

Young Citizens Assembly on Pollinators

MAIN REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Environment

Directorate ENV.D - Biodiversity

Unit ENV.D.2 — Natural Capital & Ecosystem Health

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MAIN REPORT
RECOMMENDATIONS



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THE YOUNG CITIZENS ASSEMBLY ON POLLINATORS

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the Young Citizens Assembly on Pollinators, organised by the European Commission. It responds to a challenge of major importance for the European Union (EU): the decline of wild pollinating insects, which threatens the availability of food, our future prosperity and nature itself. In this context, the Commission invited young citizens to reflect on a central question for Europe's ecological future: **how can we reverse the decline of wild pollinators?**

To address this question, the Assembly convened 100 randomly selected young Europeans aged 18 to 29, coming from all 27 EU Member States, to discuss the topic and propose policy actions. Their work unfolded over six months, from September 2025 to March 2026, through a process combining three onsite sessions in Brussels, two online meetings and two wider online debates and voluntary engagement in four task forces, creating space for learning, deliberation and collective reflection across diverse experiences and perspectives. Over the course of the project, Assembly members had the opportunity to engage in discussions and exchanges with experts, stakeholders, and civil servants working on this topic.

From the very beginning of their deliberations, young Assembly members approached pollinator decline not as a single-issue environmental problem, but as a systemic challenge rooted in the way our societies produce food, use land, allocate public money and govern ecological transitions.

Rather than isolating causes or proposing fragmented solutions, they stressed that pollinator decline results from interconnected dynamics. Agriculture, pesticide use, land-use planning, biodiversity protection, funding mechanisms, cultural norms and political decision-making were identified by the Assembly as key areas for action to address pollinators decline and prioritised given the limited time available to develop recommendations. The Assembly understood these areas as deeply intertwined and connected to other major drivers of pollinators' decline, such as climate change and invasive species. While the latter two drivers were not addressed by the Assembly due to time constraints, they should be taken into

consideration in future deliberations. Addressing one area in isolation was therefore considered insufficient and, in some cases, counterproductive.

This systemic understanding shaped both the content and the structure of the final report. The structure of the final report was based on a detailed analysis of discussions in the Assembly Sessions 1 and 2.

As a result, this report is structured around three key levers and conditions of success. The three levers are reducing pesticides, transforming agriculture and land use and protecting habitats (**Part I**). These levers are not isolated policy areas, but entry points into the same system. Each affects the others, and progress in one area depends on coherence with the rest. By framing them as 'levers', the Assembly deliberately avoided siloed thinking and focused on where intervention can generate systemic change.



This report also makes clear that identifying three key levels is not enough unless the right conditions exist for these to succeed in practice. For this reason, it sets out the Assembly's views on the following cross-cutting conditions for change in **Part II**: (1) the allocation of funding, (2) awareness and cultural change, (3) monitoring and (4) enforcement, implementation and the role of interest groups.

Finally, this report should also be read alongside the second objective of the process. The Young Citizens Assembly on Pollinators was conceived as a pilot project for a permanent Young Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity. And who better than young people themselves to design their own permanent Citizens Assembly?

Assembly members were therefore invited to deliberate on policies to reverse pollinator decline, as well as to reflect on **the role young people should play in biodiversity governance** and the conditions for evolving this pilot into a lasting participatory structure (**Part III**). Drawing on their experiences as Assembly members, they produced, in addition to their vision and actions on pollinators, seven recommendations to ensure they have a say on biodiversity issues in the future. **Part III** of the report does not present a single, ready-made model for youth participation in biodiversity governance. Instead, it reflects the Assembly's deliberations on the political conditions needed for citizen input to meaningfully influence long-term decision-making.

Taken together, the goals, actions and recommendations contained in this report reflect the concerns, priorities and ambitions of a diverse set of young Europeans regarding the future of biodiversity in Europe.

All the content in Parts I-III of this report is the result of Assembly members' deliberation and was adopted at the Assembly plenary on 8 March 2026. Each goal, action and recommendation was approved individually by two-thirds majority vote. Regarding point F) in Part III, the Assembly members specified that elected members would be granted an advisory role in the upcoming Assembly.

