



Reconnecting science to policy in Europe and beyond

Web story on the IPBES Briefing Session – 29 May 2012, European Parliament, Brussels

“Scientific research is an essential foundation for the implementation of any policy in favour of biodiversity. We need to improve data on biodiversity and its dissemination between the scientific community, policymakers and civil society both at the EU and global levels,” urged **Mr Gaston Franco, Member of the European Parliament (MEP)** during the recent briefing session on IPBES, the new global science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The European Parliament (EP) in its latest [resolution](#) on *Our Life Insurance, Our Natural Capital: An EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020* has acknowledged the need for a higher political priority to biodiversity and the full understanding of the biodiversity value for this and future generations by policy makers and the whole society.

“Although not yet finalized, the discussions of the scope of the work programme of IPBES indicate a strong focus to support the implementation of the globally accepted [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#), which is mirrored by the [EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy](#),” noted **Mr Thomas Koetz from the European Commission’s Directorate General for Environment**. He added that “IPBES will very likely provide important contributions to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.” The strategy outlines a number of actions to meet the EU’s 2020 [headline target](#) for biodiversity and global biodiversity commitments. The improvement of knowledge on ecosystems and their services in the EU is among the planned actions with a number of efforts underway.

IPBES will synthesize and critically evaluate existing information on the consequences of biodiversity and ecosystem services’ changes for human well-being. According to **Ms Anne Larigauderie from DIVERSITAS and the International Council for Science (ICSU)**, the needs in terms of biodiversity research for IPBES include documenting current trends and improving our capability to make predictions that inform future choices.

She also stressed that the scientific community should work hand in hand with IPBES to produce relevant knowledge for IPBES, while **Mr Pierre Commerville from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** emphasized that it is also critical for IPBES to rely on knowledge that is produced on the edges or outside of the academic scientific institutions. For example, the conservation community is a massive producer of knowledge, which includes databases, assessments and review processes, action tools and best practices that could all be made available for IPBES. The Platform should therefore benefit from efficient and active participation of civil society.





“In addition to scientific knowledge, IPBES provides an opportunity to integrate other useful knowledge in policy and decision making,” confirmed **Ms Maria Schultz from the Stockholm Resilience Centre at the Stockholm University**. Indigenous, traditional, local and scientific knowledge systems are different manifestations of valid and useful knowledge systems which can contribute to the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Mr Salvatore Aricò from UNESCO suggested the approach of viewing science within society and society within science as crucial, while **Mr Patrick ten Brink from the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)** argued that IPBES is an opportunity to drive understanding and awareness of the roles and value of nature for people, society, and the economy and hence help develop the evidence base needed by policy makers. “IPBES and affiliated regional or country bodies are new players that have the potential to play an important role,” said **Mr ten Brink**.

There is a broad experience in Europe on policy measures and it is important to ensure mutual benefit between EU Member States and IPBES by active participation. A number of national biodiversity platforms such as those in Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland, can ensure an effective engagement. **Mr Carsten Neßhöver from the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ)** suggested building on the achievements in European biodiversity science integration and concluded that “networking European knowledge actively will not only profit IPBES, but also serve the European policy for the 2020 goals”.

Held at the European Parliament in Brussels and chaired by MEP Gaston Franco, the [briefing session](#) on *The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) - Reconnecting Science to Policy: Why? What? How?* brought together international, European, national and regional actors. It was organized by the Secretariat of the EP Intergroup on *Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development*. The Secretariat is run jointly by IUCN and the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD).

All speeches, presentations and the report of the briefing session are available on the Intergroup’s webpages [here](#).

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About IPBES

The [Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES), intends to be an independent global body aiming to link scientific communities and policy-makers. Established on 21 April 2012 and to be based in Bonn, Germany, it will equal the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for issues directly linked with nature conservation, food security, sustainable development and human well-being. Measuring the latest trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services and identifying policy relevant tools, it will shape the international agenda and set the scene for legitimate and credible knowledge to inform policy making.

