

2021 Activity Report

We Stand for Wildlife®





The Wildlife Conservation Society European Union Office (WCS EU) is a Belgian NGO based in Brussels, affiliated to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), a global conservation organisation with field programmes in more than 55 countries across the globe.

Learn more: brussels.wcs.org

WCS EU Mission

WCS EU works at the nexus of biodiversity and development cooperation to further our mission to save wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. WCS EU provides technical, scientifically-informed inputs to government policy-makers and other key stakeholders to influence the development cooperation and environmental policies and programmes of the European Union, and the Belgian government. WCS EU raises awareness and fosters dialogue, emphasising the urgent need to protect biodiversity as a foundation for sustainable development and a healthy planet, which supports agriculture, fisheries, food security, water access, and climate resilience.

WCS EU is committed to working to improve the health of ecosystems and the wildlife they support, to benefit communities, in line with the commitments made under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving sustainable economic development and flourishing human development, depends on a healthy and resilient environment. Biodiversity loss, particularly in vulnerable regions, fuels conflict, displacement, and migration pressures, undermining stability. WCS EU supports WCS country programmes, to protect biodiversity, improve ecosystem health and resilience, and benefit local communities over the long-term, including in many least developed countries. WCS acts as a technical and science-based partner to governments, including through the delivery of rights-based conservation programmes in both terrestrial and marine environments.

Learn more: www.wcs.org

Policy and Visibility



INFLUENCING EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

One Planet Summit

On 11th January, a One Planet Summit on Biodiversity was held in Paris, under the leadership of President Macron, gathering political leaders and CEOs, pledging to reverse the destruction of nature. This high-level event included an intervention by Dr. Cristián Samper, WCS President and CEO. [Read more](#)



Left to right: French President Emmanuel Macron and WCS President and CEO, Dr. Cristián Samper at the One Planet Summit, January 11

European Development Days

On 15th and 16th June, the European Commission organised the European Development Days (EDD). WCS participated in several sessions on topics such as biodiversity conservation, protected areas, wildlife crime, and youth engagement. [Read more](#)



Left to right: HRH Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, Dr. Cristián Samper, WCS President and CEO, Prince Emmanuel de Merode, Director of the Virunga National Park, Mr. Koen Doens, DG of DG International Partnerships, and Ms. Nomsa Betty Kamanga, Young Leader from Zambia

The Role of the Africa-EU Partnership

On 17th March, Dr. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, European Parliament Rapporteur for the new EU-Africa Strategy, in partnership with WCS EU, organised a virtual high-level conference titled "Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis: The Role of the Africa-EU Partnership". [Read more](#)



Speakers at the virtual high-level conference on the Africa-EU Partnership

EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

On 2nd April, WCS EU submitted a response to the public consultation on the evaluation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. [Read more](#)

Global Europe Instrument

On 6th May, WCS EU and other NGOs sent a letter to the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, calling for the prioritisation of climate and biodiversity under the new Global Challenges thematic programme. [Read more](#)

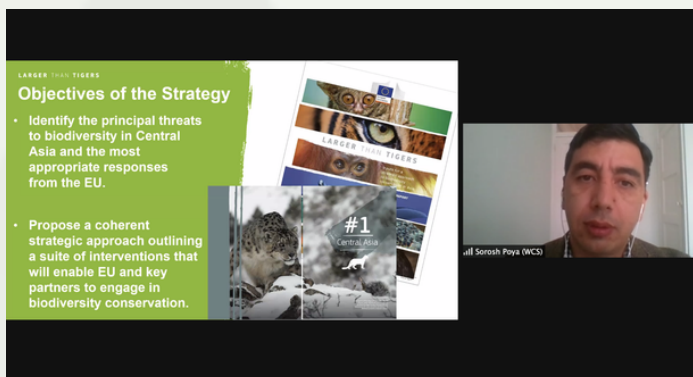
On 31st May, WCS EU submitted a response to the public consultation concerning the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Delegated regulation, calling for higher ambition on biodiversity, environment, and climate. [Read more](#)

IUCN World Conservation Congress

The IUCN World Conservation Congress took place from 3-11 September in Marseille, France. As a founding and very active member of IUCN, WCS participated in the main three components of the congress: The Members' Assembly, The Forum, and the Exhibition. [Read more](#)

