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The Nature Restoration Regulation in Sweden

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Today:

- EU's Nature Restoration Regulation
- Sweden's National Restoration Plan
- What's next..?





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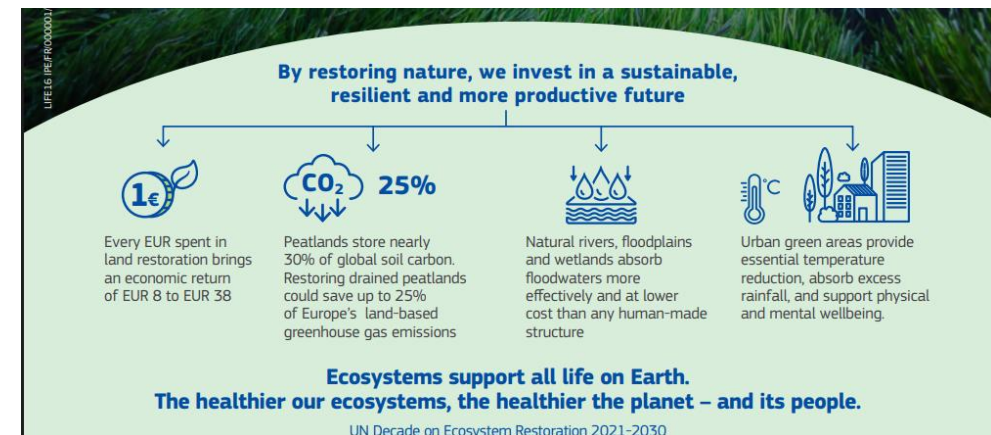
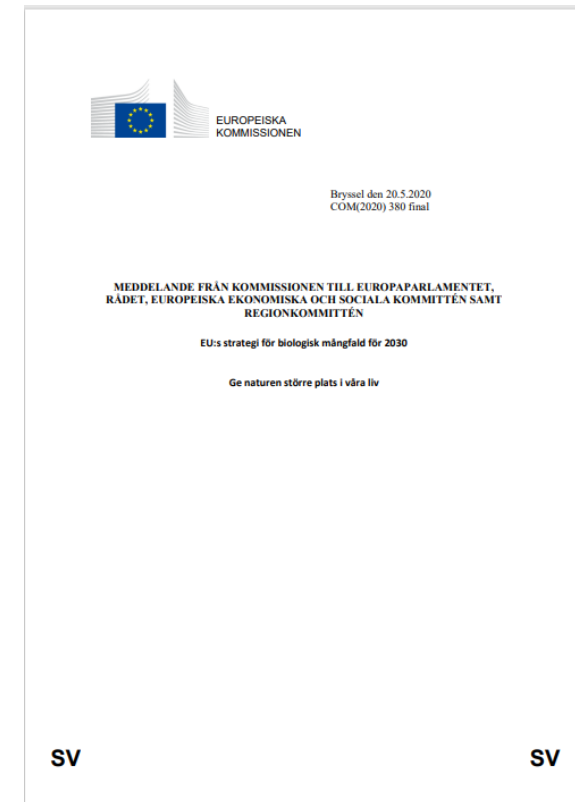
EU's Nature Restoration Regulation

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Why restoration?

- The EU **Biodiversity Strategy 2030** (from 2020) – calls for Europe's biodiversity to be on the path to recovery by 2030 – but **only voluntary targets**
- **Protecting is not enough** – restoration is also needed
- Several **economic studies** show that the benefits of restoring damaged ecosystems are **8-10 times higher** than the investment costs
- Healthy ecosystems necessary for i.e. **agriculture, fishing, tourism etc**





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Hard to get the legislation in place

- In **2022** the Commission adopted a **proposal** for a Nature Restoration Law
- But the proposal was **watered-down...**
- Sweden worked actively against the proposal
- Austrian Climate Minister **Leonore Gewessler** switched sides - with a narrow majority in the Council the law was voted through in June 2024



