



The mission of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) is to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

## **Recommendations of the meeting of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy**

held under the Finnish Presidency of the EU

**Helsinki, 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

*concerning*

### **URBAN ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE**

*To achieve the objectives of the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment<sup>1</sup>, and to support the implementation of the European Landscape Convention<sup>2</sup> in Europe's towns and cities, the participants of this meeting place high priority on research to improve understanding of*

1. the relevance of urban biodiversity for the quality of life of urban dwellers including health and well-being;
2. urban ecosystems (including species richness, diversity, ecological interactions, functioning, dynamics, evolutionary processes, succession etc....);
3. components of urban biodiversity with particular values, such as natural and semi-natural habitats (including the potential for habitat restoration and rehabilitation);
4. services provided by urban ecosystems (such as climate amelioration, soil formation, hydrological cycles, improving quality of air and water), e.g. to improve the adaptive capacity of cities in light of climate change;
5. the spatial pattern of urban ecosystems and landscapes (green networks, habitat patchiness, habitat matrix, connectivity), and their relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services;
6. the effects of urban land-use intensification, urban expansion, infrastructure as well as management and use of green space on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
7. the interactions between social and ecological systems to better understand how human agents affect the performance of urban ecosystems;
8. the political decision-making process, spatial planning, urban design and management to maintain and enhance urban biodiversity;

and develop

9. the theoretical underpinnings of urban ecology in support of effective planning and management strategies, guidelines and tools.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, COM(2005) 718final.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe, 2000. European Landscape Convention. European Treaty Series - No. 176. download from <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=176&CM=8&DF=10/26/2006&CL=ENG>, October 2006.



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10. standardized methods and indicators across Europe for comparative assessment, monitoring and prediction of the state and trends of urban biodiversity;
11. approaches to identify and value biodiversity in urban areas for its protection and sustainable management.

***These research priorities were derived in particular from the following considerations:***

- Most Europeans live in urban areas and their health and quality of life is influenced by the state of the urban environment.
- Cities are also economic drivers, and a high quality urban environment contributes to the priority of the renewed Lisbon Strategy to ‘*make Europe a more attractive place to work and invest*’.
- Urban dwellers are concerned about the future of green areas and their biological diversity in the face of growing demand on land for construction.
- The knowledge base to address the above issues is poor or completely lacking.

***In promoting research on urban ecology we emphasize the crucial importance of:***

- Interdisciplinary, long-term research, including natural and social sciences and the humanities as well as relevant stakeholders to support the development of biodiversity policies and tools in urban areas.
- Close dialogues between researchers, planners, policy makers, citizens and other stakeholders to improve the integration of research outcomes into urban planning and management.
- Integration of insights of urban ecology and biodiversity research into life-long learning and raising of public awareness.
- Better coordination across Europe for more effective research and for strengthening its societal impact.