

Following a tense debate, **the European Parliament has voted in favor of a Nature Restoration Law that establishes legally binding targets to restore degraded natural areas in the European Union (EU)**. It is the first major piece of legislation to protect [biodiversity](#) in the EU in 30 years.

Members of Parliament (MEPs) said the restoration measures must cover at least one-fifth of the land and sea areas in the EU and be in place by 2030, a press release from the European Parliament said.

“The Nature Restoration Law is an essential piece of the [European Green Deal](#) and follows the scientific consensus and recommendations to restore Europe’s ecosystems. Farmers and fishers will benefit from it and it ensures a habitable earth for future generations,” said MEP César Luena, a Spanish politician who was one of the biggest champions of the measure, in the press release.

The bill passed 336 to 300, with 13 abstentions, and will now pass to a committee of European representatives, reported The New York Times.

Restoring ecosystems is essential to battling biodiversity loss and climate change, as well as reducing risks posed to food security, MEPs emphasized. They added that the new law does not interfere with the creation of renewable energy infrastructure, and does not require new protected areas to be created in the EU.

With more than 80 percent of European habitats suffering, the continent was in desperate need of a binding law to restore the continent’s wild spaces.

“European nature is in a dire state, but this vote shows that there is still hope to restore and grow what’s left,” said Špela Bandelj, project manager for Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe Biodiversity, in a press release from Greenpeace. “So far governments and the EU have failed to act. The nature restoration law is a clear benchmark to judge them on their actions on the ground.”

Parliament said the new law must support international commitments by the EU, especially the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity framework, which was adopted at the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022.

“It’s a huge social victory,” Luena said, as The New York Times reported. “It’s good for everybody. Because if you have healthy ecosystems, then the economic systems which depend on these ecosystems are going to be healthy themselves.”

Before the law can take hold, EU countries must quantify the restoration area needed to achieve restoration goals for each type of habitat, and the [European Commission](#) must provide data on the conditions needed for long-term food security.

The possibility of restoration law targets being postponed in the event of exceptional

socioeconomic circumstances was held open by Parliament.

Within a year of the law coming into force, assessments of any gap between available EU funding and the financial needs of restoration would have to be assessed by the Commission, and funds to make up the difference would need to be found.

The Commission has said that, for each euro invested in the new legislation, benefits of at least eight euros would be reaped.

Parliament will now begin negotiations on the final draft of the Nature Restoration Law.

“Our position adopted today sends a clear message. Now we must continue the good work, defend our ground during the negotiations with member states and reach an agreement before the end of this Parliament’s mandate to pass the first regulation on nature restoration in the EU’s history,” Luena said in the press release.

Source: Eco Watch