – ANOTHER MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Until 1 September 2025, the Ministry of Agriculture's 17th call for tenders for the public distribution of fruit in schools in Luxembourg for the 2025/2026 school year was open – it covered the considerable quantity of 156 tonnes of fruit.

Mouvement Ecologique has once again criticised (*"it's always the same old story"*) the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture does not take sufficient account of environmental and health considerations: despite the opportunity to promote organic farming, regional produce and the reduction of pesticide residues in children, the tender remains focused on price and the 'perfection' of the fruit.

According to Mouvement Écologique, Restopolis shows that with clear criteria regarding regional and organic products, it is possible to promote organic farming and offer planning security to producers. One wonders why the Ministry of Agriculture is not taking this approach with the school fruit scheme.



REFORM OF THE CURRENT FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEM

The Ministry of Agriculture had invited stakeholders to give their views on the future development of food production in Luxembourg.

In May 2025, Mouvement Ecologique submitted its position paper on this subject.

Key demands include a reorientation of agricultural policy with increased support for organic farming, the protection of agricultural land and a reduction in pesticide use, the development of regional marketing structures, as well as a requirement to offer organic and regional products in public canteens.

Furthermore, Mouvement Ecologique has called for a broader public debate on agriculture and food – extending beyond the narrow circle of stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

DISCUSSION WITH THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, MARTINE HANSEN

In May, the Mouvement Écologique held a two-hour discussion with Minister Martine Hansen, attended by several senior officials from the ministry.

The topics discussed included public subsidies for greenhouses, the contamination of water and wine by chemicals from asbestos cement, pesticide residues in food, and the reform of the Nature Conservation Act.

The exchange was fairly direct and open, although significant differences of opinion emerged during the discussion. The lack of a platform on which the agricultural sector, environmental organisations and consumers could work together to develop solutions was deemed particularly critical.

Mouvement Ecologique regretted in particular that the minister – according to Mecos – had not spoken out strongly enough in favour of organic farming and the need to reform agriculture with a view to sustainability. According to Mouvement Ecologique, this would amount to neglecting the central challenges facing agriculture, to the detriment of biodiversity, health and, ultimately, agriculture itself.



PROPOSALS FOR THE REFORM OF HUNTING PRACTICES

Expert conference on forest-based hunting strategies

To mark International Day of Forests in March 2025, Mouvement Ecologique, in collaboration with an alliance of nine organisations – including natur&ëmwelt, ProSilva Luxembourg and the Federation of Hunting Associations of Luxembourg – organised a public conference on forest-focused hunting strategies. This conference was a logical follow-up to the joint statements on the issue of hunting issued in the preceding months.

The focus was on how excessive game populations endanger the natural regeneration of forests, reduce biodiversity and cause significant economic damage. Frank Christian Heute, a wildlife ecologist and president of the Association for Ecological Hunting in North Rhine-Westphalia, used concrete examples to demonstrate how hunting that respects animal welfare and is ecosystem-focused can ensure natural regeneration – whilst questioning the feasibility of such an approach given current game management practices.

The conference was deliberately aimed not only at professionals but also at all interested parties, and highlighted the need for a radical shift in mindset – among both forest owners and hunters – in the face of worsening climate change and the pressure on forest ecosystems.

Hunting practices must be reformed

In May 2025, Mouvement Ecologique, in collaboration with seven other organisations – including Lëtzebuurger Privatbësch, Pro Silva Lëtzebuerg, natur&ëmwelt and the Hëllef fir d'Na-tur Foundation – presented a detailed statement on the reform of hunting practices at national level. The central concern was the culling of wild game populations, a prerequisite for the survival of Luxembourg's forests.

The position paper included 14 specific demands aimed at reconciling nature conservation, hunting and animal welfare: from the introduction of scientific monitoring tools in every hunting ground and measurable regeneration targets – with the oak as an indicator species – to clear penalties for non-compliance. A fundamental reform of the hunting lease system was also called for, with shorter, performance-based contracts, stricter selection criteria for hunting leaseholders, and a democratisation of hunting to benefit young, locally-based hunters.

