

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

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