



# 2022 Activity Report

We Stand for Wildlife®



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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](https://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](https://www.wcs.org)



# Policy and Visibility

# INFLUENCING EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

## Global Biodiversity Finance

On 3rd March, WCS EU and other NGOs sent a letter to EU Development Ministers in advance of their meeting on 6th and 7th March in Montpellier, urging them to make strong, ambitious financial commitments for biodiversity. [Read more](#)

## Africa-Europe Week

In the run-up to the 6th EU-African Union Summit, the first edition of the Africa-Europe Week took place from 14 - 18 February, a key moment that brought together young people, civil society and the private sector from Africa and Europe to discuss the aspects of the Africa-EU Partnership. WCS EU, CAN Europe, Red Cross EU, and the African Womens Communication and Development Network co-hosted an event titled 'From Local to Global Green Action: African EU cooperation to tackle the interlinked climate, health and biodiversity crises'. [Read more](#)



WCS Gabon's Gaspard Abitsi speaking at the Africa-Europe week

## European Development Days

WCS, COMBO partners, and the China Academy of Transportation of Sciences (CATS) organised a session on sustaining economic growth by reconciling infrastructure development with national climate and biodiversity priorities at the European Development Days (EDDs) on June 21st in Brussels. [Read more](#)

## IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress

WCS sent a strong delegation to the first-ever IUCN Africa Protected Area Congress that took place from July 18-23 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Congress provided an essential and unique opportunity to promote policies, projects, and partnerships to ensure a sustainable future for protected areas in Africa for people and nature. Building on decades of success and significant contributions to local, national, and regional conservation across 14 African countries.

[Read more](#)



Left to right: Hon. Amit Idriss, Minister of Water, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing of the Central African Republic, Joe Walston (WCS), Emma Stokes (WCS), and Arnaud Goessens (WCS EU)

## Reception on COP27 and COP15

WCS EU, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, and The Nature Conservancy organised on November 21st a reception to discuss why the world needs an ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to accelerate the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [Read more](#)



Left to right: Ines Verlaye, Belgian FPS Environment, William Macfarlane, UK Mission to the EU, Joe Walston, WCS, and Camila Maria Polo Florez, Embassy of Colombia in Belgium

# 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](#)

## Forest and Ecosystem Risk Commodities

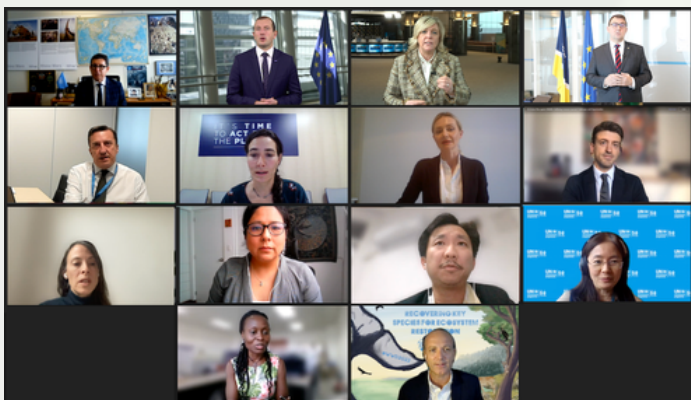
On 3rd February, WCS EU co-signed an NGO statement on the proposed EU regulation on deforestation-free products, calling on the European Parliament and Member States to ensure the current proposal is strengthened.

[Read more](#)

# COUNTER-WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

## EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day on 3rd March, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and WCS EU organised a virtual dialogue to present lessons learned and discuss challenges and opportunities for a renewed EU Action Plan to tackle wildlife trafficking. [Read more](#)



Speakers at the virtual dialogue on combating wildlife trafficking

On 15th November, WCS issued a statement welcoming the revised EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking. This revised Action Plan demonstrates that the EU takes wildlife trafficking seriously by continuing its ambitious agenda to tackle this criminal activity, which threatens species populations, undermines local security and governance, and weakens rural livelihoods. [Read more](#)

## Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

A small WCS team attended the CITES Standing Committee (SC74) meeting on March 7-11 in Lyon, France. SC74 was especially noteworthy since it was the last CITES meeting before the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP19) to CITES, which took place in November in Panama. [Read more](#)



WCS team at the CITES Standing Committee meeting in Lyon

On 5th April, WCS EU developed EU-focused recommendations for CITES COP19, focusing on sharks and rays, elephant ivory, big cats, and Saiga antelopes, among other issues. WCS EU also called for the EU and its Member States to increase their already strong leadership in CITES meetings and to step up their efforts to tackle wildlife trafficking and eliminate wildlife trade that is either illegal or unsustainable, both domestically and globally. [Read more](#)

# HEALTH

## European Development Days

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) organised a session on delivering on the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) of the Quadripartite at the European Development Days (EDD) on June 22nd in Brussels. WCS EU's Arnaud Goessens, Associate Director for EU Policy, highlighted the need for significant investments to bridge knowledge on modern holistic One Health framing. [Read more](#)



Arnaud Goessens (WCS EU) speaking at an EDD session in Brussels

## EU Global Health Strategy

On 19th September, WCS EU submitted a response to the public consultation on the new EU Global Health Strategy, calling on the EU and its Member States to fully integrate One Health approaches, to break down sectoral silos, and collaborate around the common goal of preventing future pandemics at the source. [Read more.](#)

