



WWF's work in Europe



Highlights 2006

Introduction

The year 2006 will probably be looked back on as the turning point when climate change fully arrived on the European Union's political agenda. Spurred by the Al Gore film "An Inconvenient Truth", Sir Nicholas Stern's report on the costs of climate change and leadership from a few already committed political leaders, politicians began to wake up to the enormity - and urgency - of the challenges if we are to keep temperatures 2°C below pre-industrial levels. Other pressing environmental issues fared less well in the battle for political attention. The cutting down of forests under pressure from agricultural conversion, the continuous loss of habitats and species, including the depletion of fisheries, and the challenge of supplying freshwater to millions of people worldwide are still crying out for political attention. This is WWF's job for the coming years. We must turn climate change targets and ambitions entered into by EU Heads of State into concrete actions on the ground, including new legislation and changes to the EU budget where this is needed. And we must make sure that political 'conversions' also happen quickly for these other environmental issues which are affecting just as profoundly the well-being of millions of people around the world every day, but which currently receive far less attention.



Tony Long
Director, WWF European Policy Office

1. EU Climate Change and Energy Policy

Climate change is one of the largest threats to sustainable development worldwide. Cutting greenhouse gases, using the full potential of cleaner energies and rational energy consumption are the only ways forward to halt this trend. In 2006, the EU prepared for the first time a comprehensive energy and climate security policy package. Following an ambitious proposal from the European Commission in January 2007, the EU agreed to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30% by 2020 based on 1990 emission levels. The EU also decided to have a 20% renewable energy target by 2020 across all energy consumption sectors and to explore the options for far-reaching new policies on energy conservation and efficiency. WWF pushed strongly for this package and welcomes the agreement made by European decision-makers.

2. Towards a sustainable EU Fisheries Policy

More than 80% of Europe's fish stocks are overexploited. Excessive quotas, disproportionate fishing capacity and wasteful fishing methods prevent the EU Common Fisheries Policy from being sustainable. WWF has been leading the call for the reduction of fish quotas for endangered fish species. At the Fisheries Councils in 2006, Ministers agreed to phase out deep-sea fishing over the next 4 years and to reduce cod quotas in the North Sea. The EU also adopted a new "EU Fisheries Fund" to support fishing activities between 2007 and 2013. WWF pressed to reduce the harmful impact of this subsidy regime and to strengthen the new Marine Strategy Directive, which now includes criteria for a "Good Environmental Status" of Europe's seas.



3. Development Cooperation Policy

Environmental policy and actions are a cornerstone in the fight to reduce poverty, improve human well-being and achieve sustainable development worldwide. WWF has been analyzing the shortcomings in EU development policy and has called for a strengthening of environmental integration in development aid and external relations. WWF has also stressed the importance of local civil society participation and sustainable management of natural resources. In 2006, the EU developed important new requirements for environmental assessment of development aid and the public availability of environmental documents.

4. A better future for nature thanks to a solid LIFE+

LIFE+, the EU funding line dedicated to nature and environment, is an important financial tool for the protection of endangered species and habitats in Europe. 2006 was a crucial year for WWF. We argued successfully that biodiversity should be included in LIFE+. WWF convinced the European Parliament and the Council (EU Ministers of Environment) to introduce a funding pillar dedicated solely to nature and biodiversity, representing about 40% of the total LIFE+ budget.

5. Greening EU Regional Funding

The EU Regional Funds, contributing to the development of the European regions, account for more than 30% of the EU annual budget. These funds, if properly directed and managed, can become a real tool for sustainable development. WWF's aim is to ensure that 30% of the Regional Funds go to measures that fulfill environmental objectives (e.g. climate change mitigation, freshwater, habitats and species protection). WWF published a concise handbook with practical recommendations for the EU funding programming period 2007-2013.

6. Saving nature with EU neighbours

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aims to create peaceful borders and stronger ties with Europe's eastern and southern neighbouring countries, for instance in the Mediterranean, Caucasus and Danube delta regions. For WWF, the ENP represents a major opportunity to promote nature conservation, to manage natural resources sustainably and to cut down on wasteful consumption and pollution in some of its key eco-regions. WWF welcomed the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) regulation adopted in October 2006 by the Council which now offers genuine sustainable development opportunities and environmental protection in the eligible countries.

7. The EU Chemicals legislation REACH and WWF's DetoX Campaign

After years of chemicals mismanagement resulting in the widespread contamination of wildlife, humans and the environment, WWF saw the EU's new chemical legislation known as REACH as a unique opportunity to close the knowledge gap on chemicals and secure a safer management system. Through its DetoX Campaign, WWF has been

strongly campaigning for industry to provide enough safety information on the chemical substances it produces, and for the most hazardous chemicals to be phased out. With a political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council in December 2006 and REACH entering into force in June 2007, Europe sets a first modest step towards a new approach to chemicals regulation which will have worldwide impacts.

