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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

{SWD(2023) 18 final}

1. INTRODUCTION

The decline in wild pollinators and its consequences on food security, human health, quality of life and ecosystem functioning raises strong concerns across society. It has also prompted calls, in particular by scientists and civil society, for decisive action to address the causes behind the decline. One recent example is the European Citizens' Initiative "Save Bees and Farmers"[1], which calls for a transition towards a more bee-friendly agriculture, and was successfully presented to the European Commission in October 2022 after having collected over one million statements of support from EU citizens.

Around four in five crop and wild-flowering plant species in Europe depend, at least to some extent, on animal pollination delivered by thousands of insect species. This service brings tangible benefits to the economy: its contribution to the EU's agricultural output is estimated to be at least EUR 5 billion per year[2]. Most of the essential benefits that pollinators provide remain unquantified, such as their contribution to nutrition security and health, or to maintaining ecosystem health and resilience by pollinating wild plants.

Yet, Europe and the world[3] are confronted with a dramatic loss of wild pollinators. According to the European Red List[4], the population of around one in three bee, butterfly and hoverfly species is declining. Moreover, one in ten bee and butterfly species, and one in three hoverfly species are threatened with extinction. While these figures already raise alarm bells, the full picture is not yet known. An increased understanding of the state of pollinators could reveal an even more concerning situation[5].

The decline of pollinators poses a threat to both human wellbeing and nature. The loss of pollinators undermines long-term agricultural productivity, further exacerbating a trend influenced by other factors, notably the current geopolitical situation with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Global efforts have been made to address the biodiversity crisis at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022. These global efforts must be accompanied by ambitious measures to protect and restore biodiversity at EU level, of which pollinators are an integral part.

In 2018, the Commission adopted the first-ever EU framework to address the decline of wild pollinators – the EU Pollinators Initiative[6]. This initiative set long-term objectives for 2030 and a comprehensive set of actions to be implemented in the short-to-medium term. It has been

[1] https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2019/000016_en. The European Commission will respond to this European Citizens' Initiative through a dedicated communication in 2023.
[2] Vysna, V., Maes, J., Petersen, J.E., La Notte, A., Vallecillo, S., Aizpurua, N., Ivits, E., Teller, A., Accounting for ecosystems and their services in the European Union (INCA). Final report from phase II of the INCA project aiming to develop a pilot for an integrated system of ecosystem accounts for the EU. Statistical report. Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021.
[3] IPBES (2016). Assessment report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on pollinators, pollination and food production.
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist
[5] Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the EU Pollinators Initiative (SWD(2018) 302), page 3.
[6] EU Pollinators Initiative (COM(2018) 395).

strongly supported across stakeholder groups, and garnered high public interest. The objectives of the initiative have been strongly boosted by the European Green Deal.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030[7] set the overall ambition of reversing the decline in pollinator numbers and diversity by 2030 as part of a series of commitments and targets for restoring nature in the EU. The strategy also established the EU Biodiversity Platform under which a working group for pollinators was set up as the main governance platform for the Pollinators Initiative. Other initiatives under the European Green Deal, such as the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Forest Strategy, the Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change[8], help to tackle threats to pollinators.

This Communication presents a revised action framework for the EU Pollinators Initiative, building on comprehensive stakeholder consultations and institutional feedback[9] from the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Court of Auditors. It sets out actions to be taken by the EU and its Member States to reverse the decline of pollinators by 2030.

The revision follows up on the review of progress in implementing the Pollinators Initiative, which the Commission undertook in 2021[10]. The review showed that, while it remains a valid policy tool, significant challenges still need to be overcome to halt and reverse pollinator decline. In particular, further action has to be taken to effectively tackle the drivers of the decline, underpinned by robust monitoring and governance mechanisms. The review called for the Initiative to be revised to meet its long-term objectives.

The revision also follows up on the European Court of Auditors' special report[11] on EU actions to protect wild pollinators. This report identified gaps in key EU policies addressing the main threats to wild pollinators and it recommended that the Commission assesses the need to add specific measures to address threats currently not considered in the Pollinators Initiative. It also pointed to the need to better integrate actions to protect wild pollinators in EU biodiversity conservation and agricultural policies and improve protection of wild pollinators from pesticides.

