
Declaration of the Ponta Delgada meeting on biodiversity research held under the auspices of the Portuguese presidency

The participants of this workshop agree with the proposal of the Saariselkä meeting on biodiversity held under the auspices of the Finnish presidency, to the effect that an informal **“European platform for biodiversity research strategy”** could be a significant instrument to improve the effectiveness and relevance of European biodiversity research.

The participants of this workshop propose that the platform should meet at appropriate intervals to allow participants (Member States of the EU, the associated states, the states in the accession process, and the European Commission) to discuss strategic issues relating to biodiversity research in Europe.

By giving the participants of the platform the opportunity to exchange information and work together on this topic, the platform could contribute to:

- EC biodiversity research strategies and priorities, including early discussions on the important issues that might be addressed by Framework Programmes of research and other appropriate research-related initiatives, thus facilitating the work of the formal Programme Committees
- the dissemination between the participants of knowledge of current best practices and the scientific understanding of biodiversity conservation
- exchange of information on national biodiversity activities, relevant research and networks, including groups working on themes related to biodiversity research, and on national infrastructure for biodiversity research
- the opportunity to address issues of biodiversity research in key European ecosystems in a systematic way, including discussions of biodiversity research issues set out in the EC Communication on Biodiversity Strategy and those on the agenda of international multilateral meetings, thus facilitating the work of the Council *ad hoc* working group on biodiversity
- research to support and improve management plans for protected areas such as NATURA 2000 and the Emerald Network
- significant components of a European Research Area for biodiversity research.

All states that participate in the 5th Framework Programme are invited to send two delegates to the “European platform for biodiversity” meetings. To help ensure the link between science and policy, these delegations would probably be composed of a senior scientist working in the field of biodiversity who has responsibilities related to policy making, and a policy-maker with responsibilities for biodiversity research. It would be desirable if such delegates belonged to the national biodiversity platform or a corresponding body.

Meetings of the “European platform for biodiversity” should take into account the agendas of major international meetings, including for example SBSTTA and COP meetings of the CBD, with the aim of helping to suggest orientation for research whose results will be useful to the European delegations at these meetings. They would not, however, limit their discussions to these international meetings, but would also focus on other strategic issues that are of interest or importance to Europe, its citizens, and sectoral stakeholders. For this reason, stakeholders will be invited to participate at appropriate meetings.

The “European platform for biodiversity” should ensure that its activities do not unnecessarily duplicate work of other relevant organisations, and should provide such organisations with comprehensive information about its activities.

The participants of the Portuguese presidency workshop on biodiversity therefore ask the Programme Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to discuss this proposal, and, if appropriate, to express its approval.