

COUNTDOWN 2010

Halt the loss of biodiversity

Countdown 2010 Strategic Framework



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Acronyms

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSF	Countdown Strategic Framework
EC	European Commission
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
EEA	European Environment Agency
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
KRB	Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity
MfM	Message from Malahide
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PA	Protected Areas
PEBLDS	Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
PEEN	Pan-European Ecological Network
PoW	Programme of Work
ROfE	Regional Office for Europe of IUCN
SSC	IUCN Species Survival Commission
UN ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Summary

The goal of Countdown 2010 is that all European governments, at every level, have taken the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

All governmental and non-governmental organisations and private sector companies who are committed to this goal are invited to join the Countdown 2010 alliance, for which the Regional Office for Europe of IUCN (the World Conservation Union) is providing the Secretariat.

Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, faces multiple challenges in Europe. In the west, habitat loss and fragmentation through agricultural practices, urban growth and transport networks are the primary threats. In the east, the main threats include the intensification of farming and forestry and the illegal harvesting of flora and fauna. Many species, including once common domestic breeds, are in decline. As biodiversity is lost, the quality of human life in Europe is increasingly at risk.

Recognising the major threats that these trends pose to their citizens, European governments have committed themselves to a series of global and regional agreements aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity. They range from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals to the Kyiv Biodiversity Commitments of Eurasian Environment Ministers and the targets agreed by European Union biodiversity stakeholders at their Malahide meeting in 2004.

The objectives of Countdown 2010 are to encourage and support the full implementation of all the laws and binding international commitments on halting biodiversity loss that European governments have signed; to champion and support the full implementation of all necessary supplementary actions, especially those in the Message from Malahide and the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity; and to demonstrate clearly what progress Europe makes in meeting its 2010 commitments.

Through the activities of its members and their prominent use of its logo, Countdown 2010 aims to gain maximum public attention across Europe for the challenge of halting biodiversity loss. It will produce regular reviews of biodiversity threats and trends in an annual summary report to the European Parliament. It will develop an overview of agreed commitments and targets across the whole of Europe. Using an annual 'scorecard' or 2010 biodiversity barometer, it will report on the progress being made in fulfilling these commitments. It will develop a Red List of threatened species in Europe. It will convene environmental experts on specific issues, facilitate the coordination of sectoral activities and coordinate periodic conferences on themes connected with biodiversity loss and conservation. It will urge the EU Council and Presidencies to give biodiversity loss high priority, and coordinate Countdown 2010 actions by the Presidencies. It will help to coordinate NGO lobbying efforts on biodiversity issues. It will stimulate, encourage and publicise the many efforts being made by companies, non-governmental organisations and government agencies at all levels to combat biodiversity loss, including the work of Countdown 2010 model regions like Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands.

1 Introduction

Launched in May 2004, **Countdown 2010** is a strategic alliance between governmental and non-governmental partners who are committed to halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe. Its **goal** is that

All European governments, at every level, have taken the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

As is shown in the box on the next page, Countdown 2010 has been officially endorsed at several high-level European meetings, most notably in June 2004 by the Council (Environment) of the European Union.

Countdown 2010 will act as an independent communications and technical support instrument to:

- focus attention on the importance of global 2010 commitments¹ for the EU and the whole of Europe;
- monitor Europe's progress in meeting these commitments.

To achieve its goal, Countdown 2010 aims to focus Europe's attention on the Kyiv Biodiversity commitments, the Malahide targets, and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas¹. It will forge close alliances with the European media for this purpose. The initiative is aimed at two primary **target groups**:

- key European authorities and decision-makers: governments, parliaments, public officials, private sector management;
- organisations in European society with the commitment and expertise to help achieve the goal, including IUCN Members and other conservation-related organisations.

Countdown 2010 **adds value** by:

- **raising awareness** among Pan-European stakeholders that so far have low interest of awareness of biodiversity, and in particular of the 2010 target;
- **facilitating and coordinating action** by, and building synergies between, the many committed organisations in order to raise the profile of the 2010 target and to critically review the progress made in reaching it;
- providing **knowledge management** to enhance and facilitate existing work aimed at reaching the 2010 target;
- **highlighting work done, and work that needs to be done**, in order to achieve the 2010 target.

This Strategic Framework explains how Countdown 2010 is structured and how it will work in order to halt the loss of biodiversity across Europe by 2010. Further details of the commitments Europe has made are available from the web sites referred to in the notes at the end of this document. The latest news on Countdown 2010 can be seen at www.countdown2010.net.

¹ See box on next page.

Global biodiversity agreements to which Europe is committed include the Convention on Biological Diversity, which aims to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010; the agreements reached at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (<http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>) and chapter 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.developmentgoals.org/Environment.htm>).