Further information about the Assembly's process and outcomes can be found in the two accompanying reports:

- **Accompanying Report on Justification for Recommendations** provides contextual information behind the proposed recommendations and lists proposed actions which were rejected in the voting process.
- **Accompanying Report on Process Description** details the organisation of the Assembly process.

PART I: THE KEY LEVERS



European Peacock Butterfly (Aglais io).
Chiny, Belgium. Picture by Grégoire Dubois



Lever 1: Reducing pesticides

What are we calling for

We believe that pesticide use must be reduced because it is very harmful to pollinators, biodiversity, ecosystems and human health. At the same time, this change should be implemented in a rapid, step by step, controlled and science-based way, so that it is effective and manageable for farmers and food production systems.

Our long-term goal is an agricultural production system in which pesticides are no longer necessary because effective alternatives have been established and made accessible. We therefore support the strongest possible reduction of pesticide use, with the aim of reaching a near-complete elimination through clear milestones and proper support for farmers, which means a 50% reduction by 2030 and a 90% reduction by 2040.



Actions we propose

ACTION 1

Rigorous, harmonized and independent pesticide risk assessment across the EU

Promote a rigorous, harmonized and independent pesticide risk assessment across the EU, ensuring that evaluations fully consider:

- Impacts on human health.
- Impacts on pollinators and ecosystems.
- The combined or 'cocktail' effects of multiple pesticides.

To strengthen the scientific basis for regulation and decision-making, the **European Union (EU)** should actively support and fund independent research, in close collaboration with public research institutions and scientific centres, **such as the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.**

This initiative should also:

- Improve scientific expert training.
- Strengthen cooperation between public and private researchers.
- Increase transparency so that citizens can check which pesticides are present in products.
- Support the development of safer alternatives, including organic fertilisers.

ACTION 2

Redirect agricultural funding to support farmers who do not use pesticides

At the same time, agricultural funding should be redirected to support farmers who do not use pesticides, so that subsidies are more effectively targeted towards sustainable, pesticide-free practices and reward those who adopt environmentally friendly methods.

This could be achieved through funding mechanisms managed **by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development**, which could allocate funds and financial support for farmers who adopt sustainable farming methods.

ACTION 3

Ban the urban use of pesticides to protect pollinators

Introduce policies that prohibit the use of pesticides in urban areas, particularly in gardens, public green spaces, and households. **Local councils and local/municipal authorities** should implement and enforce these bans. This measure would reduce unnecessary exposure while encouraging safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives for urban pest management.

ACTION 4

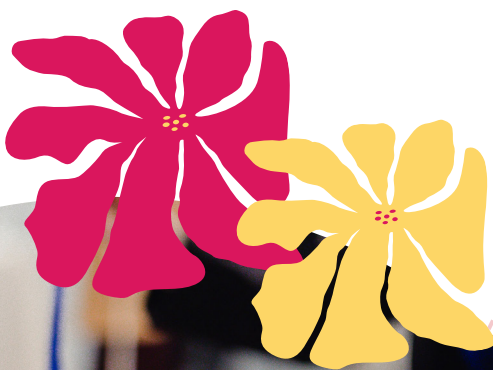
Ensuring Coherence in EU Pesticide Standards for Imports and Exports

We stress the global dimension of this issue: Europe consumes many products imported from other countries, while European farmers operate within a global market. Therefore, imported products should comply with the same pesticide standards as those applied within the EU. This would help to:

