Title

In Europe, investments in biodiversity conservation must be massively increased. The EU needs first of all to ensure sufficient financing for the Natura 2000 network, the cornerstone of European biodiversity policy and therefore a budget priority for the EU.

Studies show that investing now in safeguarding and restoring functioning ecosystems and biodiversity provides high returns, whereas, the costs of inaction on biodiversity loss are by far bigger. A study commissioned by the European Commission estimates the **cost in Europe for policy inaction in not halting the loss of biodiversity will be 1 trillion Euros annually by 2050**.

The EU needs to save citizens' money in times of austerity. Several case studies estimated that **the EU's Natura 2000 network generates economic benefits about seven times higher than its costs**. In addition, Natura 2000 has the potential to create employment even if this is not its primary aim. With an investment of 1 billion EUR of EU subsidies, investing in the Natura 2000 network can create five to nine times more jobs than current spending policy of agriculture subsidies (29,000 jobs compared to 3,000 – 6,000 jobs). Investment in the Natura 2000 network would lead to diverse types of employment including increasing jobs in the agricultural sector.

Despite this evidence the mobilisation of financial resources in the EU is very slow and insufficient to meet agreed biodiversity targets. The costs of a fully operational Natura 2000 network are estimated to be less than 6 billion EUR annually for the whole EU and around 4% of the EU budget. Environmental NGOs suggest that the EU budget should cover 50-75% of these costs, while the remainder should be financed by EU Member States. However, studies show that so far less than one fifth

of Natura 2000 costs are met by the EU Budget, with shares from Member States share likely to be even lower.

Related topics

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- Development aid and International commitments
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Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the **centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy**. It is an EUwide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. More details.

BirdLife Assessment of progress of the EU 2020 Strategy

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