



JUGEND

DEMANDS OF THE WWF YOUTH GERMANY



HANDS **OFF**
NATURE

NATURE CONSERVATION LAWS PROTECT US ALL!

In 2022 alone, natural disasters caused economic losses totalling €52.3 billion, while failure to implement environmental legislation resulted in healthcare costs of €180 billion per year. We know that an intact natural environment is an indispensable basis of life, without which our future would be hopeless.

We call on the MEPs, the European Commission and the German federal government to ensure that the EU adheres to the ambitious targets of the Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the UN environmental and climate agreements (e.g. the CBD and UNFCCC) in order to preserve our natural world for both younger and future generations. Central nature conservation laws must not be abolished, watered down, undermined or otherwise weakened under the pretext of a reduction in bureaucracy.

We recognise the geopolitical and security-related necessity of economic competitiveness. As a matter of fact, we too see room for improvement with regard to administrative procedures, digitalisation and the effective implementation of nature conservation legislation. However, we are firmly opposed to regression and inconsistency in nature conservation, as well as to U-turns when pursuing objectives and laws that have already been adopted. **The economy needs an environment that can function in the long term .**

As the WWF Youth Germany, we therefore demand ...

- 1. ... that the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Birds and Habitats Directives be consistently implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the EU Biodiversity Strategy.** Intact ecosystems act as a protective shield against natural disasters and provide vital ecosystem services such as clean drinking water and healthy soils, which is why it is essential that degraded natural environments be restored. Without specific protective measures, such as those required by the Birds and Habitats Directives or the Water Framework Directive alongside the Nature Restoration Regulation, the target of putting restoration measures in place on at least 20 per cent of EU land areas and at least 20 per cent of EU marine areas by 2030 cannot be achieved. The Birds and Habitats Directives were found fit for purpose in the 2016 Fitness Check. The urgency to implement the EU Birds and Habitats Directives has never been higher than today. Therefore, the ongoing stress test can only reaffirm that these laws are essential for protecting the nature and ecosystem services people depend on.

- 2. ... that European waters be protected more vigorously, including against pollution with PFAS chemicals, for example.** According to the Water Framework Directive (WFD), a good water status is expected to be achieved by 2027, a target we are currently still a long way from achieving. Weakening the law as currently proposed by the European Commission runs counter to the Water Resilience Strategy adopted in 2025 and harms industries that depend on clean water in the long term, such as the chemical industry. In this context, it is also essential to uphold the progressive REACH standards (Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) in order to ensure transparency.
- 3. ... that the Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) move into action, be applied by companies and be enforced in the Member States at the end of 2026.** Global deforestation – for example, of the Amazon rainforest – must be stopped and the effects of climate change reduced. The EUDR must therefore be implemented in full – in time and in good quality.
- 4. ... that the current, scientifically flawed and bureaucratic pesticide authorisation process not be watered down, but made more transparent and scientifically sound (Pesticide Regulation, PR).** To date, the aspect of biodiversity conservation has not been taken into account in the authorisation process, as entire groups of organisms have been omitted, and individual active substances have only been considered in isolation. The regular reassessment of approved pesticides should under no circumstances be abandoned or scaled back, as it has proved its worth in practice. New scientific findings can only take effect through repeated approval procedures, which ensure that approvals are not suspended at a level of science and technology that is 20 years out of date, for example. Approval studies should furthermore be published to enable independent research.
- 5. ... that the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) revised in 2024 not be watered down again.** The most environmentally harmful industrial plants should always use the best available technology so as not to exceed the lowest possible emission limit values. In the interest of forward-looking planning, both the environmental management system and the obligation on plant operators to draw up transformation plans by 2030 should also be retained in their entirety.
- 6. ... that environmental assessments not be rendered ineffective by the Regulation on Speeding Up Environmental Assessments. Nature conservation law must not be circumvented through the back door in the name of speeding up proceedings.** There is a risk of this occurring when environmental assessments are discarded or combined.

The same applies when construction projects are granted blanket priority over nature on the basis of a fictitious ‘overriding public interest’; when deadlines are shortened disproportionately; when approval is simply assumed when administrative bottlenecks occur; or when judicial review is curtailed by means of the extinction of the exercise of a right. Public participation must furthermore be ensured in order to incorporate the citizens’ local knowledge and understanding of issues into the planning process; to gain public acceptance; and to prevent delays.

Berlin, 11 September 2026

Elianor Sket and Felicia Engel
WWF Youth Spokeswomen

WWF Germany
Reinhardtstrasse 18 | 10117 Berlin
jugend@wwf.de | [wwf.de](https://www.wwf.de)