In June 2022, the Commission presented a proposal for a Nature Restoration Law[12], which aims to enshrine into law the ambition of the Biodiversity Strategy: it includes a legally binding target for EU Member States to reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030, and to maintain increasing trends thereafter. The Nature Restoration Law and this revised Pollinators Initiative go hand-in-hand: the legislative proposal gives Member States the flexibility to decide, in their National Restoration Plans, the most effective measures to achieve the target. The actions in this revised Initiative, which encompass a broad range of EU policies, aim to support and complement the national restoration measures required under the proposed Nature Restoration Law.

[7] EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (COM(2020) 380).
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6687
[9] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/policy_en.htm
[10] Report on progress in the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative (COM(2021) 261 final).
[11] ECA Special Report 15/2020.
[12] European Commission proposal for a Regulation on nature restoration (COM(2022) 304).

2. EU ACTION TO REVERSE THE DECLINE OF POLLINATORS

The revised Pollinators Initiative sets objectives for 2030 and related actions under three priorities:

I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences

II: Improving pollinator conservation and tackling the causes of their decline

III: Mobilising society and promoting strategic planning and cooperation at all levels

The subsequent chapters develop these priorities and the related actions. The table in the annex lists all actions.

2.1. PRIORITY I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and consequences

Action to help pollinators must be underpinned by robust science. Since 2018, major progress has been made in gathering actionable knowledge for pollinator conservation, but significant knowledge gaps remain. Further efforts are needed to put in place a robust EU-wide monitoring system for pollinators, undertake critical assessments and spatial analyses, and promote targeted research and innovation activities.

Establish a comprehensive monitoring system

To deploy effective conservation and restoration measures for pollinator populations, it is necessary to map their distribution, state and trends at adequately accurate spatial and temporal detail. This requires a robust EU-wide monitoring scheme that provides regular and frequent information over a long time frame. The Commission and the Member States are working on a monitoring methodology, building on technical options for an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (EU-PoMS)[13]. To rigorously measure the trends in pollinator abundance and diversity and reliably assess progress towards reversing their decline, monitoring will have to be undertaken at a sufficient number of sites. Under the proposed Nature Restoration Law, Member States would be obliged to carry out the monitoring of pollinator species every year, according to a standardised methodology.

In addition, the main threats to pollinator decline should also be monitored. The European Monitoring of Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes (EMBAL) initiative[14], which collects information on pollinator habitat in agricultural landscapes, and the Insignia project[15], which aims to monitor pesticides and other pollutants using the honeybee as a bioindicator, offer efficient ways to fill information gaps on the state of pollinator habitats and environmental pollution. These processes require systematic implementation in the long-term. Establishing an integrated framework for monitoring pollinator decline, its causes and consequences, according to the DPSIR (drivers, pressures, state, impact and response) model of intervention, would allow tracking the outputs and outcomes of relevant policy actions.

[13] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC122225
[14] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=25560696
[15] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=36702461

Support research and assessment

Research and innovation activities will continue to be needed to generate actionable knowledge based on systematically collected data and information, supported by the EU framework programme for research and innovation – Horizon Europe – as well as national research efforts. We need to better understand the taxonomic and functional diversity of pollinator communities and their distribution, as well as the threats to pollinators and their interactions. The latter in particular applies to less understood threats to pollinators (see Priority II).

It will also be necessary to further develop assessment tools, such as the Red List assessment and the EU-wide mapping of key pollinator areas, in order to enable targeted conservation and restoration measures.

Promote capacity building and knowledge sharing

Monitoring and research are resource-intensive, and financial and human resources will have to be used in a cost-effective manner. Strategic development of research infrastructure, monitoring tools and expertise can help in this regard. In particular, it will be important to raise the capacity of both professional and citizen science to undertake taxonomic work, by providing work, education, and training opportunities.

Existing online tools, such as the EU Pollinator Information Hive and the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE), should be fully utilised to share monitoring results and the knowledge generated through research and innovation. This requires engagement both at EU and national level, with support from the European Environment Agency. Knowledge sharing, together with open access to data, will increase the efficiency of public investments and ensure transparency of the science-policy processes and decision making.

2.2. PRIORITY II: Improving pollinator conservation and tackling the causes of their decline

The major threats to wild pollinators include land-use change (including urbanisation), intensive agricultural management practices (including pesticide use), environmental pollution (including light pollution), invasive alien species and climate change. Other threats could be emerging, putting extra pressure on pollinators. Some threats, such as intensive agriculture and pesticide use, are better understood than others. The appropriate measures to mitigate their impacts are well known. A rapid increase in the uptake of these measures is urgently needed.