10th Meeting of the EU-CA WGECC

WCS participated in the 10th meeting of the EU - Central Asia Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (WGECC) addressing new opportunities for cooperation to ensure a green recovery. Sorosh Poya Faryabi, Conservation and Science Manager at WCS Afghanistan presented the EU's flagship 'Larger than Tigers' study - regional strategy for biodiversity conservation in Central Asia. [Read more](#)



Sorosh Poya Faryabi, WCS Afghanistan, presenting at the 10th meeting of EU-CA WGECC

Official launch of Biodiversa+

The official launch of Biodiversa+, the new co-funded biodiversity partnership, jointly developed by BiodivERsA and the European Commission (DG Environment and DG Research & Innovation), took place on 17th November, in Brussels. WCS EU's Dr. Janice Weatherley-Singh presented the international policy landscape: needs and opportunities for Biodiversa+ to partner up. [Read more](#)



Dr. Janice Weatherley-Singh, WCS EU, presenting at the official launch of Biodiversa+

Central Asia's Biodiversity Conservation

On 24th November, WCS and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the support of the European Commission, organised a high-profile dialogue 'On the road to Kunming - Spotlight on Central Asia's Biodiversity Conservation'. The event highlighted examples of positive initiatives taking place across the region thanks to partnerships built between civil society organisations, governments, communities, and businesses. [Read more](#)



Flyer of the event 'On the road to Kunming'

Webinar on Ecosystem Integrity

On 14th December, the Finnish Ministry of Environment, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), and WCS EU organised an informal exchange with EU officials and stakeholders regarding Ecosystem Integrity and its role in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The full spectrum of integrity was addressed, from highly intact forests and coral reefs to semi-natural productive landscapes and seascapes. [Read more](#)



Speakers at the webinar on Ecosystem Integrity

COMBATING DEFORESTATION

The FGMC Programme

The Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) Programme funded by the UK Government aims to address forest and wildlife crime and illegal deforestation in the Mekong, Central Africa, and Indonesia, and also aims to improve international and national governance frameworks and business standards for intact forests, climate and biodiversity. WCS EU staff, Janice Weatherley-Singh and Arnaud Goessens, are engaged in the implementation of activities.

[Read more](#)

The Forest First approach

On 26th February, and following a webinar organised in December 2020, WCS published a [report](#) titled 'The Forest First approach: A new framing that addresses supply chain risk and reduces deforestation at the forest and farm frontier', which provides a comprehensive overview of WCS's Forest First Approach. WCS also developed a [brochure](#) alongside the report which presents some case studies from WCS's work in the field. [Read more](#)



The Forest First approach report

Forest and Ecosystem Risk Commodities

On 6th May, WCS EU and other NGOs developed joint recommendations outlining what a legislative proposal to minimise the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the European Union (EU) market should include. [Read more](#)

On 8th June, WCS EU and other NGOs sent a letter to EU Commissioners requesting not to delay any further the adoption of the legislative proposals on minimising the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the EU market and sustainable corporate governance. [Read more](#)

The 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica

The virtual launch of the EU-funded project to protect the 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica took place on 16th September. Through partnerships between governments, civil society, research partners, and Indigenous Peoples, the initiative aims to transform agriculture and food systems and protect intact forested ecosystems in Mesoamerica's Five Forests, in order to adapt to and mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity, and improve livelihoods. [Read more](#)



Dr. Jeremy Radachowsky, WCS Regional Director, Mesoamérica y Caribe, presenting the 5 Great Forests initiative

COUNTER-WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

EU Domestic Ivory Trade

On 25th February, WCS EU submitted a [response](#) to the public consultation on 'Wildlife trade – alignment of EU rules with recent decisions taken under the CITES convention and changes to EU ivory trade rules'. WCS EU and other NGOs also developed a [joint statement](#) and sent a [joint letter](#) to Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans calling for the closure of the EU ivory market.

