

To Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union
c/o Permanent Representation of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union
61 Avenue de Cortenbergh
1000 Brussels

Cc: European Parliament; DG BUDG, DG ENV, DG INTPA

Brussels, 2 March 2026

RE: Urgent Call to Prioritise Biodiversity in the Next Global Europe Instrument (GEI)

Dear Ambassador Christina Rafti,

We write on behalf of several of the world's leading conservation, environmental, animal health and welfare, and development organisations, as well as research and scientific institutions, youth groups, foundations, companies, livelihood associations, and local authorities, to urge you to prioritise biodiversity in the next Global Europe Instrument (formerly the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe - NDICI-GE).

Healthy, high-integrity ecosystems—and the wildlife they sustain—underpin environmental, social, and economic resilience. They are essential to climate adaptation and mitigation, food and water security, public health and sanitation¹, economic development, jobs and sustainable livelihoods, and long-term peace and human security.² Biodiversity loss, particularly in vulnerable regions, fuels conflict, displacement, and migration pressures, undermining stability.³

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2026 is unequivocal: extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and critical changes to Earth systems represent the three most severe global risks to the economy over the coming decade—surpassing threats such as misinformation and disinformation, adverse outcomes of AI technologies, inequality, cyber insecurity, and societal polarization.⁴

We welcomed President von der Leyen's 2021 commitment to double EU international biodiversity funding to €7 billion by 2027. This pledge sent an important political signal. However, it remains insufficient to tackle the scale of the biodiversity crisis, and under the current 2021–2027 EU budget framework, the Union's commitment to dedicate 10% of annual spending to biodiversity by 2026–2027 is unlikely to be met.⁵

¹ [JPBES Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health](#)

² [A national security assessment: Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security](#)

³ [EU study on the interaction between security and wildlife conservation in sub-Saharan Africa](#)

⁴ [WEF Global Risks Report 2026](#)

⁵ [EU Budget: Performance and Reporting](#)

In this context, we are deeply concerned that a single 30% “Environment and Climate” spending target is proposed for the Global Europe Instrument, without explicitly prioritising biodiversity. While a target is welcome, it is insufficiently ambitious and risks diluting urgently needed action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Climate and environmental objectives cannot be achieved without dedicated, measurable funding in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection and restoration. Furthermore, a healthy environment is a pre-requisite for achieving the objectives of the Global Gateway, namely sustainable and resilient economic development and the green transition. Explicitly prioritising biodiversity within the Global Europe Instrument would not only strengthen the effectiveness of EU external action, but would also be fully consistent with and would implement the international commitments and obligations of the EU and its Member States, through the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework⁶, as well as under other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

We therefore strongly urge you to:

- Raise the **climate and environmental spending target for GEI to at least 50%**, with a minimum of **15% dedicated to biodiversity**;
- Ensure biodiversity is **systematically integrated across all relevant sectors**, including international cooperation, partnerships, trade, and investment policies;
- Embed **biodiversity objectives within the Global Gateway**; and
- Move beyond a “do no harm” approach toward **proactive investment in ecosystem resilience and nature-positive development**.

In an increasingly volatile and fragmented world, the EU must lead with clarity and ambition. Europe’s long-term socio-economic security and competitiveness ultimately depend on a healthy environment—both within the Union and beyond its borders. We count on your leadership to recognise the gravity of these risks and to act decisively.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information and would be pleased to meet with you to discuss these issues in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Janice Weatherley-Singh
Director
Wildlife Conservation Society EU Office



⁶ [UN biodiversity convention: EU reaffirms global pledge to protect a third of the planet by 2030](#)

Dr Chris Baker
Director
Wetlands International Europe



Ilaria Di Silvestre
Director of Policy and Advocacy, Europe
IFAW



Herbert Lust
Managing Director
Conservation International Europe



Andras Krolopp
Interim Policy Director
The Nature Conservancy in Europe



Ester Asin
Director
WWF European Policy Office



Mary Rice
Executive Director
Environmental Investigation Agency UK



Grégory Breton
Director for Europe and West & Central Africa
Panthera



Dr Jamie McCallum
Director, UK and EU
Peace Parks Foundation



Anouk Puymartin
Head of Policy
BirdLife Europe & Central Asia



Anastasiya Timoshyna
Programme Office Director - Europe
TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC

Dr Michel Van Camp
Director General
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences



Ana Casino
Executive Director
Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF)



Chiara Martinelli
Director
Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe



Gauthier Carle
Executive Director
Ocean & Climate Platform



Connah Snape
Board Member
Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)



Emily Iona Stewart
Head of Policy and Advocacy
Global Witness



Peter Marsden
CEO
Concordis International



Catherine Weller
Director, Global Policy and Government Relations
Fauna & Flora



Uli Frank Graebener
Executive Director
Rare Europe gGmbH



Branka Španiček
Strategic Area Leader - Finance and Biodiversity
CEE Bankwatch Network



Dr Arisbe Mendoza Escalante
Director Global Impact, Advocacy & Partnerships
Fairtrade International



Stefan Hörmann
Director
Global Nature Fund



Myfanwy Griffith
Executive Director
European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA)



Nokraoui Moulay El Mostapha
Coordinator
Alliance Civile pour l'Environnement Ammelne (ACEA)



Frans Schepers
Executive Director
Rewilding Europe



Fany Kuiru Castro
Coordinadora General
Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca
Amazónica - COICA



Dr Robbert Boudewijns
Coordinator
Leuven One Health Institute



Linda Van Elsacker
Zoological Director
Antwerp Zoo Society



Abubaker Mansori
General Manager
Edama for Nature Conservation



Javier Márquez Barrientos
Director Ejecutivo
Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza



