

RES 3.005 European policy and biodiversity in overseas territories

NOTING that the European overseas territories are home to biodiversity of worldwide importance, vastly superior to that of continental Europe as a whole;

RECALLING that European overseas territories are composed of seven Ultra-Peripheral Regions (UPRs) that are an integral part of the European Union, and of 21 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) that benefit from a system of close association;

FURTHER RECALLING that the European Union cooperates with 78 independent states known as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, often located in the same parts of the world as the UPRs and OCTs;

IDENTIFYING therefore seven priority areas of action for knowledge and sustainable management of biodiversity, namely: Macaronesia, the Caribbean, the Guyana Shield, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific, the South Atlantic, and sub-Antarctic islands;

NOTING that Macaronesia is the only one of the seven areas to benefit from a specific European policy in favour of biodiversity;

RECALLING that in June 2001, the European Summit in Gothenburg made a solemn pledge to halt the loss of biological diversity before 2010;

UNDERLINING the need to pursue a specific European policy on biodiversity in the four French UPRs, in particular because the European Union Birds and Habitats Directives are not applied there, a situation which goes against the spirit of cohesion of the European Union;

UNDERLINING ALSO the need to pursue a specific European policy on biodiversity in the OCTs;

UNDERLINING FURTHER the need to give more consideration to biodiversity in overseas territories in the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development;

STRESSING that development policies supported by the European Union in the European overseas territories should make sufficient provision for the specific richness and fragility of those territories;

APPROVING the efforts made to improve regional cooperation between UPRs, OCTs and ACP countries in the same geographical area, through joint mobilization of their respective financial systems;

DRAWING ON the common interest of IUCN National Committees in the France, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, expressed in Brussels on 19th May 2004, and on the results of the Conference on Biodiversity and the EU held in Malahide, Ireland, in May 2004; and

NOTING also that under the reform process the instruments for external cooperation will be redefined under the European Union financial perspectives for 2007–2013;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. INVITES European Union institutions, France, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the local authorities of the UPRs and OCTs to:

(a) recognize and integrate in their policies the global importance of biodiversity in the French UPRs and the OCTs of the three countries concerned;

(b) adopt a regime or scheme for the protection and management of important biodiversity areas in the UPRs not covered by the European Union Birds and Habitats Directives, including sufficient financial support;

(c) ensure that under the European Union's new financial perspectives adequate attention is given to environment and biodiversity in the OCTs;

(d) improve consideration of biodiversity in overseas territories in European research and to strengthen the ability of the UPRs and OCTs to work together on this subject;

(e) apply strict environmental conditions and procedures, taking account of the specific fragility of the European overseas territories, which are often islands with high levels of endemism;

(f) encourage regional cooperation on biodiversity between the UPRs and OCTs, including neighbouring African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries whenever possible;

(g) develop and implement an action plan for biodiversity conservation with ACP countries in each of the following areas of priority action: the Caribbean, the Guyana Shield, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific, the South Atlantic and the sub-Antarctic islands, to encourage, among other things, the coherent regional use of the different European funds;

(h) involve non-governmental organizations fully in the definition and implementation of these proposals, and to improve their access to European funds, namely by facilitating administrative and financial procedures; and

(i) support and contribute to the implementation of the above proposals, with the necessary financial means; and

2. CALLS ON the IUCN Director General to support the work of the IUCN National Committees concerned, with the support of the IUCN Regional Office for Europe, in order to promote these proposals with the states concerned and the European Union institutions.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.