Leonore Gewessler Foto: EU





The Nature Restoration Regulation entered into force August 2024

- Aim: To **restore** the EU's biodiversity and **stop** further **biodiversity loss**
- **Binding** and **timed** targets
- Member States shall put in place restoration measures in **at least 20 %** of the EU's land and sea areas **by 2030**. By 2050, such measures should be in place for all ecosystems that need restoration
- Focusing on achieving **good condition of key habitat types** and **habitats of species** on land and at sea





Also a number of specific targets:

- Reversing the decline of **pollinating insects**
- Achieving an **increasing trend** for standing and lying deadwood, uneven aged forests etc in **forest ecosystems**
- **No net loss** of **green urban space** and **tree cover** in urban ecosystems
- Increasing grassland **butterflies** and **birds** etc in **farmland ecosystems**
- Restoring **marine habitats** such as seagrass beds and soft sediment bottoms
- **Removing barriers** to increase river connectivity (Article 9)





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Article 9: Restoration of the natural connectivity of rivers & functions of floodplains

- River fragmentation is one of the leading pressures on freshwater biodiversity
- In Europe **>1.2 million artificial barriers** → Fish cannot migrate to reach their spawning grounds etc
- Article 9 states that the objective is to contribute to the EU-wide target of **restoring 25,000 km of free-flowing water**, primarily by removing **obsolete barriers**



[Removal of the Herting dam Falkenberg, partly funded by SSS NC's Good Environmental Choice](#)





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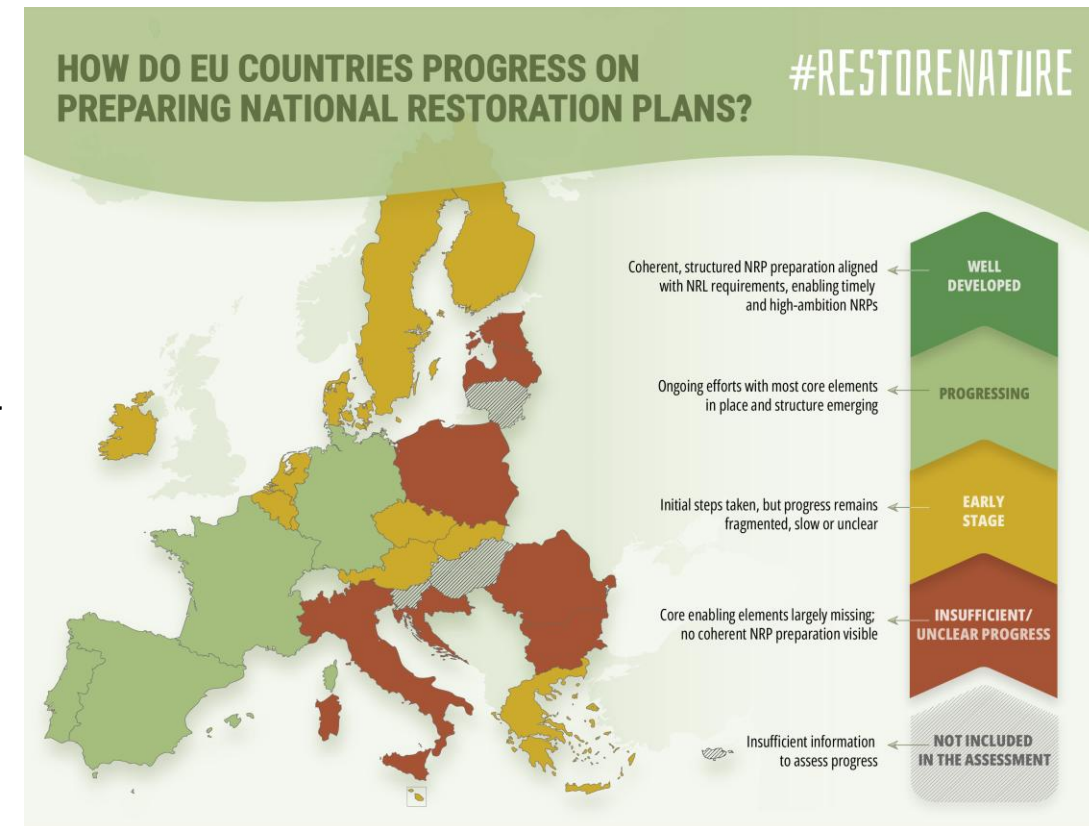
Sweden's National Restoration Plan