At the **Gothenburg European Council** in September 2001, the EU Heads of State committed themselves to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, and made this a goal in the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development http://europa.eu.int/comm/gothenburg_council/index_en.htm

In the biodiversity resolution of the **Fifth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**, May 2003, over 40 Eurasian Environment Ministers signed the commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity at all levels by the year 2010. http://www.countdown2010.net/documents/biodiv_resolution_Kiev.pdf

The Stakeholders' Conference on Biodiversity and the European Union held at Malahide, Ireland in May 2004 produced the **Message from Malahide** on halting the decline of biodiversity – priority objectives and targets for 2010. www.eu2004.ie/templates/document_file.asp?id=17810. Countdown 2010 was endorsed in the Message from Malahide. Its objective 17.3 refers to “Ten thematic conferences under the ‘Countdown 2010’ initiative (launched at Malahide in 2004) to halt the loss of biodiversity supported from 2004 to 2010, and parallel processes in other regions, or by other partners encouraged”

The Council for the **Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy**, meeting in May 2004, identified Countdown 2010 as one of the Leading Actors to contribute to “organise international symposia on the integration of the PEEN [Pan-European Ecological Network] into sectoral policies in order to produce concrete recommendations and guidelines. Support legislation processed in countries. Organise these symposia together with the sectors in question”.

The **Council (Environment) of the European Union**, meeting in June 2004, (<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/04/st10/st10997.en04.pdf>) endorsed Countdown 2010 in Point 13, which “WELCOMES the Countdown 2010 initiative, launched by a partnership of civil organisations, including the Irish Presidency, the Commissioner for the Environment and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and other key actors at the Malahide Conference, as an important sensitising initiative to the significance of biodiversity loss across the globe and as a means to act as an independent monitor of progress towards the 2010 targets and ENCOURAGES Member States, Commission and civil society to support the Countdown 2010 initiative”.

2 Timeframe and scope

Countdown 2010 runs from May 2004 to December 2010. Its scope is the whole of the European region defined by the UN ECE (see map).



3 Objectives

Countdown 2010 has the following three objectives:

Objective 1:

The full implementation of all existing relevant legislation and international binding commitments is encouraged and supported.

Objective 2:

The full implementation of all necessary supplementary actions, in particular those in the Message from Malahide and the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity, is championed and supported.

Objective 3:

The level of achievement of the 2010 commitments is clearly demonstrated.

4 Instruments and activities

To achieve its objectives, Countdown 2010 will adopt a range of instruments and undertake a number of activities. These include:

- development of an overview of agreed biodiversity targets and commitments at the pan-European level;
- production of an annual 'scorecard' or '2010 biodiversity barometer' that tracks Europe's performance with respect to the CBD Programme of Work, the Message from Malahide and the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity;
- production of an annual summary report to the European Parliament on biodiversity trends and threats;
- development of a European Red List of Threatened Species;
- facilitating measurement of the ecological footprints of European countries;
- annual or biannual conferences on Countdown themes;
- facilitating coordination of different sectors' biodiversity activities, with particular emphasis on linkages with sectors not directly involved in environmental or conservation issues;
- coordination of Countdown 2010 action by EU Presidencies;
- promote attention by the European Council to Countdown 2010 targets and actions;
- coordination of NGO lobbying efforts with regard to Countdown 2010;
- convening experts on specific biodiversity issues;
- promotion of, and support for, Countdown 2010 model regions throughout Europe;
- awareness raising and coordination of Countdown 2010 impact through allocation of logo use rights and monitoring of organisations' use of the logo.

5 Organisation

5.1 Structure

Countdown 2010 is guided by a core **Executive Group** of participating organisations. The day-to-day organisation of the initiative lies with the **Secretariat**. A broader **Steering Group** of participating organisations meets periodically to review the overall direction of the Countdown. At its first meeting in February 2004, the Steering Group requested the IUCN Regional Office for Europe (ROfE) to take on the role of Countdown 2010 Secretariat.

5.2 Principles

The Countdown 2010 organisational model is based on the following principles:

- Countdown 2010 is a strategic alliance with a minimum of bureaucratic structure and process.
- Countdown 2010 will not replicate existing work, structures or procedures. It aims to add value through facilitation, coordination and publicity.
- The Secretariat will only undertake those Countdown activities that the participants are unable to undertake. The Secretariat will therefore seek to involve as many organisations and to form as many strategic partnerships as possible in order to achieve the objectives of the Countdown.
- All Countdown 2010 work will be underpinned by sound science and/or relevant practical conservation experience, and will be carried out to the highest standards.

5.3 The Steering Group

Membership of the Steering Group is open to all governmental and non-governmental organisations that are actively contributing to the objectives of Countdown 2010. Applications should be submitted to the Secretariat, which will process and decide whether to approve them.

Meeting once or twice a year, the Steering Group will perform the following functions:

- serve as a forum for all Countdown partners, bringing together different types of stakeholder;
- present ideas for Countdown themes for the attention of the Executive Group and Secretariat;
- identify other matters that require the attention of the Executive Group and the Secretariat;
- suggest members of the Executive Group (who are then invited by the Secretariat);
- serve as ambassadors for Countdown 2010.

