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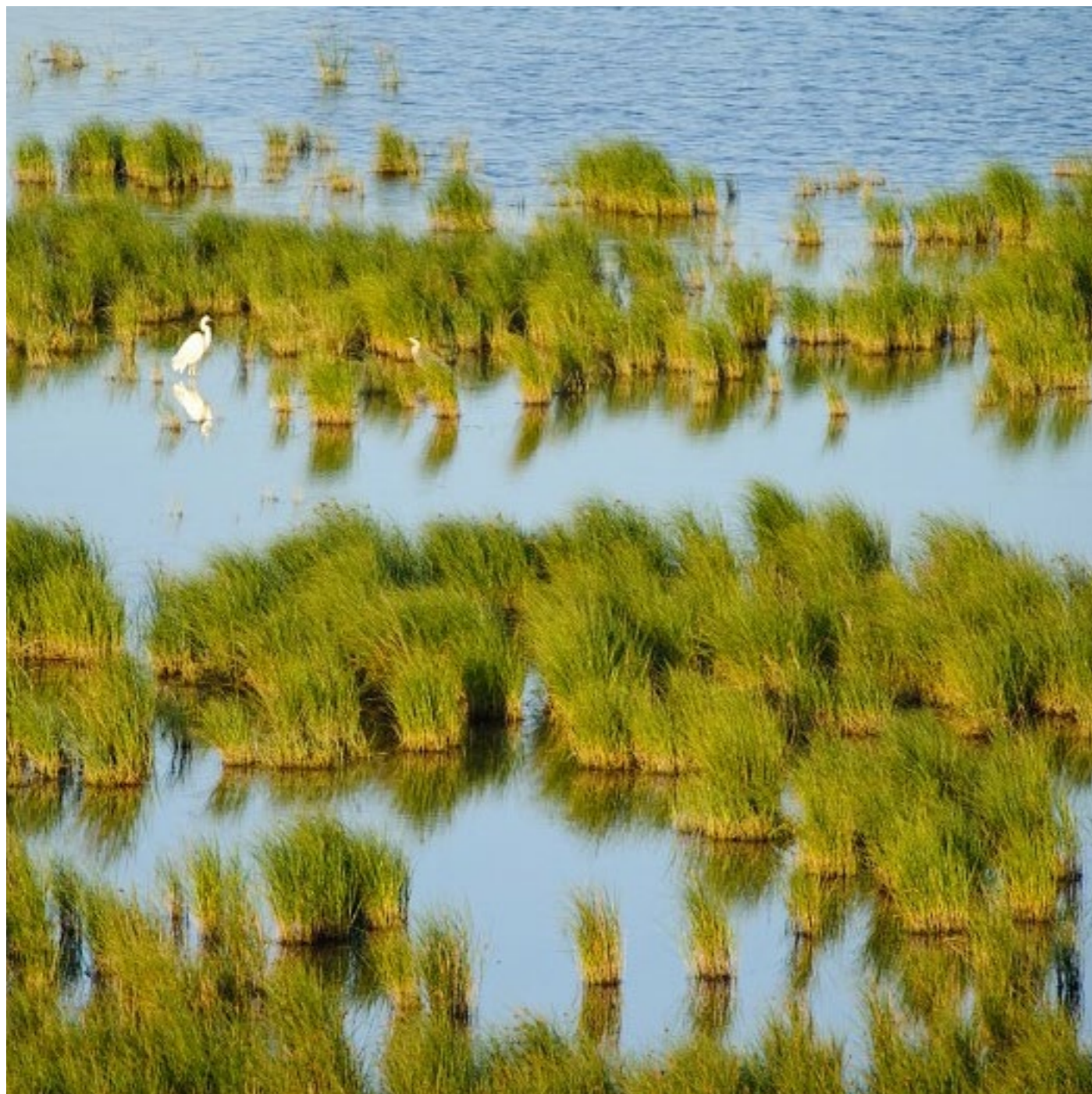


# Press kit FPEU

Ministerial Conference:  
30 years of the Natura 2000 network

Strasbourg, 24 and 25 February 2022





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# The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

## What does the presidency of the Council of the European Union involve?

### A rotating presidency

Each Member State holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months on a rotating basis. From 1 January to 30 June 2022, France holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Presidency of the Council organises meetings, brokers compromises, submits conclusions and ensures the coherency as well as the continuity of the decision-making process. It ensures proper cooperation between all Member States and acts as a liaison between the Council and the European institutions, in particular the Commission and the European Parliament.