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All EU countries must develop national restoration plans

- Member states are expected to submit National Restoration Plans, setting out restoration needs and measures to fulfil the obligations in the Regulation, to the Commission by **September 2026**
- The plans shall be based on the **best available scientific knowledge**
- Requirements for broad support and **transparency** when the plan is developed
- There is a **possibility of exceptions**

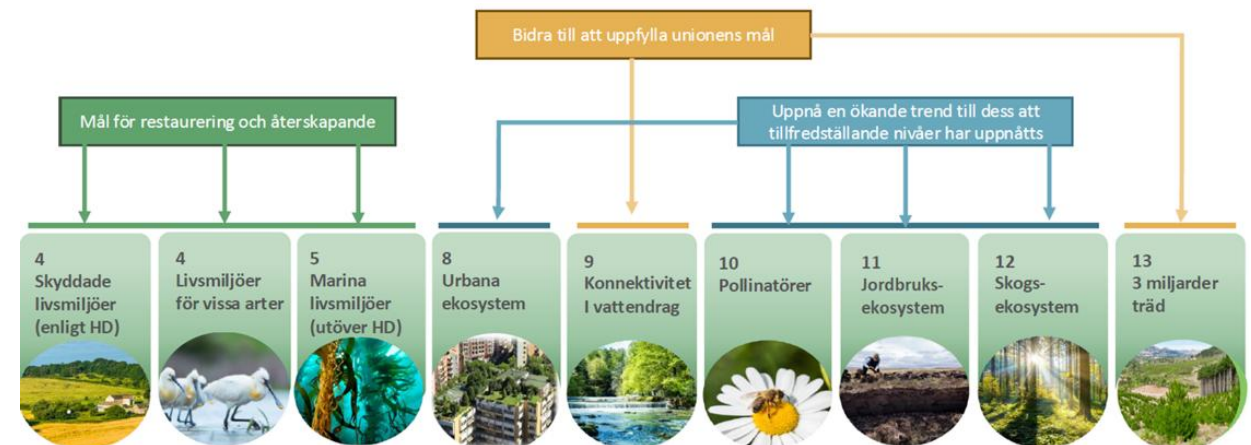


[From WWF's Mid-term Assessment December 2025](#)



The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency responsible for the plan in Sweden

- The work has been carried out in a project where **five authorities** work together in several different sub-projects
- **Civil society** and other actors has been involved through a number of **dialogue processes**
- Also possible for **the public** to submit comments in **online surveys**
- A first draft of the national plan was out for comments & discussion in November 2025





Low level of ambition

- The **assignment from the Government** states that the **flexibility** provided for in the Regulation is analyzed and **fully utilized**
- In order to “protect the competitiveness” of Swedish companies when implementing the EU Regulation, the plan and any legislative proposals in it shall **not go beyond the minimum level** in the Regulation
- Nevertheless – the authorities have done a **good job**





Proposals for measures and policy instruments in the draft – some examples

- Continue with, and strengthen, **existing nature conservation work** (more government money is needed!)
- Strengthened work with **green infrastructure** and **catchment area-specific** action planning
- More **collaboration** – initiate new networks and platforms, more action planning
- **Increase knowledge** about the state of the environment and develop a basis for prioritization
- New forms of **financing** (biocredits, etc.)



Bild: Tobias Flygar/Studio Flygar



What do the SSNC think about the draft plan?

- We are happy that the authorities have presented a serious draft plan – but **how** the work shall be conducted (more concretely) **has to be clarified**
- The **reference areas** must be based on the **best possible knowledge**
- **The non-deterioration requirement** is good – but needs to be **clarified**
- **Legislation** must be tightened/change
- The need for **action** in each area (agriculture, forest, water, etc.) needs to be clarified and quantified
- Geographical priorities are needed
- More actors should be involved - **civil society** can, and will, contribute!





