



AWARD

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## AWARD FOR EUROPE'S NATURE

### Leaders For A Living Planet

Today, WWF would like to recognise the key role played by Stanley Johnson, Henriette Bastrup-Birk, Claus Stuffmann and Hemmo Muntingh within the European institutions for the adoption of the EU Habitats Directive in 1992, which represents the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy; and for contributing to the creation of Natura 2000, the world's biggest network of protected areas including over 26,000 sites and covering almost one fifth of Europe's territory

WWF's Leaders for a Living Planet publicly celebrates people who fight to protect nature and profiles their environmental leadership and the inspiring example they show to others.

Since 2000, over 100 people or organisations have received this award, recognising a wide variety of initiatives. These range from local actions to protect wildlife to the leadership of government ministers to achieve specific conservation goals such as sustainable fisheries and new protected areas.

Recent high level recipients include Mr Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General in 2015; Mr Han Zheng, the Mayor of Shanghai in 2010; Ms Helga Pedersen, Minister of Fisheries of Norway in 2009 as well as Senegal's First Lady, Mme Viviane Wade in 2005.

# The Leaders Are



**Stanley Johnson**, a former Member of the European Parliament and the Commission and a long time environment defender is one of the “founding fathers” of the EU Habitats Directive. In his role as senior adviser to the Directorate General for the Environment, he was responsible in 1986 for drawing up, and defending, the European Union's (EU) 4<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme which included the commitment to propose a Community instrument to achieve the comprehensive protection within the EU of natural habitats and species. He then inspired and guided the preparation of the draft text of the Habitats Directive.



**Henriette Bastrup-Birk** was instrumental to drafting the EU Habitats Directive. Between 1988 and 89 she helped Stanley Johnson to prepare the text for the draft directive. She coordinated a group of expert working on the annexes for endangered and threatened species and habitats. Bastrup-Birk followed closely and prepared inputs for negotiations in the Council, her main mission was to explain the implications of the Directive to key stakeholders.



**Claus Stuffmann** was head of unit in charge of nature protection at the European Commission (EC) in 1987. When Stanley Johnson came to his office with a draft text for the Habitats Directive, he looked doubtful. The Commission was finding it difficult to implement some of the measures that had already been agreed in earlier environmental action programmes, such as the EC Birds Directive. However, Stuffmann knew that there was a need for an all-encompassing EU law and played a key role to have it adopted by the Commission.



**Hemmo Muntingh** was encouraging the European Commission in 1980 and in 1981 to develop legislation to protect wild plants and animals other than birds. In 1988 he was nominated Rapporteur of the European Parliament (EP) on the proposal for a Habitats Directive. His work as a rapporteur was praised by many and in 1990 the EP adopted the resolution of his report. The Council made the Habitats Directive officially European law on 21 May 1992.

# Their Achievements

## The EU Birds And Habitats Directives And Natura 2000

***Natura 2000 covers 1.106.610 km<sup>2</sup>, larger than the combined area of France and Germany.***

The EU Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) Directives form the backbone of nature conservation in Europe and have led to the establishment of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, covering 18% of Europe's land and 6% of its seas. Thanks to these Directives we've seen a spectacular recovery of iconic species in Europe such as the Iberian Lynx, the White-tailed Eagle, the Brown Bear and the Beaver.

## What Should Be Done To Protect Europe's Nature

***It is estimated that 65% of EU citizens live within 5 km of a Natura 2000 site, and 98% live within 20 km***

Greater efforts are needed to effectively protect EU nature. The cases where the legislation has been well implemented and enforced are currently outweighed by poor national enforcement and severe underfunding in several Member States, as well as negative impacts on nature from other EU policies. This has led to continued loss of Europe's biodiversity.

The 2015 report on the State of Nature in the EU<sup>1</sup> shows that only 23% of protected animals and plants and just 16% of protected habitats are considered in favourable status; the rest is depleted or under threat.

The European Commission is currently carrying out an evaluation (so-called "Fitness Check") of the Birds and Habitats Directives and is considering revising them. WWF believes, along with Member States, MEPs, progressive businesses, NGOs and more than half a million European citizens, that a revision of these Directives could create a long period of legal uncertainty, further undo the fragile recovery of species and habitats in Europe, and jeopardise achieving the Biodiversity Strategy towards 2020.

Instead of a revision, the well-known root causes which slow the progress towards halting the loss of biodiversity should be tackled.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0219&from=EN>



## To effectively protect Europe's nature, WWF is calling EU Member States and the EU Commission to:

- Ensure that EU nature legislation is fully and effectively implemented and enforced across all EU member states;
- Improve coherence between relevant sectoral policies (e.g. agriculture, forests, energy...) and biodiversity;
- Invest in nature via more biodiversity friendly financial and fiscal policies;
- Ensure effective transparency and public participation to allow people and nature to work together.

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