

Biodiversity

The EU Commission has published the "Biodiversity Strategy for 2030" as an important element of its "Green Deal". The strategy includes measures for a coherent network of protected areas, an EU plan for the restoration of nature, and a roadmap for achieving biodiversity goals yet to be formulated. The claim associated with this: assuming an international leading role in the protection of biodiversity. The German chemical and pharmaceutical industry is committed to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations; the industry supports the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Knowing the challenges and tackling them

The measures and objectives of the European biodiversity strategy must be carefully examined in terms of their economic impact and the global competitiveness of companies in the EU. The loss of competitiveness means that production sites in countries with less stringent requirements become more attractive. Furthermore, potential trade-offs must be considered – for example, between the expansion of wind and hydropower plants or extensive land use for food production on the one hand and species and habitat protection on the other. Here, close interlinking of the various strategies under the umbrella of the "Green Deal" is essential. The EU's current plan for nature restoration provides for the protection of habitats as a whole. This should be maintained,

as intact habitats are the basis for species protection. Existing legislation, such as the German soil protection provisions, should be taken into account, in order to avoid duplicate regulations or even contradictions. Local solutions can be more suitable for the given purpose and should be preferred in case of doubt.

Make the goals measurable

The development of biodiversity targets and indicators at EU level must be workable and also take into account business and national economy contexts. Therefore, experts from company practice should be involved in the discussion. In the EU's plan, existing gaps in natural science data are a challenge for the development of indicators and monitoring. A comprehensive and high-quality data basis on biodiversity is important for the further development of processes and industrial production with its innovations, for example, regarding natural conditions at the company location or the availability of biological resources. For this reason, the chemical and pharmaceutical industry also supports the national monitoring centre for biodiversity, as adopted at federal level in Germany.

Additional reporting obligations for companies and EU Member States should be avoided, particularly in view of existing burdens on small and medium-sized enterprises.

The VCI is calling for the following

◆ Address biodiversity in a holistic approach and as a task for society as a whole

The promotion of biodiversity should be addressed comprehensively and include perspectives of business and national economy. Problems and trade-offs must be identified and resolved in a pragmatic manner. The strategies of the EU's "Green Deal" should be consistently harmonised with the Member States' activities to avoid controversial and inefficient parallel processes.

◆ Use manifold levers

Policymakers should recognise and support the wide range of contributions from the chemical and pharmaceutical industry: The industry relies on research and innovation to increase the sustainability contributions of processes and products. Also, the industry contributes to better health through sustainable use of biological resources. It takes sustainable agriculture to secure food in a climate-friendly and environmentally sound way. Raw materials and resources must be obtained and used efficiently and sustainably, and cycles need to be closed.

◆ Create innovation-friendly framework conditions for change

With a view to making even better use of the above-mentioned potentials for profound change, framework conditions are needed that are open to different technologies, enable companies to reliably plan innovations and investments, and strengthen existing positive examples.