On 20th December, WCS issued a statement welcoming the new EU Global Health Strategy - Better Health for All in a Changing World, which sets out the EU's global priorities and actions leading up to 2030 to combat health threats, and to ultimately protect human health and well-being. [Read more](#)

Reception 'One Health and Pandemic Prevention' WCS EU, the Belgian One Health Network, the PREZODE Initiative, and the Czech Presidency of the EU Council organised on September 19th a special reception to discuss the importance of the One Health approach and the critical need to include 'prevention at source' in the new WHO instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. [Read more](#)



Participants at the One Health Reception in Brussels

## World Health Summit

The World Health Summit (WHS) took place on 16-18 October in Berlin, Germany. WCS health and policy experts participated in the summit to ensure that nature remains a top priority on the global health agenda and to contribute to discussions on the One Health approach. [Read more](#)



Left to right: Arnaud Goessens (WCS EU), Christine Franklin (WCS), Molly Crystal (WCS) and Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer (WCS)

## European Health Summit

The European Health Summit (EHS) took place on 8th December at the Egmont Palace in Brussels. Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer, WCS Executive Director for Health, and Mr. Bernard Mazijn, Chief of Staff to Minister Khattabi, discussed why a fully integrated cross-sectoral One Health approach provides the necessary framework for recovery from COVID-19. [Read more](#)



Left to right: Amalie Holmgaard Mersh (Euractiv), Bernard Mazijn (Cabinet of Belgian Minister Khattabi), Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer (WCS)

## OTHER ISSUES

### European Business Nature Summit

WCS participated actively in various sessions of the European Business Nature Summit, which took place on October 18th & 19th in Brussels. Mr. Joe Walston, WCS Executive Vice-President, spoke in a high-level panel on tackling the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. [Read more](#)

### European Critical Raw Materials Act

On 25th November, WCS EU submitted a response to the public consultation on the new European Critical Raw Materials Act, calling on the EU and its Member States to promote a circular economy approach, source secondary over primary critical raw materials, and address demand-side dynamics through measures that promote demand reduction and sufficiency. [Read more](#)



# 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, Guillaume Baralle, SWM Technical Assistant, and Arnaud Goessens, Associate Director of EU Policy (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).

Momentum continued to grow in 2022, driven by field missions and innovative interventions. Guillaume and Caroline conducted field visits to both DRC and Congo to support programme activities.

- **DRC:** In collaboration with Village Enterprise, the Graduation Approach was introduced, benefiting 312 participants who received subsidies to establish micro-enterprises and develop alternative income sources. The Institut Technique Agricole et Pédagogique (ITAP), a local agronomy school, successfully completed its first poultry production cycle, yielding promising results.
- **Congo:** The Graduation Approach was also launched in Congo, supporting 312 beneficiaries. The programme hosted a national workshop focused on strengthening veterinary services, addressing a critical need for rural community farmers. In addition, the Kabo community formalised the creation of a hunting governance group, enabling improved management of community offtakes. The Legal Hub for Congo was published online.
- **Madagascar:** The programme identified Sakondry, a locally collected insect, as a potential source of protein and income. Training in Sakondry farming was introduced to communities, showcasing innovative agricultural practices tailored to local needs.
- **PNG:** The Wamiufa Conservation Deed was finalised, and training began for Wasman, local community rangers tasked with enforcing conservation rules established by the deeds. The year also featured a collaboration with ePop to produce short videos promoting community-led biodiversity conservation efforts.



An adult Sakondry, edible insect from Madagascar © David Mansell-Moullin / FAO

The European Commission and the SWM partners hosted a side event at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which took place in Montreal from 7 – 19 December and brought together governments and stakeholders from around the world. The event explored participatory opportunities to promote sustainable solutions to wild meat consumption in different contexts. Gaspard Abitsi, WCS Gabon Country Director, discussed the enabling conditions for a legal, regulated and sustainable wild meat sector. In order to create a conducive and comprehensive enabling environment for the management of wild meat sector, the SWM Programme has embedded the Community Rights Based Approach in the result specific theory of change at Programme level. This aims at the recognition of local communities' substantive rights (from land security to the right to food) through strengthening governance processes and procedural rights (access to legal information as well as participation in decision-making). [Read more](#)



Speakers from DG INTPA, OACPS, DRC, FAO, CIRAD, CIFOR, and WCS at the SWM side event at CBD COP15

## 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, Associate Director of EU Policy, is engaged in the implementation of activities as a sub-contracted partner of WCS. [Read more](#)

WCS EU, the EU, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) co-hosted a side event titled "Local Governance and Civil Society Organisations – Key in Disrupting Wildlife Trafficking" at the 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which took place in Panama City from 14th - 25th November. The event was opened by Hon. Fernando BEMANE DE SOUSA, Vice-Minister of Land and Environment of Mozambique. Speakers presented best practices and lessons learned from several WCS initiatives, including from the EU-funded initiative 'Disrupting Illicit Supply Chains of Wildlife in the Niassa Special Reserve through Law Enforcement and Community Engagement'. The side event brought together actors from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the EU, from governments and civil society, sharing local and regional experiences on strengthening the capacity of local authorities, civil society, and local communities in protecting their environment and wildlife, and in combatting illegal use and trade.

[Read more](#)



*High-level speakers and the audience at the CITES COP19 side event on tackling wildlife trafficking*



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