For other threats such as pollution by chemicals, air pollutants, and heavy metals, knowledge is insufficient to estimate the extent and distribution of their impacts on pollinators, or to design an appropriate intervention strategy. Here, further monitoring and research and innovation activities are needed to enable a science-based response to pollinator decline.

Improve conservation of pollinator species and habitats

Pollinator populations are subject to pressures across different landscapes and land uses, which interact with each other, further amplifying the harmful impacts. Therefore, actions to mitigate those impacts should not be taken in isolation but need to be coordinated across sectors and planned well to ensure consistency, synergies, and cost-effectiveness.

Protected areas and appropriate land management provide the backbone for conserving the rich diversity of pollinator species. Building on this, strategically planned restoration activities should be deployed to ensure adequate areas of well-connected, high-quality pollinator habitats. Species conservation plans[16] are a key tool to coordinate such a strategic approach, in particular for the most threatened species. They provide information on the status, ecology, threats, and current conservation measures for each species and list the key actions that are required to improve their conservation status across their range within the EU. The Commission is currently developing three conservation plans for certain groups of threatened pollinator species. Two plans will cover agricultural and forest landscapes across the EU, and the third will cover a specific geographic area, the Canary Islands. Once finalised, their broad uptake and implementation should be ensured by support from various funding sources, including the LIFE Programme.

Pollinator conservation should be well integrated into the management of protected areas, in particular the Natura 2000 network. Many habitat types protected by the Habitats Directive are essential for pollinators. Including pollinators as typical species in the monitoring and assessment of these habitats' conservation status would help streamline pollinator conservation in Natura 2000 management plans.

The rollout of pollinator monitoring will help to better map rare and threatened pollinator species. This information should be used for fine-tuning conservation and restoration efforts, and for designating new protected areas, in the context of the EU target to achieve 30% protected areas by 2030 under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Land use and changes in land use, such as intensification in agriculture and forestry, urbanisation and infrastructure development can negatively impact pollinators by reducing the availability of pollinator habitats and increasing habitat fragmentation. An integrated approach is needed across natural and cultural landscapes to counteract habitat fragmentation. This can be achieved through a strategically planned network of habitat stretches that jointly form a connected infrastructure across the landscape, traversing biogeographic and administrative regions. Such ecological corridors for pollinators – which we propose to call "Buzz Lines" – would enable species to move in search of food, shelter, and nesting and breeding sites. Moreover, these corridors would act as migration routes for species impacted by climate change, and thus support adaptation efforts. Spatial planning processes at all governance levels are of critical importance for the successful implementation of the Buzz Lines network.

Actions for pollinators across landscapes should also be further supported through EU funds, in particular the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP), cohesion policy funds and the LIFE programme. Member States should also strongly encourage and facilitate cross-border cooperation in this regard.

Restore pollinator habitats in agricultural landscapes

Known pressures include certain agricultural management practices such as monoculture, high use of pesticides and intensive tillage, intensively performed grazing or mowing, and, where it occurs, over-fertilisation of grasslands[17], leading to the decline of pollinators in agricultural

[16] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Action+plans

[17] Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the EU Pollinators Initiative (SWD(2018) 302 final)

landscapes. A greater uptake of pollinator-friendly agronomic techniques, in particular agroecology, is key to reversing this trend.

The CAP is one of the main instruments to support such a transition, through measures such as organic farming, maintaining and developing landscape features, agro-forestry, reduced chemicals use, and protection of pollinator-friendly plants on pastures and buffer strips. In 2023-27, the CAP will be governed by a new green architecture with strengthened baseline requirements and new ecoschemes under its Pillar I, in combination with measures under Pillar II, such as agri-environment-climate management commitments. Interventions beneficial for pollinators in agricultural landscapes should be planned in a strategic and coordinated way, on the basis of the needs identified at local level. Pollinator-friendly landscapes are biodiverse, rich in landscape features and offering an adequate quantity of high-quality, well-connected habitats[18].

Within the CAP, Member States can design strategic interventions that contribute to the specific economic, environmental and social objectives. For example, results-based payment schemes can make the approach more effective and offer more flexibility and incentives to farmers to implement environmentally friendly practices. Moreover, Member States are encouraged to mitigate pressures at landscape level through collective schemes, which incentivise the collaboration between farmers in the collective implementation of agri-environment-climate commitments.