EMPACT Policy Cycle

On 15th April, WCS EU co-signed a letter from Members of the EU Parliament (MEPs) calling on the EU Commission and EU Council to include all forms of environmental crimes, including wildlife crime, in the list of priorities for the upcoming European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) Policy Cycle 2022-2025. [Read more](#)

EU Environmental Crime Directive

On 3rd May, WCS EU submitted a response to the stakeholder consultation on Environmental crime – improving EU rules on environmental protection through criminal law, calling on the EU and its Member States to treat wildlife and forest crimes as serious criminal offences. [Read more](#)

EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

On 28th December, WCS EU submitted a response to the stakeholder consultation on the evaluation and revision of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, calling on the EU and its Member States to step up efforts to tackle wildlife trafficking, one of the most lucrative criminal activities and one of the most immediate threats to biodiversity and the rule of law in many parts of the world. [Read more](#)

HEALTH

EU Parliament's ENVI Committee public hearing

On 14th January, the EU Parliament's ENVI Committee organised a public hearing on "Facing the sixth mass extinction and increasing risk of pandemics: what role for the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030", which included an intervention by Dr. Chris Walzer, Executive Director, WCS Health Program. In the context of this event, WCS EU developed a document with several recommendations on how the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 can help reduce the risk of pandemics of zoonotic origin.

[Read more](#)



WCS's Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer speaking at the EU Parliament's ENVI Committee public hearing

Preventing the Next Pandemic

On 28th September, the MEPs for Wildlife, a cross-party interest group at the European Parliament, organized a webinar titled 'Preventing the Next Pandemic: One Health, emerging infectious diseases and wildlife trade', in partnership with WCS EU, Humane Society International/Europe (HSI) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). [Read more](#)



WCS's Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer presenting during the MEPs webinar



Supporting Field Implementation through Funding and Partnerships

Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme

The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme is a major international initiative that aims to improve the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in forest, savannah and wetland ecosystems. It is being funded by the European Union with co-funding from the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the French Development Agency (AFD). The initiative is coordinated by a dynamic consortium of four partners, namely the FAO, CIFOR-ICRAF, CIRAD, and WCS. The SWM Programme is developing innovative, collaborative, and scalable new approaches to conserve wild animals and protect ecosystems, whilst at the same time improving the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities who depend on these resources. Projects are being piloted and tested with governments and communities in 16 participating countries. [Read more](#)

WCS EU staff, Caroline Abid, Chief of Party SWM Programme and Arnaud Goessens, Senior Manager (SWM R1 Focal Point), are engaged in the direct implementation of the SWM Programme by WCS (with which we are affiliated), through WCS's country programme offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo (RoC), Madagascar, and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

In 2021, following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, field implementation gradually resumed and saw significant progress across activities.

- **DRC:** An agreement was signed with the Institut Technique Agricole et Pédagogique (ITAP), a local agronomy school, to support semi-intensive poultry production and provide student training in poultry farming. Additionally, households in Eboyo and Bapukeli received support for bean farming and poultry production through material provision, training, and vaccination programmes.
- **Congo:** The Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocol, developed and implemented with two communities, was presented to the government and received official validation.
- **Madagascar:** The Farmer Field Schools approach, aimed at building community capacity in agriculture, trained 170 community members in poultry and fish farming techniques. Furthermore, the Legal Hub initiative, which maps, compiles, and analyses wildlife management legislation, was published for Madagascar.
- **PNG:** The Kwiop Conservation Deed was signed, enabling eight clans (representing 892 people) to formally manage 3,500 hectares of montane rainforest traditionally owned by their communities.



Group picture following FPIC signature in Kwiop © WCS PNG



Presentation of the SWM Programme at the EU pavilion during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille

Niassa Special Reserve (NSR) Programme

The Niassa Special Reserve (NSR) in northern Mozambique is one of Africa's largest protected areas. It is of paramount importance to the local communities and the Mozambique government to secure viable biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Reserve. The EU-funded initiative 'Disrupting Illicit Supply Chains of Wildlife in the Niassa Special Reserve through Law Enforcement and Community Engagement', implemented between 2021 and 2024, aims to ensure a healthy, functioning and resilient ecosystem in the Reserve. WCS EU staff, Arnaud Goessens, Senior Manager, is engaged in the implementation of activities as a sub-contracted partner of WCS. [Read more](#)

Arnaud led the development of the Communication and Visibility Plan in close collaboration with colleagues based in Mozambique, including Peter Trevor, WCS Mozambique Field Operations Manager, and Francisco Cabo, WCS Mozambique Communication Manager.





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