

4.079 The European Union and its overseas entities faced with climate change and biodiversity loss

RECALLING that the European overseas entities are made up of seven Outermost Regions (ORs) that form part of the European Union (EU), and 21 associated Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs);

CONSIDERING that the ORs and the OCTs are scattered over all of the world's oceans and found at all latitudes, from the poles to the tropics, and that they contain a level of biodiversity higher than that found in continental Europe;

CONSIDERING that the ORs and OCTs are often situated in regional areas of global ecological importance, alongside Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Countries), which most often share ecological challenges;

CONSIDERING that the ORs and OCTs and their neighbours are generally subject to a great deal of pressure from development and are particularly vulnerable to climate change;

RECALLING Resolution 3.005 *European policy and biodiversity in overseas territories* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004);

RECALLING that the EU is committed to reinforcing its action in favour of the ORs, the OCTs and their regional areas, particularly with regard to the European Commission's communication of 22 May 2006 entitled *Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond*;

UNDERLINING the fact that the conference entitled *The European Union and its Overseas Entities, Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss*, an official event of the French Presidency of the EU, co-organized by IUCN, and held on Reunion Island in July 2008, allowed all the stakeholders involved in the economic challenges confronting the ORs and the OCTs to come together and adopt common positions;

UNDERLINING the importance of the *Message from Reunion Island* that resulted from this conference, which offered the EU, its Member States, the OR and OCT authorities and other stakeholders, a roadmap aimed at responding, through specific actions, to the challenges of adapting to climate change, promoting renewable energies and conserving biodiversity; and

CONSIDERING that reinforcing the capacity of European overseas countries and territories to counter climate change and biodiversity loss constitutes a major political challenge for the EU, and also an opportunity to reinforce its scientific, technical and political contribution to these challenges in regions of global ecological importance, in cooperation with the countries of these regions;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. CALLS ON the EU and its Member States, the OR and OCT authorities and other stakeholders concerned, to provide specific responses to the *Message from Reunion Island* recommendations;
2. CALLS ON the French Presidency of the EU and the future Czech, Swedish and Spanish Presidencies to pay particular attention to the monitoring of the awareness of this message, in particular in view of the 2010 targets; and
3. ENCOURAGES IUCN to develop a new phase of the European overseas entities programme to support the implementation of the *Message from Reunion Island* Recommendations, in particular by setting up a working and monitoring platform involving all the stakeholders concerned: local, national and European authorities, public organizations, civil society, experts, and regional and international organizations.

State and agency members of the 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 U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.