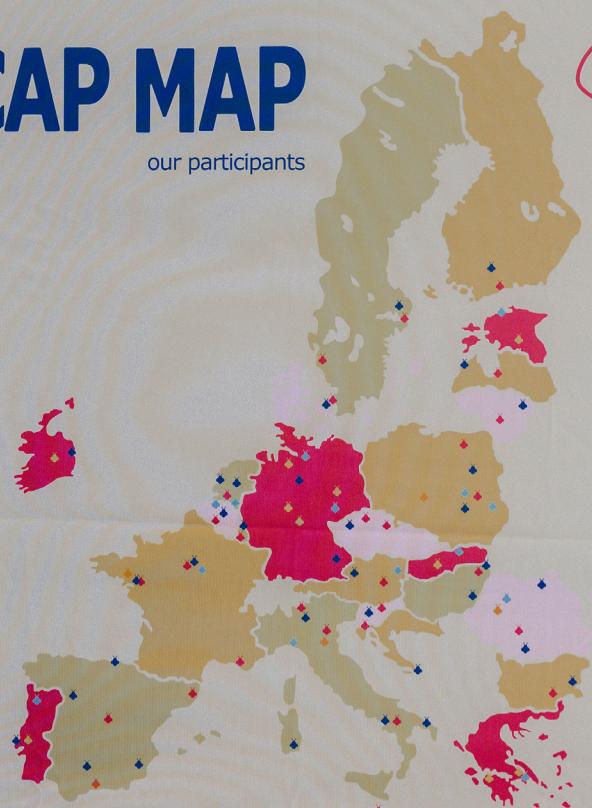
- Ensure a level playing field for European farmers.
- Avoid outsourcing environmental and health impacts to third countries.
- Make EU pesticide policy more coherent.
- Promote local product consumption.
- Encourage direct links between farmers, retailers and consumers.

At the same time, we recognise another contradiction: some pesticides that are banned for use within **the EU** are still produced in Europe and exported to third countries. This should also be forbidden as part of a global approach to pesticide reduction.

The European Commission, notably the Directorate-General for Trade, needs to review rule for importation within trade agreements, while the **European Council** needs to agree this general direction.



YCAP MAP
our participants



ACTION 5

Independent research needs on the effects and alternatives to pesticides

We need to anchor all measures, including bans and incentives, in scientific findings. Independent research should therefore be conducted on:

- The effects of pesticides on all pollinators and other wild animals.
- The combined effects of multiple substances ('cocktail effects').
- Long-term and non-lethal effects.

A second pillar of research should focus on ecological alternatives to pesticides that are not environmentally harmful. Their effectiveness needs to be assessed in order to determine whether they are viable for farmers. Pesticide companies should be given sufficient time to transition their production in accordance with the timeline for the near-complete elimination of pesticides.

We also need to ensure that each **EU Member State** is conducting sufficient local research, and that this process is steered by the **EU** rather than by private companies producing pesticides and having an interest in their approval.

Political actors must take research findings into account and ensure that they have a concrete effect in practice.

The **EU** should support and coordinate independent research by setting guidelines for **Member States** and commissioning studies through institutions such **as the European Food Safety Authority**. Research must remain strictly independent from industry influence, with a clear separation between pesticide companies and research institutions.

ACTION 6

Raise awareness on the dangers of pesticide use in public and domestic spaces

Awareness needs to be raised, and information shared, in order to discourage unnecessary preventive use of pesticides, especially in agricultural and also especially in non-agricultural, non-industrial settings such as public, urban and domestic spaces. This would align with the idea of integrated pest management, whereby pesticides are used as little as possible based on need.

Stakeholders, including private citizens, need to be informed on the dangers of pesticide use and societal costs especially in agricultural and also in non-industrial and/or non-agricultural contexts.

Responsible actors should include **local, regional and national authorities**, so that measures can be adapted to location-specific crops, environmental conditions and climate.





Lever 2: Transforming agriculture

What are we calling for

We call for a progressive transformation of the European agricultural model that supports pollinator protection. The transformation should be towards more green, biodiverse, ecological and regenerative agriculture, moving gradually away from intensive monocultures. It is based on diverse farming systems, including significant pesticide reduction, crop rotations, fallow land and the integration of habitats for pollinators within agricultural landscapes.

We believe this change should be gradual and steady, not sudden or abrupt, in order to maintain public support and make the transition viable in practice. The transition should be within 20 years or less with milestones of 5 years in between.

We support a society-wide shift, not only a technical change, building on evolving research, because what is at stake is not only farming methods, but also the future of food production, ecosystems and pollinators.

We believe this transformation must be carried out with farmers, not without them. Farmers should be included in decision-making and supported through funding, technical support, awareness-raising and a burden-sharing, rather than being left to carry the burden of change alone. This also requires the farming profession to become more attractive.

