

BIODIVERSITY: EMPHASISING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

For a long time, biodiversity or biological diversity has been presented as the preservation of emblematic species at risk of extinction. In fact, biodiversity encompasses the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems in interaction. This group of living beings, of which humans are part, constitutes the biosphere.

Biodiversity, today acknowledged as being essential to human development, has been subject to ever increasing attack. Numerous studies have shown that reducing the quantity and diversity of living beings, which includes us, reduces their capacity to adapt and evolve, affecting the services provided by biodiversity, vital to human societies.

Protecting biodiversity is therefore a response to an ecological, economic and social imperative. Humanity as a whole, and each country taken in isolation, should prove itself to be up to this social challenge, reconsidering its relationship with living beings and promoting different ways of economic and social development.

For the ESEC, the current objective should be that of growth, developing and encouraging solutions that contribute to competitive and effective production, including a high level of social commitment and having a positive impact on the environment. Biodiversity is a source of both profits and costs, whence the crucial importance of properly considering its integration into business strategies. The ESEC, in a follow up to this opinion, will explore the solutions necessary to meet this objective.

In October 2010 in Nagoya, at the conference of the parties to the Nagoya Convention on Biological Diversity, a range of ambitious texts were adopted, including a strategic plan accompanied by precise objectives. Taken up in the European Union strategy currently in the process of being adopted, they have also been integrated by the Comité multi-acteurs d'élaboration de la nouvelle Stratégie nationale pour la biodiversité (Multi-Party Committee responsible for drawing up the new national biodiversity strategy) (SNB). The 2011-2020 strategy, as presented on 19 May 2011, does not include sufficient guarantees for the integration of goals into all public policies, or vis a vis the resources that will be assigned to this.

After a referral by the Prime Minister in a national and international framework marked by France's commitments at Nagoya and the adoption of the SNB, the ESEC makes its recommendations while insisting on the role and involvement of the different types of parties as key factors of success.

In the presentation which follows, the eleven thematic recommendations of the opinion have been grouped into three main pillars, referring to this context and this concern.

Preserving and restoring biodiversity is a societal challenge.

It involves reconsidering our relationship with living beings and ensuring a different means of economic and social development for humanity.

A proper understanding of the challenge is therefore essential.



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RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO FRANCE'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

- Signing up to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources, sharing the benefits of their use (APA) and implementing them
- Actively contributing to the search for innovative financing, optimising existing resources and assigning resources on an international and European scale
- Finalising and consolidating the setting up of the plateforme intergouvernementale scientifique et politique sur la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) (IPBES)

The economic consequences of declining biodiversity have been assessed within a range falling between *située entre*

1,350 and 3,500 billion Euro per year

source : Report in the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE FRENCH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

- Increasing the mobilisation of the government as a whole and the exemplary contribution of the State
- Increasing the mobilisation of regional authorities and the consistency of actions
- Increasing research efforts
- Increasing educational and training efforts
- Acknowledging and valuing the wealth of biodiversity in Overseas territories

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE MOBILISATION OF KEY PLAYERS

- Supporting and developing the mobilisation of citizens and not-for-profit organisations
- Increasing the mobilisation of economic entities
- Improving and expanding governance

60 %

of services provided by ecosystems have been damaged or used in an unsustainable way

75 %

of fishing stocks have been overexploited or significantly reduced

75 %

of the genetic diversity of agricultural cultures has been lost worldwide since 1990

source : European Commission