

European Commission
President Ursula von der Leyen

12 June 2024

Subject: Joint letter to the EU Commission to accelerate the Nature Restoration Law

The Architects Council of Europe (ACE) and the European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA Europe) wish to convey an urgent request to you, on behalf of EU Architects and Landscape Architects in the interests of our environment and future generations. We are deeply concerned about the blocking minority position of certain EU Member States towards the EU Nature Restoration Law.

The ACE and IFLA Europe, which represent the Architects and Landscape Architects across Europe, are partners of the New European Bauhaus, and are calling for a consistent law to restore nature. The Nature Recovery Law is acknowledging the importance of restoration of our natural systems and the need to secure the conservation, development, and management of our landscapes to ensure climate resilience, as an extension of the European Green Deal or the new European Bauhaus Declaration.

Environmental challenges, climate change and the living conditions of the inhabitants of larger cities oblige us to take nature beyond the emphasis on aesthetic perspectives. Green spaces and ecosystems are of undisputed relevance for all cities, municipalities and communities, as they can provide fresh air corridors, regulate temperatures and regulate the water balance in all populated areas. It is important to promote the quality of landscape planning, delivery, and management, provide nature-based solutions in climate change mitigation and adaptation and ensure transformational changes in landscape, urban and rural areas.

In design, planning and management of our landscapes, Architects and Landscape Architects face a contemporary challenge to repurpose our cities: to design with nature and introduce a more natural shape for cities, utilizing nature-based solutions and thus bringing cities function closer to the cycles of nature. Thinking of the city as the habitat for all species and not only for people, can establish a more symbiotic relationship between buildings, land and nature, creating exciting functions of landscape and building. This law is an essential contribution to achieving the climate targets we have set ourselves and provides important guidelines for our professions.

Society needs new approaches to decision-making, progressive policies, and a universal commitment to innovative ideas. We are working, bearing in mind the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, to design green infrastructure that mitigates Urban Heat Island Effect, and reduces the risks associated with fire, drought, and flood, to try thought our designs and management plans work to reduce operational and embodied carbon emissions and collaborate with clients, suppliers, and allied professions to champion climate positive design. This EU law also focuses, for the first time in a long while, on the restoration of natural areas that have almost been lost. We now have the urgently needed rescue plan for European ecosystems, for nature - and therefore for us.

By initiating the New European Bauhaus in 2020, you have already assigned our profession a key role in the transition to an innovative construction and landscape industry and the associated



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building culture of sustainability. We need to design with nature and introduce a more natural shape for cities, utilizing nature-based solutions and thus bringing cities function closer to the cycles of nature. We take this task very seriously. That is why we need clear guidelines, because only in this way can we contribute to the ecological preservation of habitats, the stabilization of our ecosystems and support you in the common goal of European climate neutrality by 2050.

We would very much welcome it if you could appeal to the Member States of Belgium, Finland, Austria, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands and Poland to vote in favor of the first Europe-wide Nature Restoration Law and to give up their blocking minority - in the interests of ecosystems and in the interests of Europe.

We still recall your electrifying speech at the beginning of the Reconstructing the Future Conference and that is why we think you are the only one who can still save this regulation.

Of course, we can assure you of our support in every respect.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Schagemann

ACE President

Katerina Gkoltsiou,

IFLA EUROPE President