The CAP Strategic Plans developed by Member States[19] include a variety of actions with high potential for the protection of pollinators. For example, several Plans aim to create feeding areas for wild pollinators, such as flower strips, cultivation of annual melliferous plants, or other suitable landscape features. Other commitments concern the establishment of non-productive areas on arable land in order to improve, among others, the status of pollinators and to increase the food supply for pollinating insects. The Plans may also aim to replace chemical plant protection products by biological pest control methods, contributing significantly to the protection of pollinators.

Risks posed by agro-chemicals (in particular pesticides and high nutrient loads) must also be well mitigated. This requires common efforts and cooperation between public authorities and farmers. Farm advisors who are well-trained in biodiversity and pollinator conservation, as well as demonstration and communication activities, are key elements to facilitate a better uptake of targeted measures. Once available, robust indicators based on the EU-wide pollinator monitoring methodology (see Priority I) should be used to evaluate the impact of interventions. Under the CAP, technical assistance at the initiative of the Member States can be used, among other funding sources, to support deployment of the pollinator monitoring scheme (EU-PoMS).

Mitigate the impacts of pesticide use on pollinators

Pesticides remain a major driver of pollinator decline, and their impact must be mitigated by targeted policies and practices. In the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy,

[18] IPBES (2016). Assessment report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on pollinators, pollination and food production.

[19] The CAP Strategic Plans entered into force on 1 January 2023.

the Commission committed to reduce the risk and use of pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030. These targets are intended to be implemented, in particular, by the proposed Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (SUR)[20]. The Commission will also undertake further work to improve the indicators used for quantifying the reduction of the risk and use of plant protection products.

As part of the draft SUR, the Commission also proposed a ban on the use of pesticides in sensitive areas. These include areas protected for nature conservation, as well as areas hosting pollinators that are threatened with extinction. As part of the interinstitutional negotiations, the European Parliament and Council are looking in detail at the modalities for such a prohibition. The draft SUR also provides for increased uptake of integrated pest management (IPM). This establishes a hierarchy of interventions for plant protection, where the focus is on low-risk measures and chemical pesticides are only used as a last resort.

One growing concern is the granting of emergency authorisations by Member States for pesticides that are no longer approved at EU level. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation and will mandate the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to verify whether the justifications provided by Member States for these authorisations are valid. The Commission has already done this repeatedly in relation to emergency authorisations for the use of certain neonicotinoids[21]. Furthermore, the Commission is undertaking steps to enhance the availability of low-risk alternatives to chemical pest control, in particular related to biological solutions such as micro-organisms[22].

The Commission is working towards reinforcing the risk assessment of pesticides for pollinators. This includes strengthening the risk assessment for bees[23] to minimise the undesired effects of pesticides use on honeybees and wild bee species. Moreover, there is an urgent need to accelerate the availability of test methods that allow to determine the toxicity of pesticides for wild pollinators. It is also necessary to ensure that co-formulants are prohibited from being used together with active substances in plant protection products when they are considered to have unacceptable effects on the environment, including pollinators.

Enhance pollinator habitats in urban areas

Urbanisation and infrastructure development reduce the availability of natural pollinator habitats. However, if properly planned and managed, urban areas can act as refuges to pollinators, especially in a wider landscape deprived of floral resources. They can also improve habitat connectivity by providing stepping-stone habitats, such as public parks, private gardens (also in rural areas), urban farms, and green walls and green roofs.

The Commission has developed guidance on pollinator-friendly cities[24], which should be further promoted and widely applied by cities. Furthermore, pollinator conservation should be taken into

[20] European Commission proposal for a Regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products (COM(2022) 305).
[21] https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/approval-active-substances/renewal-approval/neonicotinoids_en
[22] https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/micro-organisms_en
[23] https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/protection-bees_en
[24] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Pollinator-friendly+cities

account in developing urban greening plans[25]. Urban areas are also hotspots for engagement activities, and thus play an important role in scaling up involvement of citizens in conservation activities.

Reduce the impacts of invasive alien species on pollinators

Certain invasive alien species can exert direct or indirect pressures on pollinators. They may prey on native pollinators, be a vector for new diseases and pathogens or compete with them for food sources. Invasive alien plants may outcompete native plants, thus altering plant communities that native pollinators depend on.

To prevent further introduction and spread of invasive alien species whose impact on pollinators may be severe, consideration will be given to including them in the list of invasive alien species of Union concern[26].

To ensure that restricting the use of pesticides in sensitive areas does not undermine the future management of invasive alien plant species, it will be important to increase the availability, uptake, and effectiveness of non-chemical management options.