Dr Mark Jones
Head of Policy
Born Free Foundation



Zana Vokopola
Executive Director
Urban Research Institute



Jean-Pascal Guéry
President
Conservatoire pour la Protection des Primates



Dr James Danoff-Burg
Director of Conservation
The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens



Antonio Alcántara Bellón
Presidente
Asociación para la Supervivencia de la Naturaleza y el Medio Ambiente (ANDALUS)



Carolina Schäffer
Vice President
Associação de Preservação do Meio Ambiente e da Vida (Apremavi)



Dr Najoua Bouraoui
Head
Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable de Bizerte (APEDDUB)



Jane da Mosto
President and Executive Director
We are here Venice ETS



Rym Zakhama-Sraieb
President
Association Tunisienne de Taxonomie (ATUTAX)



José M. Rey Benayas
President of the Board
International Foundation for Ecosystem Restoration (FIRE)



Antonio Aguilera Nieves
Secretario General
Fundación Savia por el Compromiso y los Valores



Devrol Dupigny
Head of Public Policy
Animal Advocacy and Protection (AAP)



Gregorio Tzoc Norato
Director Ejecutivo y Representante Legal
Asociación de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente
(CDRO)



Marcelino Díaz Vázquez
Manager
Asociación para la Defensa de la Naturaleza y los Recursos de
Extremadura (ADENEX)



Carmen Acedo
President
Sociedad Botánica Española (SEBOT)



Eva Graciá Martínez
President
Asociación Herpetológica Española



Sarra Melki
Chargée de projets
Green Compass



Albert Vahlhaus
Managing Director
Cleanwave Foundation



Felipe Martínez García
President
Sociedad Española de Biología de la Conservación de Plantas



Prof Dr Alister Scott
Executive Director
Global Rewilding Alliance (GRA)



Dr Manu Monge-Ganuzas
Executive Secretary
ProGEO



Pierre Celestin Nsengiyumva
Chairperson
Sabyinyo Community Livelihood Association (SACOLA)



Ernesto Álvarez Justo
President
Grupo de Rehabilitación de la Fauna Autóctona y sus hábitats
(GREFA)



Jean Jalbert
Director General
Tour du Valat



Guillermo Palomero García
President
Fundación Oso Pardo



Maud Lelievre
Déléguée Générale
Les Eco Maires



Astrid Vital-Durand
Secrétaire Générale
Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour l'environnement



Christophe Lépine
Président
Conservatoire d'espaces naturels des Hauts-de-France



Dr Frédéric Di Meglio
Président
Fédération Française d'Etudes et de Sports Sous-Marins



Sergio Lopez
Founder and CEO
Wildlife Angel International



Galitt Kenan
Directrice
Jane Goodall Institute France



David Sève
Directeur de la Fondation et des engagements
Fondation Nature & Découvertes



Pierre Gay
Président
Bioparc Conservation



Jean-Philippe Siblet
Président
Association des Naturalistes de la Vallée du Loing
et du massif de Fontainebleau - ANVL



Barbara Mathevon
Directrice
MIRACETI



Rachel Calvert
Présidente
A Rocha France



Jose Maria Musmeci
President
Patagonia Natural Foundation



Ernestine Lüdeke
President
Fundación Monte Mediterráneo



Jon Paul Rodríguez
President
Provita



Benoit de Thoisy
Directeur
Association Kwata



Baptiste Mulot
Directeur général
Association Beauval Nature



Laure d'Astorg
Directrice Générale
Alliance pour la Préservation des Forêts



Julien Pierre
Président
Play for Nature



Raúl I. De Tapia Martín
Project Manager
Fundación Tormes-EB



Luc Mathot
Executive Director
Conservation Justice



William Lebedel
Président
Friendship France



Marc Elvinger
Président
Friendship Luxembourg



Maria Cecilia Wey de Brito
Director
Instituto Ekos Brasil



Julie Simon
Directrice
Ucoopia



Neyda Radouane
Directrice
Coral Guardian



Arnaud Greth
Président
Noé



Dr Monica V. Biondo
Head of Research and Conservation
Fondation Franz Weber



Daniela Freyer
Head of Policy
ProWildlife



Caroline Herman and Joanna Wils
Belgian UN Youth Representatives for Sustainable Development
Vlaamse Jeugdraad / Flemish Youth Council



Cristian Barros Diaz
Executive Director
Fundación para la Conservación e investigación JAPU



Pablo Lloret Zamora
Executive Director
Fundación Internacional para la Promoción del Desarrollo
Sustentable Futuro Latinoamericano



Georgina Lamb
Chief Executive Officer
David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation



Simon Jolivet
Président
Société Française pour le Droit de l'Environnement



Jean-Claude Futhazar
Président
Société Réunionnaise pour l'Étude et la Protection de
l'Environnement - Île de la Réunion



Tom Daune
Directeur Général
Parc animalier et botanique - École de Branféré



Yolaine De la Bigne
Porte-parole
ASPAS - Association pour la protection des animaux sauvages



Salek Aouissa
Président
Réseau Association Khnifiss



Marion Hammerl
Board of Directors
Food for Biodiversity



Cécile Erny
Director
AFdPZ – French Association of Zoos



Dr Thilo Liesenjohann
Managing Director
BioConsult SH GmbH & Co. KG



Anne-Lise Melki
Managing Director
Biotope SAS



Nicholas Tompkins
Chief Executive Officer
HiDef