Furthermore, the organisations called for enhanced environmental training for hunters, better support for forest owners in assessing damage, and the introduction of minimum standards in lease agreements. The statement emphasised that hunting must, in future, fulfil a clearly defined societal role.





WILD HONEYSUCKLE IN THE EU NOW ON THE RED LIST – APPEAL TO THE RELEVANT MINISTERS

Following a European study that classified wild honey bees as a threatened species on the IUCN Red List, Mouvement Ecologique has once again called on the Minister for Agriculture, Martine Hansen, and the Minister for the Environment, Serge Wilmes. They have demanded the repeal of a legal obligation still in force that mandates the destruction of wild bee nests – an anachronism that is no longer tenable in view of the decline in biodiversity. A letter on this subject sent in 2022 to the then Minister for Agriculture remained unanswered.

GET INVOLVED 'ACTION HARE' ENTERS ITS NEXT PHASE

The citizen science initiative dedicated to the brown hare continued in 2025. As part of the "Action Hare" participation campaign, Mouvement Écologique called on citizens to report their sightings of brown hares via the iNa app

The aim was to collect data on the distribution of a species that is poorly documented scientifically due to the lack of official national monitoring.

The brown hare is representative of many species found in the agricultural landscape, whose populations have declined due to the loss of habitat features and the increase in monocultures, the use of pesticides and road traffic.



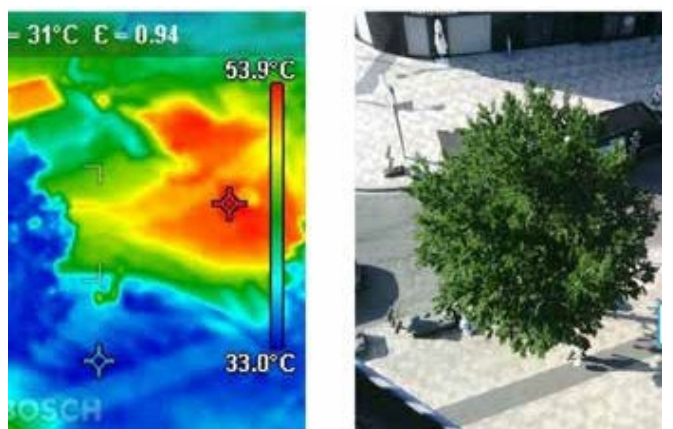
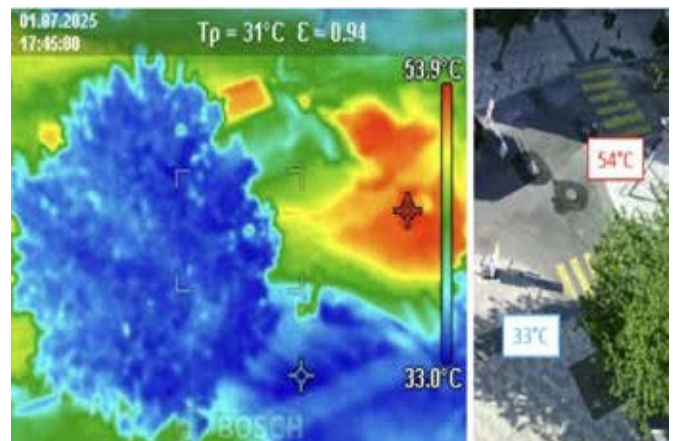
HANEBOSCH CASE IN DÉIFFERDENG: DESTRUCTION OF A PROTECTED FOREST FOR AN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE?

In spring 2025, Mouvement Ecologique opposed the planned felling of two hectares of the 'Sternmieren-Eichen-Hainbuchenwald' protected forest in the Haneboesch near Niederkorn, which is to make way for an expanding industrial estate. Although the intervention is in principle legal, the Nature Conservation Act stipulates that certain compensatory measures aimed at protecting the animal and plant species living there must be implemented before felling work begins. Following an on-site inspection, Mouvement Ecologique concluded that these measures had not yet been fully implemented. It therefore sent a letter from its lawyer to the Ministry of the Environment, threatening to take immediate legal action in the event of a breach of the Nature Conservation Act.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE? – THE HEAT WAVE SHOWS HOW ESSENTIAL GREEN SPACES ARE IN URBAN AREAS

On 2 July 2025, at the height of a heatwave with temperatures reaching up to 38°C, Mouvement Ecologique published a press release featuring striking thermal images of towns and villages in Luxembourg. In this press release, it urged local authorities to embark on ambitious, immediate and coherent green planning – because, due to climate change, such heatwaves will occur more frequently and last longer in the future.

