

1.86 European Agriculture

RECOGNIZING that agriculture is the dominant land use across Europe and in many other parts of the world and, as such, is fundamental to the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes, including associated cultural and heritage values;

NOTING that many rare, declining or threatened species, valued landscapes and historic features are associated with the remaining extensive agricultural systems; that in Europe a high proportion of these systems are found in Central and Eastern states; and that many of these are at risk from the rapid intensification and specialization of agricultural practice;

RECOGNIZING that rapid change in agriculture continues to be stimulated by technological and economic forces, and reinforced by agricultural support policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union (EU);

BELIEVING that there are opportunities at international and European level to direct agricultural policy towards greater integration of environmental and food production aims, for example international trade agreements such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade could represent an opportunity to decrease any subsidies which could be environmentally damaging;

RECOGNIZING that over 150 States worldwide are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to the principles signed at Rio in 1992 on sustainable development; and that EU Member States are bound by the Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) – the Habitats Directive;

RECALLING the technical conference held in Maastricht, the Netherlands, November 1993, and the Pan-European Environment Ministers Conference held in Sofia, Bulgaria, October 1995, at which governments in Europe declared themselves in support of closer integration between agriculture and environmental policy within the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;

RECALLING also that the IUCN report, *Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe*, calls for a more complete “greening” of the CAP, for combining agricultural production restraint measures with stronger safeguards for protected areas and for supporting Central and Eastern Europe in avoiding the environmental mistakes associated with agricultural policy in Western Europe;

NOTING that IUCN members, meeting in Bristol, UK, July 1995, have called for a Pan-European approach and identified land use, including agriculture, as a major priority in the IUCN programme in Europe;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. CALLS upon the European Commission and all EU Member States to:
 - a) integrate environmental objectives into European agricultural policy, in line with Article 130r of the Treaty of the European Union;
 - b) assess potential strategies for EU enlargement and CAP reform for their likely environmental impacts, and to take these into account;
 - c) ensure that EU assistance programmes such as PHARE have specific environmental objectives and are used to fund a pre-accession programme of pilot agri-environment projects (based on EC 2078/92);
 - d) promote best agri-environment practice;
 - e) ensure that incentives for positive environmental management available to farmers in the EU under the Agri-Environment Regulation (EC 2078/92) are:
 - i) based on clear environmental objectives, targets and appropriate prescriptions;
 - ii) developed and targeted at priority species, habitats, and landscape types;

- iii) supported by a greater financial commitment within the existing financial framework;
 - iv) available in specially designated areas, but complemented by measures which reflect the conservation needs of the wider countryside;
 - v) supported by adequate advice and training;
 - vi) closely integrated with, and complementary to, other agricultural and land-use policies;
 - vii) comprehensively monitored and evaluated for their impact on biodiversity, heritage features and landscape character;
 - viii) promoted outside Europe to countries where they could be usually applied;
2. ALSO CALLS on the European Commission and EU Member States as appropriate to:
- a) press for international trade agreements to be based on the principles of sustainable development and take account of international environment agreements, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - b) assess the environmental impacts outside the EU of internal agricultural policies, and of the “export” of agricultural technology by EU countries, and consider measures to combat any damaging consequences;
3. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:
- a) to ensure the IUCN programme in Central and Eastern Europe continues to support those governments engaged in privatization and farm restructuring, so as to identify and safeguard the most important areas for nature conservation, and historic and landscape character; and to cooperate with European IUCN members in monitoring the environmental impacts of changed agricultural practice in Central and Eastern European States following their expected or actual accession to the EU;
 - b) to convene in the framework of implementing the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy a major workshop at the proposed Pan-European Forum to focus particularly on the impact of agriculture on the natural and semi-natural habitats of Central and Eastern Europe.