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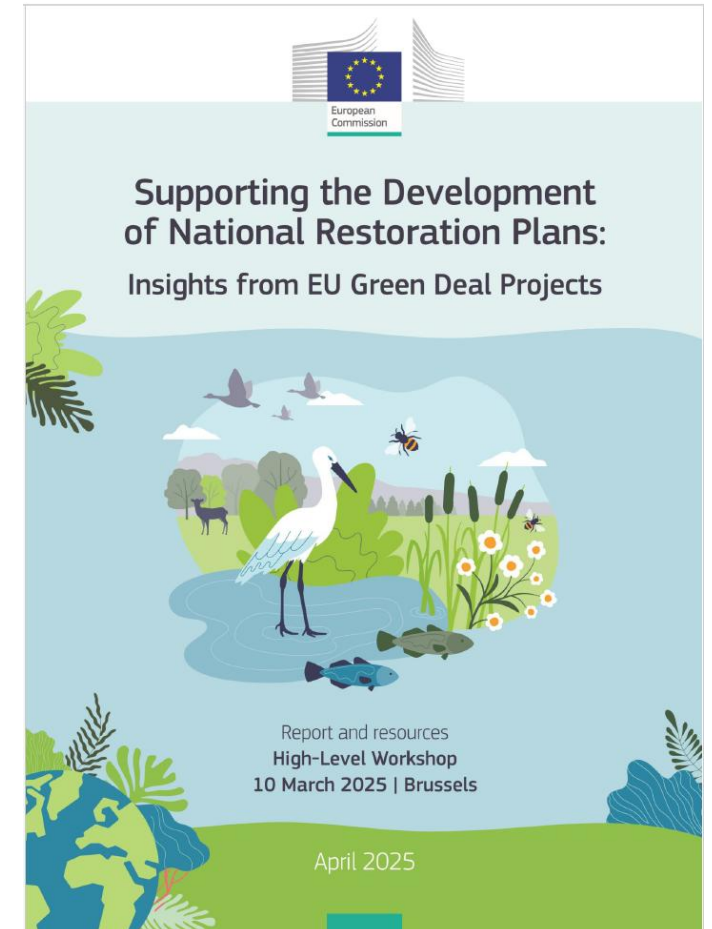
What's next..?

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Will the National Plans be finalized in time?

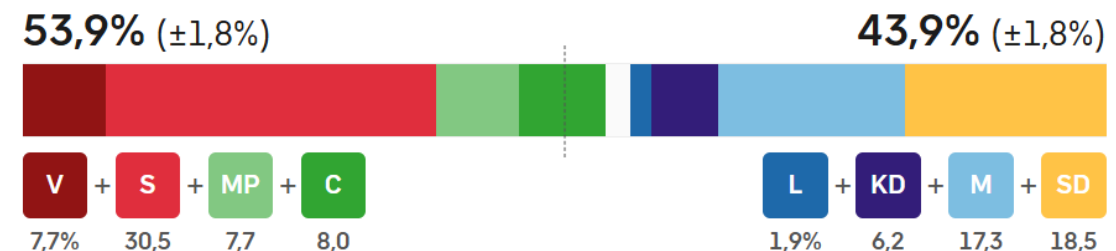
- EU Member States are working on their national restoration plans (the Commission has decided on a **uniform format** in an implementing regulation)
- They are expected to submit the Plans **to the European Commission** for review no later than **1/9-26**
- To be approved by the EU **1/9-27** → Final national restoration plans
- **The first targets** are to be achieved by **2030**





What will happen in Sweden...

- The preliminary plan was handed over from the authorities to the Government in **February 2026**
- The **right-wing government** has worked against the Nature Restoration Law from start - big changes (deteriorations) are expected...
- In Sweden general elections to the Riksdag will take place on **13 September**
- Right now,, Swedish opposition holds big lead poll shows
- **????!!!**





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Thank You!

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What is to be achieved?

- Favourable conservation status for the species and habitat types covered by the Habitats Directive (good environmental status in the marine environment)
- Restoration of habitat types where necessary (to reach favourable reference area)
- In addition, increased carbon sequestration, rewetting of drained peatlands, more pollinators, strengthening urban green spaces and free migration routes in watercourses