We support this transition because protecting pollinators and ecosystems is essential for food security in the long term. It is important to increase food security by raising quality of produced food. Change should be driven by a public awareness of what could be lost.

Actions we propose

ACTION 7.

Make it easier to become a farmer

EU Member States should set up an office to help young farmers and support young people wanting to become a farmer.

This office can offer help finding land (via tenders for example) or assistance when taking over farms of elders (by reducing paperwork). It can also offer young farmers guidance in sustainable agricultural practices, and how to improve work / life balance (free weekends, holidays, childcare, etc.).

EU institutions and Member States, particularly to regulate banks and define the framework, as well as private banks and public investment banks.

ACTION 8.

An independent civil society body to monitor conflicts of interest in funding allocation

There needs to be an independent body consisting of **civil society organisations** to support funding allocation.

This body would be responsible for giving recommendations to EU institutions. These recommendations would be binding, and failure to comply with them would result in consequences. It would have enforcement power.

ACTION 9

Dissemination of existing solutions

Dissemination of existing solutions and practices (such as prioritising pest monitoring and biological or mechanical control methods before resorting to pesticides) should be funded by **EU and national authorities**.

Farmers need to do a compulsory education about these practices and make the education a requirement to ask for funding to implement these practices.

ACTION 10

Strengthen education on sustainable agricultural models in existing agricultural curricula

Existing agricultural curricula should be transformed to better integrate education on the ecological impacts of agricultural practices and to increase future farmers' exposure to diverse and sustainable farming models. Agricultural training programmes should include dedicated modules explaining the environmental consequences of different farming systems and the importance of protecting ecosystems, including pollinators.

This reform should not only introduce new content but update and adapt current curricula so that future farmers are trained in sustainable agricultural techniques. Agricultural education should also play a role in making farming more attractive for new generations, by highlighting innovative, environmentally responsible farming models and by encouraging more people to enter the profession. Awareness should be increased about the reasons for transforming agricultural models

Agricultural schools and **training institutions** should implement these changes in their curricula, with support from **national governments**. Governments should also encourage **partnerships between training institutions, farmers and research organisations** to ensure that the latest sustainable techniques are integrated into agricultural education. The **European Commission** and **EU Member States** should reform and implement the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to better support this transition taking into account local sensitivities in the scoring system. Member States should integrate these objectives into their national CAP strategic plans, ensure that funding mechanisms reflect sustainability goals. **Regional authorities** should also play a role in adapting implementation to local farming realities, soil conditions and environmental needs.



ACTION 11

EU subsidies and targeted economic incentives for diversified farming practices

The EU should subsidize new agricultural solutions to incentivize sustainable industry players to scale up, while farmers should have a longer period of adjustment being supported by EU funds while they are changing their practices. Farmers should also get a period of less taxes to give a market advantage for them.

Introduce targeted economic incentives to support farming practices that enhance biodiversity and protect pollinators. These incentives should reward concrete practices such as crop rotations, diversified cropping systems and leaving part of agricultural land fallow, which contribute to healthier ecosystems and more resilient agricultural landscapes.

Financial support should be based on the size of the farms and the type of agricultural model.

To ensure the effectiveness of these incentives, regular monitoring and field controls should be carried out to assess whether the measures are properly implemented and delivering environmental benefits. This monitoring should be harmonized across Member States.

ACTION 12

Protect the market access of locally produced regenerative and organic food

Local regenerative agriculture should be better supported in the market. Strengthening the link between local farmers and consumers through local products can help make food systems more pollinator friendly, sustainable and resilient. At the same time, if food produced through biological and regenerative agriculture increases in the EU, it is important to ensure that these products can effectively reach the market. This can be difficult when they have to compete with cheaper imports produced through large-scale monocultures outside the EU, which may drive down prices and make local ecological production less viable.

Trade and import policies should therefore help ensure that food produced ecologically within the EU is not priced out of the market by cheaper imports from outside the EU. Measures such as taxation or tariffs could be used to create fairer market conditions, so that locally produced regenerative and organic food can be sold at a competitive price and reach consumers more easily.

The European Council, which decides on the main lines of trade agreements, **the European Commission**, in particular **the Directorate-General for Trade**, and **national governments** for implementation.