The risk of the introduction and spread of alien species harmful to pollinators should also be further reduced by promoting the use of pollinator-friendly native plants and seed mixes in areas including private gardens, public areas, farmland, and forests.

Tackle climate change and other causes of pollinator decline

Climate change alters the local weather conditions in terms of temperature and precipitation, and therefore can reduce the resources available to pollinators (e.g. due to drought) and disrupt co-evolved plant-pollinator relationships, such as the timing of flowering and the emergence of specialised pollinators.

In particular, many species are expected to change their distribution range to adapt to altered climatic conditions, which would require them to move to new areas. While the EU has put in place a series of climate policies and strategies to become the first climate-neutral and climate-resilient continent by 2050[27], European ecosystems will inevitably be affected by climate change over the coming decades. Therefore, it will be important to consider the impact of climate change on pollinators and on their habitats and to identify the most vulnerable zones for pollinators in this context, with a view to devising and implementing targeted mitigation measures

[25] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/urban-greening-platform_en

[26] Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

[27] https://climate.ec.europa.eu/index_en

As regards light pollution, its impact on nocturnal pollinators is well understood, enabling specific mitigation actions at national, regional, and local level. The Commission has integrated recommendations on how to mitigate light pollution into its guidelines for citizens[28] and cities[29] and will continue to promote them.

Pollinators can also be affected by biocides. The approval of active substances and authorisation of biocidal products containing them are subject to strict risk assessment[30]. The European Chemicals Agency is currently devising a specific approach for assessing the risks biocides pose to pollinators[31].

2.3. PRIORITY III: Mobilising society and promoting strategic planning and cooperation at all levels

Help citizens and businesses to act

Implementing the actions outlined under the previous two priorities will require broad mobilisation of all relevant actors, including scientists, policymakers, citizens, farmers, and businesses.

This should be underpinned by effective communication, mobilisation, and networking activities. Public participation in the monitoring and conservation of pollinators should be further promoted. This should encompass citizen science as well as organised processes of public participation in monitoring and conservation activities at all relevant levels. The European sustainability competence framework[32] can empower citizens to act in this regard.

As the decline of pollinators is expected to strongly impact future generations, particular attention should also be paid to youth engagement. In this regard, new technologies, such as the Pollinator Park virtual reality experience[33], offer complementary channels for engaging society at large.

Engagement of key business sectors should be further facilitated through existing networks, with a view to promoting the uptake of the guidelines on action for pollinator conservation across sectors.

Promote strategic planning and cooperation at all levels

The Pollinators Initiative will need to be translated into well-devised strategic approaches at national, regional, and local levels. Only a consistent course of action across all governance levels will reverse the decline of pollinators.

National pollinator strategies should coordinate and stimulate efforts across all relevant sectors and policies to reverse the decline of pollinators by 2030, including through actions supported by

[28] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Citizens
[29] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Cities
[30] https://health.ec.europa.eu/biocides/biocidal-products_en
[31] https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17234/scoping_paper_pollinators_guidance_en.pdf/7957c0f8-5ded-4a6e-17a7-2a899bbb141a
[32] https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en
[33] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/pollinator-park_en

the EU cohesion policy funds. They should be translated into action plans at regional and local levels. The strategies and action plans need to be developed transparently, in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders and using existing networks and platforms to facilitate multi-actor collaboration. Where needed, the setting up of new networks and platforms should be explored. For topics and interventions raising controversy, participatory, deliberative and co-creation processes offer additional means of addressing tensions between different actors, including citizens. An active role for the European Committee of the Regions will be of particular importance, promoting regional engagement and collaboration.

Finally, the decline of pollinators is not only a European challenge. EU efforts should contribute to international efforts to reverse this global trend, under the International Pollinators Initiative[34] and through other relevant international forums.

3. CONCLUSION

There is no alternative to halting and reversing the decline of wild pollinators if the EU is to preserve biodiversity, which is fundamental to human wellbeing. The new action framework under the EU Pollinators Initiative sets out a path for the EU to meet this challenge. Together with the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law, it represents a new deal for pollinators in the EU.

This revised initiative will contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal, in particular the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies. It will also provide a valuable contribution to EU progress towards the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments agreed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to endorse the new action framework under this Initiative and to actively engage in its implementation, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

[34] https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-06-en.pdf

ANNEX – NEW ACTION FRAMEWORK

This annex provides an overview of the objectives and actions included under each priority of the revised EU Pollinators Initiative.

