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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT**

*Accompanying the document*

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**EU Pollinators Initiative**

{COM(2018) 395 final} - {SWD(2018) 302 final}

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Between December 2017 and March 2018, the Commission consulted widely<sup>1</sup> with stakeholders including the general public, public authorities dealing with nature conservation and agriculture, academia, environmental non-governmental organizations, beekeeping sector, farming and other land management sectors. This report summarises the inputs received following: (i) an **open public consultation**, which garnered over 66 000 responses; (ii) a **two-day expert workshop**; and (iii) the consultation of a number of Commission **expert groups and committees**. The report is structured around the three priority areas of the initiative as set out in the roadmap<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

### 2.1. Priority I: Improve knowledge on pollinators

In the public consultation, nearly all respondents (over 95 %) considered that it was important to improve knowledge on pollinators and the causes and consequences of their decline. While at least two thirds of stakeholders in all groups<sup>3</sup> considered the decline of pollinators alarming, they considered it important to address the knowledge gaps that may obscure the magnitude of the problem.

One of key gaps identified by experts at the workshop was a lack of data on the abundance and population trends of wild pollinators. They emphasised the need for an EU-wide monitoring process to fill data gaps. Experts suggested developing different tools and approaches to facilitate the monitoring process, such as DNA barcoding and machine learning. Another way to achieve this would be to get the public more involved in science.

Almost all respondents to the public consultation felt it was important to research the threats to pollinators and the impacts of their decline on natural ecosystems and human society. At the workshop, experts highlighted the need for further research on the combined effects of different threats, on the resilience of pollinator populations and on the functional links between pollinators and pollinated plants. They also underlined the need to improve the availability of data, in particular on the status of pollinator habitats, agricultural land use and management and pesticide use.

Overall, the scientific community stressed the need to strengthen research capacities, especially in less-researched EU regions. While different funding instruments were identified as relevant, the EU framework programme for research and innovation was regarded as key.

### 2.2. Priority II: Tackle the causes of the decline of pollinators

A large majority of public consultation respondents (75 % in the agri-food sector and over 90 % in other groups) rated intensive agricultural management and pesticide use as the most important threats to pollinators. Three quarters of the agri-food sector respondents found these to be important drivers of the decline. For other stakeholder groups, the proportion was significantly higher (95 % or more). Other threats like urbanisation, pollution, invasive alien

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiative/136668/attachment/090166e5b6db6927>

<sup>3</sup> The analysis of the public consultation categorises respondents as individuals and in four organisation groups (agri-food, apiculture, nature/environment and others).

species, diseases and climate change were considered important by at least half of the respondents in each stakeholder group. Individuals placed higher importance on climate change and diseases than other stakeholder groups.

Public consultation respondents considered that the most important actions to tackle the decline of pollinators are: (i) assessing the risks of pesticides to pollinators; and (ii) supporting their habitats, particularly in rural areas, both inside and outside Natura 2000 sites. However, a large majority of respondents (at least half in each stakeholder group) also considered that it was important to address other threats to pollinators, including getting the private sector and local communities involved in actions.

The workshop experts primarily focused on the restoration and maintenance of pollinator habitats in rural and urban landscapes and on addressing the threats of pesticides to pollinators. A majority of experts identified the Habitats Directive and the EU common agricultural policy as key instruments to protect and support pollinator habitats. Experts widely agreed that getting farmers involved would be pivotal in creating a favourable environment for pollinators in rural areas. They also emphasised the importance of urban areas and the potential of large infrastructure such as transport and energy for providing habitats and ensuring that they are connected to the wider landscape.

To reduce the threat of pesticides, experts stressed the need to improve risk assessment and reduce the exposure of pollinators to pesticides. Experts also considered it important to include wild pollinator species in the assessment and include explicit measures to reduce the impacts of pesticides on pollinators under the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides<sup>4</sup>.

### **2.3. Priority III: Raise awareness and improve collaboration and knowledge sharing**

Over 90 % of the public consultation respondents emphasised the importance of raising awareness, getting the public involved in solutions and facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange. Respondents highlighted the need for an EU initiative to support action at national, regional and local levels. While suggestions on how to make the knowledge widely available differed, stakeholders broadly agreed on the need for a central open-access knowledge platform.

Experts broadly supported the involvement of the public in science and acknowledged the catalytic role that educational institutions such as schools and museums can play in this. While there is a number of existing platforms supporting stakeholder collaboration, experts thought the collaboration capacity should be further strengthened.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

All contributions to the consultation were taken into account, but due to the wide range of views expressed, the final policy document may not necessarily reflect all of them. The initiative will address identified knowledge needs through actions that bring together the knowledge that already exists in this field, making it widely accessible while acquiring new knowledge to fill the gaps. The initiative will also tackle well-established threats to

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<sup>4</sup> Directive 2009/128/EC.

pollinators, whether directly (intensive agricultural management and pesticide use, invasive alien species) or indirectly (climate change, diseases and pollution). The initiative will support collaboration and action at all levels in order to enable a coordinated EU response to the problem. It will also seek to involve wider society by promoting and supporting action taken by the general public and the private sector.