Mouvement Écologique emphasised that vegetation and tree shade not only cool the microclimate and improve the quality of public spaces, but also have positive effects on biodiversity and public health.



EXAMPLE OF AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN 'LISTENING TO NATURE'

The song of a lark, the buzzing of bees or a rustling hidden in the leaves: all these sounds bear witness to the living, diverse nature that surrounds us day after day – often unnoticed and drowned out by everyday noise. Unfortunately, many of these voices are becoming increasingly rare. This is precisely where the campaign 'An Ear for Nature', run by the Mouvement Ecologique from late April to November 2025, was very well received by the public.

During this period, **two short videos** were published each month on endangered animal species found in Luxembourg's towns and countryside – each accompanied by an animal sound puzzle.

The animals featured were selected so that they could actually be heard in the wild at the time the video was published. At the end of each video, the call of the next species could already be heard, and participants were asked to guess which one it was. Participants could submit their answers by email or in the comments on Facebook and Instagram; for each video, a voucher for an organic shop was raffled off among the correct answers.

A total of 14 animal species were featured, each accompanied by a fact sheet detailing its habitat, the causes of its endangerment and specific conservation measures:

1. Proyer's Bunting
2. Hedgehog
3. The swallow and the swallow's nest
4. Field cricket
5. Midwife toad
6. Dragonflies
7. Long-eared bat
8. Swallow
9. Marsh grasshopper

En Ouer fir d'Natur
Lead an ear to nature

PROFILE
LUX: LITTLE BIRDS, DEAR BIRDS
LAT: ALAUDA ARVENSIS

Who is singing and chirping so insistently above the field...?

Did you recognise the song of the skylark in the clip?

The skylark is particularly well known for its melodious, long and steady song, which it sings during what is known as its 'song flight'. During this, the male rises in wide spirals to a height of several dozen metres in the sky – often so high that he is nothing more than a tiny dot – and sings there without interruption for up to 15 minutes (!). This is how, during the spring mating season, the male marks his territory and attracts females. Unlike the skylark, most other songbirds sing from a perch, often for much shorter periods and in a less conspicuous manner.

Keep your eyes and ears peeled on your next walk from April onwards! Their song can be heard from afar, but who will be the first to spot them in the sky?

Lifestyle and needs

The skylark is heavily dependent on open landscapes consisting of farmland. However, these areas must not be too 'uniform', meaning they must not consist solely of very large, intensively farmed fields. The skylark needs variety, for example through strips between fields where grasses and herbs grow, known as 'field margins', or parts of fields left fallow for a certain period. The skylark is also found in sparsely sown fields and nutrient poor meadows with low vegetation.

It needs the features and refuges mentioned above to be able to build its nest in peace. Indeed, it builds its nest on the ground, it is what is known as a ground-nesting bird.

10. House sparrow
11. Booted Eagle
12. Dormouse
13. Wildcat
14. Little owl

An information **sheet** has been published for each species, detailing its habitat, the threats it faces and concrete conservation measures (including suggestions for the general public).

The campaign aimed to raise public awareness of native (endangered) biodiversity in an engaging way, to highlight lesser-known species, and to ask the following question: what concrete steps can policymakers – and indeed every individual – take to preserve these species and their habitats?



PODCAST 'OUERESTËPPLER' – EPISODE 1: "IS OUR FOREST SICK?"

In March 2025, Mouvement Ecologique launched the podcast 'Ouerestëppler'. In the first episode, the two biologists and forestry experts Roger Schauls and Jacques Pir discussed the current challenges facing Luxembourg's forests.

During the conversation, they highlighted the impact of climate change, drought and excessive wildlife populations on forest ecosystems.