PRIORITY I: Improving knowledge of pollinator decline, its causes and its consequences		
Objectives to be achieved by 2030 *The state of pollinators and the key causes of their decline are regularly monitored by means of an EU-wide monitoring system and regularly assessed. This provides the basis for developing robust indicators to inform on the impacts of relevant national and EU policies on pollinators. Critical knowledge gaps on the decline of pollinators, its causes and consequences for society and the economy are plugged. There is open access to data and information on pollinators.*		
ACTION		***COMPLETED BY***
1. ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING SYSTEM		
1.1	The Commission and Member States should finalise the development and testing of a **standardised methodology for an EU pollinator monitoring scheme (EU-PoMS)**. The methodology will ensure delivery of annual datasets on the abundance and diversity of pollinator species, with adequate statistical power to assess whether the decline of pollinators has been reversed both at EU and national level. Once the methodology is available, Member States should deploy the scheme on the ground.	2026
1.2	The Commission will, with the support of Member States and the European Environment Agency, devise an integrated framework for monitoring pollinator decline, its causes and consequences[35]. The Commission will continue supporting the **systematic collection of data on major threats to pollinators**, in particular through the EMBAL[36] and Insignia[37] initiatives.	2026
1.3	The Commission will develop **indicators** on the state of pollinator populations and the pressures they face and	Continuous until

[35] This will follow the DPSIR (drivers, pressures, state, impact and response) model of intervention.
[36] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=25560696
[37] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=36702461

	will explore options for developing indicators on the impacts of pollinators on ecosystem health, the economy and human wellbeing. These indicators will be developed with a view to contributing, among other things, to the evaluation of relevant policies, such as the common agricultural policy (link to Action 5.4).	2030
2. SUPPORT RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT		
2.1	The Commission and Member States should promote **research and innovation on the state of pollinators, the causes and the consequences of their decline**, as well as effective **mitigation measures**. Prioritised basic and applied research, supported through the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon Europe – and national research efforts, should widen the knowledge base across pollinator groups and improve understanding of emerging threats to pollinators.	Continuous until 2030
2.2	The Commission will finalise the **European Red List** assessment for key insect pollinator groups – bees, hoverflies, butterflies, and moths.	2024
2.3	The Commission will, jointly with Member States and the European Environment Agency, identify and map **Key Pollinator Areas** in the EU, which should become the focus of conservation and restoration efforts.	2025
3. PROMOTE CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING		
3.1	Based on an assessment of gaps, the Commission and Member States should support investment to increase the **capacity of EU experts in pollinator taxonomy** (i.e. the science of naming, describing and classifying those organisms), to meet research and monitoring needs. Member States should increase education efforts and create work opportunities in this area.	Continuous until 2030
3.2	The Commission will continue to develop a **database on pollinator species** (including the description, images, and distribution maps of each species) and will support the development of **field guides and identification keys** to facilitate pollinator monitoring.	2025
3.3	The Commission and Member States should promote **open access to data and information** generated by research and monitoring activities, as well as from other relevant data sources such as land-use data under the CAP's Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS).	Continuous until 2030

3.4	The Commission and the European Environment Agency will continue to facilitate knowledge sharing through the **EU Pollinator Information Hive**[38] and the **Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE)**[39].	Continuous until 2030
3.5	The Commission and Member States should support further development of **research infrastructure** important for improving the knowledge base on pollinators, including by building on existing initiatives such as the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo)[40] and the Long-Term Ecosystem Research in Europe (eLTER)[41].	2026
PRIORITY II: Improving pollinator conservation and tackling the causes of their decline		
Objectives to be achieved by 2030 *Appropriate conservation and restoration measures have been identified and implemented for pollinators and their habitats. Pollinator-relevant measures are fully integrated into the common agricultural policy, and Member States are making full use of the funding opportunities to maintain and restore pollinator habitats in rural and urban areas, including under EU cohesion policy. Pollinator habitats are effectively connected in the wider landscape, allowing pollinators to disperse across the territory and respond to adverse climate impacts. Pollinators are safeguarded from the impacts of pesticides, other environmental pollutants, and invasive alien species.*		
4. IMPROVE CONSERVATION OF POLLINATOR SPECIES AND HABITATS		
4.1	The Commission will finalise the development of conservation plans for threatened pollinator species. Two plans will cover agricultural and forest landscapes, and the third will cover the Canary Islands. The Commission and Member States should support their implementation.	2026
4.2	The Commission will identify **pollinators typical of habitats protected under the Habitats Directive**. Member States should ensure that the measures implemented for these habitats, in particular under Natura	Continuous until 2030