## What is the Council of the European Union?

Also called the "Council of Ministers", or simply "the Council", the Council of the European Union brings together the ministers of the EU Member States who meet in configurations by sector of activity. Together with the European Parliament, it serves as the co-legislator of the European Union.

Concretely, ministers will chair ten configurations of the Council of the EU: general affairs; economic and financial affairs; justice and home affairs; employment, social policy, health and consumer protection policy; competitiveness (internal market, industry, research and space); transport, telecommunications and energy; agriculture and fisheries; environment; education, youth, culture and sport; and trade. The Foreign Affairs Council is an exception; it is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Mr Josep Borrell.

The Council also holds budgetary powers; it adopts and amends the European budget together with the Parliament. Lastly, the Council adopts certain decisions as well as non-binding recommendations, concludes international agreements on behalf of the EU, and appoints members of certain institutions such as the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions. The Council's deliberations and votes on legislative texts are public.

## Into what framework does the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union fit?

The French Presidency of the Council of the EU builds on the vision for a sovereign, united and democratic Europe laid out by the President of the French Republic in his address given on 26 September 2017 at the Sorbonne University. For four years, the President and French Government have been working to build true European sovereignty, namely Europe's ability to act in today's world to defend our values and interests. The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union will continue this work to promote a more united, sovereign and democratic Europe.

The French Presidency aims to meet citizens' expectations, which were expressed during citizen debates held in September throughout the 18 French regions as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This project, which France put forward in 2019, opened up a new space for discussion with European citizens. The final contribution of these citizen panels was submitted to the Government last autumn. Recommendations made by citizens, in France and in Europe, have helped determine the priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The French Presidency is linked with the presidency Trio programme, with which France aligns its action. This system, in place since 2009, sets long-term goals and defines the main topics to be addressed over a period of 18 months. Following the Slovenian Presidency, France is beginning a new cycle and will work as a trio with the Czech Republic in the second half of 2022 and with Sweden in the first half of 2023.

## Nearly 400 events

In total, nearly 400 events are planned in France and the EU throughout the Presidency, including political meetings, a cultural programme and citizen events open to all.

### The Council of the European Union is not to be confused with:

- *The European Council, which is composed of the Heads of State or Government of its Member States and defines the general policy priorities and directions for the European Union. Its current president is Charles Michel.*
- *The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation made up of 47 Member States. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe serves to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its seat is in Strasbourg and its Secretary-General is Marija Pejčinović Burić.*

# Ministerial Conference: 30 years of the Natura 2000 network

## > Strasbourg, 24 and 25 February

To mark the 30th anniversary of the Habitats Directive, this ministerial conference will bring together stakeholders in the Natura 2000 network for workshops on best practices and on how to achieve the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. It will be held in Strasbourg on 24 and 25 February 2022 and attended by the French Minister of State for Biodiversity, Bérangère Abba, her European counterparts, and representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and several other stakeholders.

### Natura 2000, 30 years of protecting biodiversity in Europe

In 30 years, the European Union has formed the largest network of natural protected areas in the world on a continental scale, called Natura 2000. Based on dialogue at local level and finding balance between human activity and preserving biodiversity, Natura 2000 has helped place a large number of areas in the EU under protection. This has yielded positive results for the conservation status of numerous habitats and species.

To build on this momentum, the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 aims to strengthen nature protection by 2030, with ambitious goals for increasing the number of protected areas and restoring ecosystems.