COURSE AND VIDEO SERIES ON NATURAL FARMING 'SPARE ME THE SPADE'

In 2025, Mouvement Ecologique organised this course in collaboration with 'Krautgart', a very popular course on natural market gardening based on the 'No-Dig' principle – that is, growing vegetables without tilling, chemical fertilisers or pesticides. The course attracted many participants and provided practical advice on how to make a vegetable garden efficient, sustainable and soil-friendly.

To reach a wider audience and raise awareness, the course content was filmed: four detailed episodes guide participants through

the different seasons and cover planning, seed propagation, maintenance and harvesting.

Shorter clips offer personalised tips and advice for your own garden (these will continue until 2026). The video series and clips are available to the public to encourage a wider audience to grow vegetables in an environmentally friendly and resource-efficient way.

NATURNO GARDENING TIPS FOR MEMBERS

Throughout the year, the Mouvement Écologique has provided its members with practical advice for a nature-friendly approach to gardens, balconies and outdoor spaces. In spring, for example, people were encouraged to create a wildflower meadow using mixtures of native wildflower seeds.

In autumn, however, the message was: 'Do more by doing nothing' – because perennials left in place and plant debris provide insects, birds and mammals with valuable shelter and food for the winter.

"OUT INTO NATURE!" – EXCURSIONS 2025

In 2025, the Mouvement Écologique, in collaboration with its regional groups, organised a series of nature excursions for its members and other interested parties. All the excursions combined experiences in nature with the sharing of knowledge on topics such as biodiversity, forest health and measures to protect the habitats visited.

The series kicked off on 13 April with a morning **birdwatching walk** in Rollingen, near Mersch, led by ornithologist Max Steinmetz.

Two weeks later, on 27 April, Roger Schauls led a **walk in the forest** to the 'Plateau Haard' near Mersch, where the damage caused to trees by wild animals and practical solutions were the focus of discussion.

On 18 May, Mouvement Ecologique, in collaboration with *the Association of Luxembourg Biologists* (ABIOL), organised an **excursion** to discover orchids at 'Hêlt', near Rosport, led by biologist Jean-Marie Mangen.



In June, a night-time walk with the Forestry Service followed at 'Echerfeld', an initiative focusing on **innovative nature conservation projects** on the outskirts of Luxembourg City, followed by a community barbecue.

The season concluded with a walk through the **picturesque Eisch Valley** in the company of Roger Schauls and Marc Schoellen.

VISIT TO THE HISTORIC GARDENS OF AANSEBUERG

In June 2025, the regional association 'Mersch and its surroundings' organised an informative tour of the historic vegetable gardens of Aansenburg. In addition to the magnificent castle gardens, extensive vegetable gardens were also showcased, dedicated not only to food production but above all to the preservation and propagation of regional heirloom seeds certified as organic – varieties that are sometimes no longer available on the market. The tour was led by Frank Adams, founder of the 'Seed' platform dedicated to the preservation of heirloom varieties. The event allowed participants to discover for themselves the importance of seed diversity, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, and to find inspiration for their own gardens or regional projects.

THE SCARECROW SPEAKS: MAKE WAY FOR BIODIVERSITY!

To mark **International Biodiversity Day** in May 2025, the Mouvement Écologique action group sent an unusual ambassador out into the field: **the scarecrow** – reimagined, this time not to scare away birds, but to attract biodiversity. These charming installations have appeared in various locations across Luxembourg City, showing passers-by where 'nature is still thriving' and where it is not at all. The aim was to demonstrate **that there are oases of biodiversity in towns and cities**, and that it is worth preserving, improving and raising awareness of them.



COLLABORATION ON THE PLATFORM 'MY FARMING': NEW ROOTS FOR OUR AGRICULTURE – A CALL FOR A FAIR AND FORWARD-LOOKING AGRICULTURAL POLICY

On 30 June 2025, the "My Agriculture" platform, of which Mouvement Écologique is also a member, published the fourth edition of its advocacy document for an agricultural policy.

The 19 member organisations are calling for a fundamental reorientation of agricultural policy based on the principle of *'public money for the public good'* – with eight concrete proposals for greater sustainability, biodiversity, animal welfare and regional value creation.