[38] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/EU+Pollinator+Information+Hive
[39] https://biodiversity.europa.eu
[40] https://www.dissco.eu
[41] https://elter-ri.eu

	2000 management plans, take pollinator conservation into account. Member States should secure adequate funding for those measures.	
4.3	Member States should address the needs of threatened pollinator species[42] in the management of **existing protected areas**, and in their pledges for **new protected areas** under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.	Continuous until 2030
4.4	The Commission and Member States, with the support of the European Environment Agency, should devise a blueprint for a network of ecological corridors for pollinators – **"Buzz Lines"** – and develop a plan of measures for implementing it. The plan will build on the mapping of Key Pollinator Areas and the creation of new habitat areas through restoration. To support the implementation of the Buzz Lines network Member States should integrate pollinator conservation into **spatial planning policies** at national, regional, and local levels.	2027, with continuous implementation until 2030
4.5	The Commission and Member States should continue to promote activities for pollinator conservation through the **LIFE Programme**.	Continuous until 2030
5. RESTORE POLLINATOR HABITATS IN AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES		
5.1	The Commission will continue to work with Member States to increase support for pollinator-friendly farming under the **common agricultural policy (CAP)**. Member States should develop and implement targeted and strategically planned interventions to reverse the decline of pollinators in agricultural landscapes by 2030, as part of the CAP and other relevant instruments (e.g. national or regional nature conservation measures). They should also ensure consistency and synergies between these different instruments and measures. In view of this need, the Commission will explore options on how best to address pollinator conservation and restoration in the future reform of the CAP.	Continuous until 2030
5.2	The Commission will continue to encourage Member States and stakeholders to **share best practice** and organise **coordination activities** under the current CAP to facilitate the design and uptake of effective instruments that benefit pollinators, such as results-based payment schemes and collective measures by	2027

[42] According to the European Red List assessments, https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist.

	farmers, including through the EU CAP Network and other stakeholder platforms.	
5.3	Member States should enhance the capacity of **farm advisory services** for pollinator conservation and restoration. Member States should also implement communication and demonstration activities for pollinator-friendly schemes.	Continuous until 2030
5.4	The Commission will continue the development of a **pollinator indicator** with a view to integrating it into the CAP's performance monitoring and evaluation framework, once the EU pollinator monitoring scheme (EU-PoMS) is sufficiently implemented.	2026
6. MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF PESTICIDE USE ON POLLINATORS		
6.1	The Commission will require that all Member States establish systems in line with relevant legal requirements to ensure that professional users of plant protection products implement **integrated pest management (IPM)**, with a view to minimising the impact of plant protection products on pollinators.	2026
6.2	The Commission will assess options for improving the existing **harmonised risk indicators**, or developing new ones, to better estimate the trends in the risk and use of plant protection products, including the risks for pollinators.	Continuous until 2030
6.3	The Commission will continue to monitor **emergency authorisations** for pesticides that are harmful to pollinators and, if considered necessary, ask EFSA to assess the justifications provided by Member States. The Commission will mandate EFSA to develop specific protocols to evaluate those justifications. When emergency authorisations are found to be unjustified, the Commission will continue to adopt decisions to prohibit them. The Commission will monitor the implementation of the guidance document on emergency authorisations, and, if necessary, will consider setting legally binding criteria under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 on when emergency authorisations can be granted.	Continuous until 2030
6.4	Once it is published, the Commission will work with Member States towards full endorsement and	2024

	implementation of the revised **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Bee Guidance Document** on the assessment of **risks to bees** from the use of pesticides[43]. The Commission will ask EFSA for another review when new knowledge or modelling tools become available.	
6.5	The Commission, together with Member States, will set up a work plan to develop, validate and ring-test **additional test methods** for determining the **toxicity** of pesticides for pollinators, including wild pollinators. This work plan will consider the **indicator species** that need to be tested and will include **sub-lethal and chronic effects** of pesticides. It will include support for the international recognition of those methods through new Test Guidelines from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).	2025
6.6	The Commission will prepare an Implementing Regulation[44] setting out a procedure and criteria for identifying **unacceptable co-formulants** in plant protection products, which will comprise environmental protection criteria that cover pollinators.	2024
7. ENHANCE POLLINATOR HABITATS IN URBAN AREAS		
7.1	The Commission and Member States should encourage cities to implement the **guide for pollinator-friendly cities**[45].	Continuous until 2030
7.2	When developing **Urban Greening Plans**[46], European cities should take into account pollinator conservation requirements.	Continuous until 2030
8. REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ON POLLINATORS		
8.1	The Commission will assess **threats to pollinators from invasive alien species** not yet included in the list of	2025