Membership of the Steering Group will continue until December 2010, unless the member withdraws earlier or its membership has been revoked by the Executive Group.

It is not compulsory for members of the Steering Group to attend its meetings. If they do so, members are generally required to meet all the expenses of their attendance. Those members that are unable to attend meetings will be encouraged to participate actively through other channels of communication.

5.4 The Executive Group

Members of the Executive Group will be appointed by the Secretariat. They will comprise:

- a rotating representative of the EU Presidency;
- an observer from the European Commission;
- a rotating representative of the PEBLDS Bureau;
- a rotating representative of the Countdown Regions;

- a small number of representatives of Countdown alliance members, appointed on the recommendation of the Steering Group.

The Executive Group will perform the following functions:

- give strategic guidance to the Secretariat and oversee the achievement of the programme;
- provide evaluation and quality control;
- decide on themes to be promoted during each EU Presidency;
- identify future Countdown activities;
- advise and assist the Secretariat on communication and on financial aspects;
- when requested by the Secretariat, decide on the use of the Countdown 2010 logo for activities by Countdown partners and other organisations;
- revoke the Steering Group membership of organisations that deviate from Countdown principles, no longer meet membership criteria or have misused the Countdown logo (see below);
- serve as ambassadors for Countdown 2010.

Members of the Executive Group (other than rotating representatives) will serve for two years and may be invited by the Secretariat to serve for further terms.

Members of the Executive Group are expected to attend all its meetings, at their own expense.

5.5 The Secretariat

Keeping in mind the principle that it will only undertake those Countdown activities that other participants are unable to undertake; the Secretariat will:

- provide overall day-to-day co-ordination of Countdown 2010;
- undertake financial and human resource administration of the programme;
- strive to increase the number of participating organisations throughout Europe, but with particular emphasis on Eastern and Southern Europe and the CIS;
- invite participating organisations to become members of the Executive Group;
- communicate intensively with Steering and Executive Group members to build their understanding and ownership of the Countdown;
- promote long- and short-term secondments of staff and interns from Steering and Executive Group members to the Secretariat;
- develop a Communications/Media Strategy;
- help prepare Countdown events;
- authorise use of the Countdown 2010 logo for fund raising purposes (see below).

6 Logo

The Countdown 2010 logo is being registered as a trademark. To join the Countdown 2010 alliance and be authorised to use the logo on their web sites and publications, interested organisations should certify that:

- they can **add value** in at least one of the ways outlined in Section 1 above, and that each of the activities for which they use the logo will do this;
- they can contribute to achievement of at least one of the Countdown's **objectives**.

A self-certification system will be placed on the Countdown 2010 web site for this purpose.

For each use of the logo, participating organisations should:

- inform the Secretariat in advance;
- inform the Secretariat about the outcomes of the activity for which the logo was used;
- agree that the activity (and relevant reports) be publicised in the Countdown newsletter and on the Countdown web page, and be stored in the Countdown online library.

The Secretariat will submit an annual listing of organisations using the logo to the Steering Group.

Organisations may only use the Countdown 2010 logo for fund raising purposes if they are members of the Steering Group and if they have obtained prior consent from the Secretariat.

The Executive Group may withdraw any organisation's right to use the Countdown 2010 logo.

7 Finance strategy

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, English Nature, the Brabant-European Partnership for Sustainability and IUCN have all pledged funds to Countdown 2010. Negotiations are ongoing with the European Commission and with the Ministries of Environment of several countries. Key elements of the finance strategy for Countdown 2010 are:

- approaches to a broader spectrum of potential funding agencies in European governments, including environmental, agricultural, heritage, trade, marine, research and energy agencies;
- priority attention to core funding for Secretariat operations, including media and communications activities;
- promotion of staff secondments to the Secretariat from members of the Steering and Executive Groups and from other partners;
- promotion of partnerships with the private sector;
- flexibility in linking potential donor interest to the needs of the programme.

A detailed budget for Countdown 2010 is available on request from the Secretariat. Agencies that are potentially interested in supporting the Countdown are encouraged to contact the Secretariat to discuss their specific interests and ways in which they might be matched with one or more elements of the budget. The Secretariat is committed to proactive approaches to ensuring that the interests of both the donor agency and the Countdown are met through such funding arrangements.

8 The way forward

The founding partners in the Countdown 2010 alliance have launched a vital effort to help ensure that Europe meets its commitment to halt biodiversity loss. They urge every other organisation that shares this commitment to join the alliance and work together to meet its objectives. The Secretariat welcomes all expressions of interest in becoming part of Countdown 2010 and in helping to fund its work, and will respond proactively to ensure the mutual achievement of targets.

For further information, and to discuss your potential contributions to Countdown 2010, please contact:

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