Lever 3: Land-use and protecting habitats

What are we calling for

We call for all land, whether urban, rural, agricultural or unused land to become pollinator friendly through a step-by-step approach until 2050. This requires both renaturing land and managing existing areas in a pollinator friendly way. More specifically, 15% should become pollinator friendly by 2030 to stop pollinator decline, 20% until 2035 to reverse pollinator decline, and a step-by-step approach until all land is pollinator friendly in 2050 to ensure pollinator populations are not under threat anymore. These specific targets should be confirmed by scientific knowledge, taking context into account, and reassessed every 5 years (by the end of each implementation cycle).

We acknowledge the trade-off between development needs and environmental protection. We believe the best approach is one that balances ecological responsibility with practical realities. We support a gradual, step-by-step approach and acknowledge that the housing crisis needs to be tackled at the same time as the pollinators' crisis. We support using the land we already occupy more intelligently.

We believe that land use policies should recognise diverse perspectives and take into account differences between cities and villages, as well as related issues such as tourism. We also believe that development

should benefit both urban and rural communities and help create environments that are sustainable and welcoming for all who live in them.

Actions we propose

ACTION 13

Development of indicators for what 'pollinator-friendly' space means

To measure the achievement of the targets, **experts from the national and EU level and universities** must create indicators for what can be considered pollinator friendly city, area, and infrastructure.

ACTION 14

Support the construction of pollinator-friendly infrastructure in cities

The EU, together with Member States, regions and cities, should establish sustainable standards and indicators for new urban infrastructure, with clear guidelines and incentives, in order to create genuine pollinator-friendly habitats in cities.

ACTION 15

European platform for land-use management

We call for an EU funded platform mapping out and bringing together data from all European cities regarding opportunities where there is room for pollinator friendly land-use development. This is a tool for policymakers at the national and local level to identify potential for more pollinator-friendly land-use management and a basis for supporting landowners in making their property more pollinator-friendly.

Through this platform, guidance should also be given on the creation of pollinator friendly land use. This guidance should be based on a study analysing the necessities of pollinator-friendly land-use management.

ACTION 16

Support pollinator-friendly urban design

Existing structures and public spaces should be greened to make them more pollinator-friendly, through green façades and other nature-integrated designs. Public buildings, such as schools, hospitals as well as social housing estates, should set the example, with the support of **EU Member States, cities and public authorities**.

These measures should create genuine pollinator-friendly habitats, including more natural areas within cities, rather than only ornamental or decorative green spaces, and should also address light and noise pollution.

ACTION 17

Promote ecological corridors in urban and rural contexts

The EU should provide funding to promote ecological corridors that support pollinators and biodiversity more broadly. These corridors should cover both urban and rural contexts, including the transformation of abandoned buildings and unused areas. **Governments and public authorities** should take the lead, while **EU Member States, regions and municipalities** should support implementation in their local context. **Experts** should provide guidance on how to best create these corridors.

ACTION 18

Promote rural development

Rural conditions and infrastructure should be improved to make living in rural areas more attractive and to help reduce pressure on cities. This should include better services and public transport, while taking into account the pressure created by the tourism sector on land use. Better land-use regulation is needed to avoid further damage to ecosystems and pollinator habitats.

EU institutions should provide the overall framework and support; **national governments** should improve rural conditions and services. **Regional and local authorities** should implement these measures according to their context.





PART II:

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS



Florentine Wool-carder Bee (*Anthidium florentinum*),
Lombardy, Italy. Picture by Gregoire Dubois

Allocation of funding

What are we calling for

A clear orientation emerged around the idea that public funding should actively support ecological transition rather than the status quo. Funding is seen as a lever to:

- Reward sustainable practices.
- Reduce risks for those who change.
- Align economic incentives with environmental objectives.
- Ensure that funding to protect pollinators supports not only farmers but the entire ecosystem around agriculture, including economic actors, research, education and public awareness, so that scientific knowledge, sustainable practices and responsible consumption reinforce each other.