[43] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3295
[44] Under Article 27 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.
[45] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Cities
[46] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/urban-greening-platform_en

	invasive alien species of Union concern under Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 and prepare risk assessments for the most problematic ones.	
8.2	The Commission will assess **management options for invasive alien plant species** most harmful to wild pollinators, with a view to increasing the availability, uptake, and effectiveness of non-chemical management options.	2028
8.3	The Commission will develop guidelines to promote the use of **pollinator-friendly native plants and seed mixes** in areas including private gardens, public areas, farmland, and forests.	2027
9. TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER CAUSES OF POLLINATOR DECLINE		
9.1	The Commission will, with the support of the European Environment Agency, identify **most vulnerable zones for pollinators in the context of climate change**, and devise and implement targeted mitigation measures. Member States should consider the impact of climate change on pollinators and on their habitats in their national climate adaptation strategies.	Continuous until 2030
9.2	Member States should mitigate the impact of **light pollution** on pollinators through national, regional and local policies. The Commission will promote the uptake of guidance for the public[47] and cities[48] in this regard.	Continuous until 2030
9.3	The European Chemicals Agency will develop guidelines for assessing the risks of **biocides** on pollinators.	2024
PRIORITY III: Mobilising society and promoting strategic planning and cooperation at all levels		
Objectives to be achieved by 2030 *Action plans for reversing the decline of pollinators have been developed and implemented at national, regional and local level. The impact of public policies has been scaled up by effectively mobilising the general public and businesses. The impact of individual measures has been increased through better collaboration and coordination of relevant actors at all levels. The EU is taking the lead at global level to support*		

[47] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Citizens
[48] https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Cities

and facilitate international action on pollinators.		
10. HELP CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES TO ACT		
10.1	The Commission and Member States should continue **raising public awareness** about pollinator decline and engaging the public in action to tackle it, by supporting communication and networking activities.	Continuous until 2030
10.2	The Commission and Member States should promote citizen science and facilitate **public participation** in the monitoring and conservation of pollinators, and in particular should support **youth engagement and participatory governance**.	Continuous until 2030
10.3	The Commission and Member States should promote the uptake of the guides on action by **key business sectors** to protect pollinators[49], including through the EU Business @ Biodiversity Platform.	Continuous until 2030
11. PROMOTE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COOPERATION AT ALL LEVELS		
11.1	Member States should develop, in close collaboration with stakeholders and citizens, **national pollinator strategies** that will coordinate and stimulate efforts across all relevant sectors and policies to reverse the decline of pollinators by 2030. The Commission will support Member States in this regard, including through the EU Biodiversity Platform's working group on pollinators.	2025
11.2	The Commission and Member States should support and encourage action for pollinator conservation at regional and **local levels**, including through the EU cohesion policy funds. Regional and local authorities should develop, in close collaboration with stakeholders and local communities, **action plans** that contribute to EU and national efforts for reversing the decline of pollinators by 2030.	Continuous until 2030
11.3	The **European Committee of the Regions** should support the implementation of the Pollinators Initiative among local and regional authorities, promoting the sharing of knowledge and best practice on how to protect	Continuous until 2030

[49] Guides on action to protect pollinators by the agri-food and beverage; retail; forestry; horticulture; building; landscape architecture; tourism, energy; apiculture; and extractives sectors; see https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Businesses

	pollinators. The Commission and the European Committee of the Regions should cooperate to promote involvement of all levels of government, ensuring adequate support, encouragement and coordination for actions implemented at local and regional level.	
11.4	The Commission will continue to facilitate **multi-actor collaboration** through existing platforms such as the EU Biodiversity Platform's Working Group on Pollinators, the Interreg policy platform, the TAIEX-EIR Peer 2 Peer programme, the EU CAP Network and the EU Urban Greening Platform. The Commission will investigate additional needs for increasing the collaboration capacity between multiple actors at EU level.	Continuous until 2030
11.5	The Commission and Member States should continue to promote effective **international action** on pollinators, including in the framework of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Convention on Biological Diversity and the OECD.	Continuous until 2030