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STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT

Accompanying the document

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Revision of the EU Pollinators Initiative
A new deal for pollinators**

{COM(2023) 35 final}

1. INTRODUCTION

Between September 2021 and June 2022, the Commission consulted stakeholders on the revision of the EU Pollinators Initiative (EUPI)¹, including EU and non-EU citizens, public authorities, academic/research institutions, NGOs, environmental organisations, and business and trade associations. This report summarises the inputs received through an open public consultation (OPC) that garnered 423 responses², a call for evidence that garnered 7388 feedbacks³, and nine online expert consultation workshops each of which had its specific thematic focus⁴. This report is structured along the lines of the three priorities of the revised EU Pollinators Initiative.

The vast majority of respondents to the public consultation found pollinator protection in the EU to be very urgent and assigned high importance to the EUPI.

2. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

2.1. Improving knowledge of pollinators decline, its causes and consequences

Public consultation

Respondents to the public consultation placed high importance on improving the knowledge on pollinators and causes of their decline. Almost three in four respondents find it important to establish scientifically robust EU-wide schemes for monitoring the causes of pollinator decline and the abundance and diversity of pollinator species. Respondents further stressed the need to understand multiple stressors and their interactions (e.g. use of pesticides, intensive farming, habitat fragmentation, air and soil pollution as well as light pollution).

Expert consultation

Experts participating in the consultation workshops suggested strengthening research capacity and infrastructure in order to improve data and research for pollinator conservation, including the state of pollinators and the causes and consequences of their decline, the knowledge base across taxa, and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

Experts widely welcomed existing efforts to establish an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (EUPoMS)⁵ and stressed the urgent need to implement it in all EU countries. They agreed on the importance of increasing long-term commitment to pollinator research, defining pollinator monitoring as a strategic priority at the EU and national levels. Experts suggested studying the synergistic effects of the various threats to pollinators. An integrated EU monitoring framework

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1528213737113&uri=CELEX:52018DC0395>

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13142-EU-pollinators-initiative-revision/public-consultation_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13142-EU-pollinators-initiative-revision/feedback_en?p_id=29152302

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/policy_en.htm

⁵ <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=23462107>

for pollinator conservation should be set up following the DPSIR model⁶, linking the EUPoMS to the monitoring of the drivers, including under the EMBAL⁷, LUCAS⁸ and Insignia⁹ projects. The experts also considered that 1) a pollinator indicator should be included in the monitoring and evaluation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), 2) open access to available data (e.g. under Integrated Administration and Control System) improved, 3) citizen science and conventional methods better integrated, 4) the digitalisation of analogous data in museums ensured, and 5) the lack of taxonomic expertise and relevant research centres in Europe addressed. EU-level efforts should be linked to global conservation action (e.g. CBD¹⁰)

2.2. Tackling pollinator decline

Public consultation

While two in five respondents agreed that the EUPI overall addresses the key causes of pollinator decline, an equal number of respondents disagreed. The vast majority of respondents felt that efforts need to be stepped up to reduce the impacts of pesticides on pollinators, improve pollinator habitats in farmed landscapes, and conserve the most endangered pollinator species and their habitats. A significant number of responses to the open question called for a ban or restricted use of pesticides and highlighted the need to increase connectivity of pollinator habitats and providing permanent pollinator habitats.

Expert consultation

In relation to agriculture, experts called for a development of strategic plans of interventions for pollinators under the CAP. Experts stressed the key role of farm advisory services, and the need to enhance landscape features and connectivity, promote landscape-scale approaches (e.g. through collaborative measures), as well as result-based measures. In relation to pest control, experts suggested further developing risk assessments and test protocols, as well as harmonised risk indicators that fully capture biodiversity impacts. Experts widely agreed on the importance of strengthening the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), to be supported by guidance for crop-specific IPM practice, as well as a reliable pest monitoring and prediction models. Furthermore, efforts are needed to harmonise risk mitigation measures in Europe, reduce the number of emergency authorisations, and add buffer zones to protected areas.

Experts suggested better integrating pollinator conservation and restoration across the wider landscape and enhancing habitat connectivity. Pollinator conservation should be integrated into spatial planning at the national, regional, and local levels and supported by the EU Cohesion Policy and National Pollinator Action Plans. Specific to the urban level, suitable management options should be fine-tuned to the local environmental context and included in Urban Greening Plans. In relation to protected areas, experts supported anchoring pollinator protection in the

⁶ DPSIR stands for Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts and Responses.

⁷ <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=25560696>

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas>

⁹ <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=36702461>

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/>

Habitats Directive. Pollinator conservation should be integrated into Natura 2000 management plans, and a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area should be protected.

Despite considerable knowledge gaps on the effects of pollutants other than pesticides, experts called for immediate actions. In relation to light pollution, experts suggested monitoring light pollution, promoting “dark infrastructure” and restoring darkness. Targets for reducing light pollution could be set up. EU guidelines and standards for biodiversity-friendly lighting sources could serve as guidance for citizens and local authorities. To understand better the impacts of other pollutants (e.g. air pollution, heavy metals, biocides, and electro-magnetic radiation), knowledge gaps should be filled and standardised tests and risk assessments developed to assess their effects on pollinator species and enable concrete policy actions.

Related to Invasive Alien Species (IAS), specific invasive alien insect and plant species were identified and prioritised based on their perceived threat to pollinators. Experts suggested assessing threats to pollinators from relevant IAS, including risk assessments for the most problematic ones. Good practice guidelines and targeted incentives for land managers were suggested, including management options to remove plant IAS and promote the use of native plant species and seed mixes.

Experts recommended setting up a dedicated policy framework to tackle the effects of climate change on pollinators. Spatially explicit pollinator risk maps and prediction models would help to identify vulnerable zones for pollinators and develop solutions, including the facilitation of pollinator migration under climate change. Pollinator conservation should also be addressed in national climate adaptation strategies.

2.3. Strategic planning, engaging the wider society and promoting collaboration

Public consultation

A large majority of respondents deemed national or regional pollinator conservation policies in their countries inexistent or insufficient. Respondents across all stakeholder groups broadly agreed on the importance of raising awareness, promoting multi-stakeholder platforms and citizen science, and labelling of pollinator-friendly products (e.g. in food, gardening, horticulture, lighting solutions). In the open text field, citizens in particular emphasised the importance of information and awareness raising and labelling of pollinator-friendly products.

Expert consultation

Experts favoured better inter-sectoral coordination at EU and national level to improve policy coherence. A central open-access knowledge platform was widely supported, providing maps, resources and tools for taxonomic expertise and citizen science.

Furthermore, it was suggested to improve dialogue between all relevant stakeholders, further develop a standardised monitoring of pollinators and Red Lists, and address climate change adaptation and risk management. Strategic partnerships of European cities and regions for pollinators, including pesticide reductions, were recommended, as well as multi-disciplinary expert groups on less-represented research fields and pollinator conservation.

Experts also identified opportunities to improve knowledge and raise awareness targeting society-at-large, youth, farm advisory services, and key business sectors to promote knowledge on biodiversity measures and pollinators.