Co-organised by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the European Commission, the ministerial conference celebrating 30 years of the Habitats Directive will review the achievements of the network, largely based on the mobilisation of stakeholders at various levels, and on the challenges to overcome in order to enact change on a larger scale. Discussions will focus on how to expand measures to improve the conservation status of species and habitats both within and outside of the network and how to have the EU commit to restoring ecosystems and reducing pressure linked to human activity.

### Natura 2000 network stakeholders meeting

The conference will bring together representatives of the Member States, EU institutions and civil society including socio-professional stakeholders, managers of protected areas and environmental associations.

Thematic workshops will be held on Thursday, 24 February. They will address the challenges of governing and mobilising stakeholders, implementing measures for restoration and reducing pressure in the context of climate change, monitoring progress and optimising funding.

A ministerial segment will be held on Friday, 25 February to draw lessons from the conference.

### Taking stock of 30 years of action to identify the best solutions to environmental challenges

The objective of the conference will be to highlight the best practices of EU action for biodiversity: building the network of protected areas, mobilising stakeholders and supporting sustainable practices, financing dedicated measures and promoting consideration for biodiversity in sectoral policies.

The finalists of the 2022 edition of the European Natura 2000 Award will also be presented at the conference.

# Agenda

Draft programme:

## > Thursday, 24 February

### 11 a.m.

Arrival of the delegations and the participants at the European Parliament

### 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Welcome lunch

### 2 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Plenary session

Topic: The EU's efforts to protect biodiversity through the Natura 2000 network

### 3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Five breakout sessions grouped into four topics

Topics:

- Governance: The participation of all stakeholders in Natura 2000
- Effectiveness: The role of Natura 2000 in improving conservation status
- Biodiversity and the Climate Crisis: Nature restoration as a success factor
- Funding: Increasing and optimising funding uptake

8:30 p.m.: Welcome dinner

## > Friday, 25 February

### 10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Welcome of the ministers by Bérangère Abba, Minister of State for Biodiversity  
Doorstep – All accredited press  
European Parliament

### 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Ministerial segment  
No press

### 12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

- Session on the outcomes of the conference
  - Speech by the presidency – Bérangère Abba, Minister of State for Biodiversity
  - Adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration
  - Announcement of the European Natura 2000 Award finalists – European Commission
  - Launch of the LIFE Biodiv'Est project – European Commission and the Grand Est region
  - Group photo
- All press pass holders  
European Parliament

### 1:15 p.m.:

Official lunch

### 2:30 p.m.:

Press conference  
All press pass holders  
European Parliament

### 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Visit

Robertsau and Wantzenau Forest Nature Reserve  
All press pass holders

# The participants

The ministers and ministers of state responsible for ecology from the 27 EU Member States, or their representatives

**Virginijus Sinkevičius**, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

**Jean Rottner**, President of the Grand Est region

**Fabienne Keller**, MEP

## Strasbourg – Host City

**Grande Île, Strasbourg, has been on the World Heritage list since 1988**, and is the first urban centre to have been selected by UNESCO. The capital of Alsace has indeed managed to preserve its exceptionally diverse heritage, tracing the city's evolution from the Roman era to the present day. **The Gothic Strasbourg Cathedral, with its 142 m** spire, was the tallest in Christendom up until the 19th century. Its unusual alleys and timber-framed houses give this pleasant city its present-day uniqueness, especially during the legendary Christmas markets.

**The European Parliament has its seat in Strasbourg**, as do many other international organisations and European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights.

**Robertsau and Wantzenau Forest Nature Reserve** is located on a Natura 2000 site responding to a need to protect alluvial forests, which are habitats of Community interest which have become rare. The project aims to re-establish the alluvial dynamic of the forest area by reconnecting its hydrographic network to the Rhine. The designation of this reserve contributes to achieving the goals for strengthening nature protection set out by the French President and enshrined in the national strategy for protected areas.

 **Click here to visit Strasbourg :**  
[www.visitstrasbourg.fr](http://www.visitstrasbourg.fr)

## Find all of the news on the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

***On the site [www.europe2022.fr](http://www.europe2022.fr)***

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- › [www.toutteleurope.eu](http://www.toutteleurope.eu)
- › [www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/council-eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/council-eu)

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