8. Communications highlights

Communicating effectively is key to raise awareness about environmental problems and to support WWF's work in Europe. In 2006, WWF launched several successful communications activities, including:

• WWF "Chain of Contamination" report and DetoX TV Spot

In the light of the DetoX campaign to achieve a stronger EU chemicals legislation, WWF launched a European report in September 2006 denouncing the presence of several hazardous man-made chemicals in our daily food. WWF also published a TV spot featuring 4 leading Members of the European Parliament from different political groups who supported WWF's view. The spot was launched in the European Parliament and broadcast on Euronews, EUX TV, Europe by Satellite as well as on Hungarian, Italian and Finnish television stations.

• Leading EU economists sign WWF declaration on emissions trading

In November 2006, more than fifty leading European economists signed a WWF statement declaring that emissions trading is the appropriate instrument to tackle climate change and reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by large polluting industries. At a joint press conference, EU Commissioner for the Environment, Stavros Dimas, also signed the statement.

• WWF report about "Conflicting EU funds"

A WWF report issued in March 2006, "Conflicting EU funds", showed that despite the EU commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, large sums of European money are being spent on the construction of roads, dams and irrigation projects, threatening endangered species in Europe. WWF urged that EU funds include priority measures to protect biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites, and that Member States develop sound national programmes that contribute to the 2010 goal.

Photos: Page 2, top left + top right © WWF-Canon / Michel Gunther • bottom left © E. Scagnetti • bottom right © WWF-Canon / Michel Gunther. Page 3, top left © WWF-Canon / Sánchez & Lope • top right © WWF-Spain / Jesús Cobo • bottom left © WWF-Canon / Hartmut Jungius • bottom right © WWF

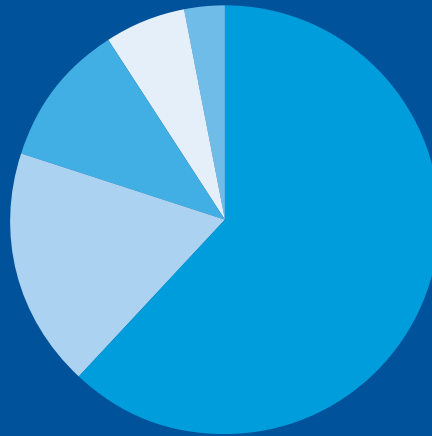


WWF European Policy Office (EPO) was established in Brussels in 1989. It is the 'embassy' to the European Union for the global WWF network, one of the largest environmental conservation organisations active in more than 100 countries. WWF-EPO contributes to the achievement of WWF's global mission by helping to shape a European Union policy that has a positive impact on the European and global environment. WWF-EPO is part of the Green 10, a coalition of the ten leading environmental NGOs represented at EU level.



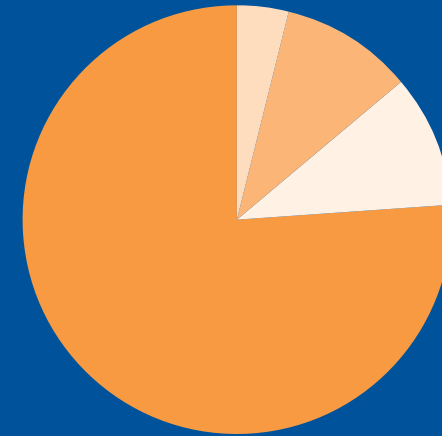
The WWF European Policy Office gratefully acknowledges Activity Funding support from the Commission of the European Communities

WWF-EPO financial year 2006*



INCOME: 3.7 million euros*

- 62% WWF
- 18% European Commission
- 11% Companies
- 6% Foundations
- 3% Other sources



EXPENDITURE: 3.7 million euros*

- 76% Conservation policy programmes
- 10% Management and coordination
- 10% Administration
- 4% Communications

* Rounded up to next 100.000 euros. Financial year covers the period 01 July 2005 to 30 June 2006.

Published May 2007 by WWF, World Wide Fund for Nature (Formerly World Wildlife Fund), Brussels, Belgium. Any reproduction in full or in part of this publication must mention the title and credit the above-mentioned publisher as the copyright owner. © text 2007, WWF. All rights reserved. Front cover photo: © European Commission. Printed on 100% recycled paper. Layout: beëlzePub, Brussels.



for a living planet®

WWF is one of the world's largest independent conservation organisations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF European Policy Office

Avenue de Tervurenlaan, 36 Box 12
1040 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 743 88 00
Fax: +32 2 743 88 19
E-mail: wwf-epo@wwfepo.org
www.panda.org/eu