Actions we propose

ACTION 19

Use economic incentives to make pollinator-friendly products more accessible and affordable

Allocate dedicated funding and economic incentives to encourage economic actors across the food supply chain to make organic pollinator-friendly products more accessible and affordable. These products should have the same price or lower as products from conventional agriculture. Businesses play a key role in transforming the agricultural and food system, financial mechanisms should support the promotion and distribution of products coming from organic farming or from practices that respect pollinators.

This should include measures across the whole supply chain:

- Reducing transport costs for these products, including by lowering certain taxes and encouraging more local sourcing and distribution.
- Encouraging supermarkets through economic incentives to promote pollinator-friendly and organic products more visibly in stores.
- Creating dedicated funds to help ensure that these products are not more expensive than products that are harmful to pollinators.
- Supporting consumer demand through fiscal measures, such as reducing or removing VAT on organic or pollinator-friendly products, or through other tax reductions depending on national tax systems.

The European Union and Member States should create the financial mechanisms, fiscal incentives and regulatory frameworks to support these changes.

Supermarkets, food companies and other actors in the food supply chain should implement these measures by prioritising and promoting pollinator-friendly products, while **consumers** are encouraged to support these products through their purchasing choices.

ACTION 20

Use dedicated funding to turn pollinator research into public awareness and practical change

Allocate dedicated funding to ensure that scientific research on pollinators effectively informs society and supports concrete changes in practices. This should follow a cyclical approach. This should include:

- Ensuring long-term funding for research on pollinators and biodiversity, in order to support scientific knowledge, technological innovation and the development of solutions that reduce pressures on pollinators.
- Supporting intermediaries such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and media organisations so they can translate scientific findings into accessible information for the wider public, including through public information campaigns and science communication initiatives.
- Ensuring that research results reach the actors most directly concerned, particularly farmers, so that they can integrate new knowledge and practices into their activities, including through stronger knowledge transfer between researchers, advisory services and farmers.

Public funding for the agricultural sector should also include conditions and incentives encouraging the adoption of practices that are more respectful of pollinators, so that scientific knowledge is effectively implemented in practice: in education programmes and pedagogical activities for children (e.g.: gardens in schools, pedagogical farms, etc.) because educated future generations are essential.

The European Commission and EU Member States should allocate funding for research programmes, science communication initiatives and knowledge transfer mechanisms. **Research**

institutions, NGOs and media organisations should disseminate scientific knowledge to the public, while **agricultural** advisory services and relevant stakeholders should help ensure that new knowledge and innovations are effectively implemented in practice.

ACTION 21

Align the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with the transition towards a more sustainable agricultural model

The transition towards a more sustainable agricultural model should address both the scale of farms and the type of agriculture in place, particularly large-scale monocultures that have significant impacts on ecosystems. Overall, CAP support should actively encourage the shift towards agricultural practices that reduce monocultures, diversify land use and contribute to the protection of pollinators and ecosystems.

CAP measures should therefore support smaller and more diversified farms, which often rely on practices that are more favourable to biodiversity, while introducing stronger environmental conditionalities for large-scale farms, especially those based on intensive monocultures.

- CAP support should also move beyond a predominantly area-based logic, so that public funding does not mainly reward the amount of land farmed but better reflects the actual contribution of farms to biodiversity and pollinator protection.
- In this perspective, the CAP could introduce a fair and transparent scoring system based on ecological criteria, such as reduced pesticide use, biodiversity-friendly practices, habitat preservation and more diversified land use.
- This system should rely on independent monitoring carried out by an external body, in order to reduce the risks of fraud, corruption and greenwashing.
- The CAP should also take into account the evolution of farms over time, ensuring that farms growing from small to larger operations continue to meet sustainability requirements and that public funding remains aligned with environmental objectives.

CAP support should also provide targeted assistance to vulnerable farmers and to those who are starting, or considering starting, a transition towards more sustainable or organic practices, including support to offset temporary losses in income or yield during the transition period.

The **European Commission** and **EU Member States** should reform and implement the CAP to better support this transition taking into account local sensitivities in the scoring system. **EU Member States** should integrate these objectives into their national CAP strategic plans, ensure that funding mechanisms reflect sustainability goals. **Regional authorities** should also play a role in adapting implementation to local farming realities, soil conditions and environmental needs.

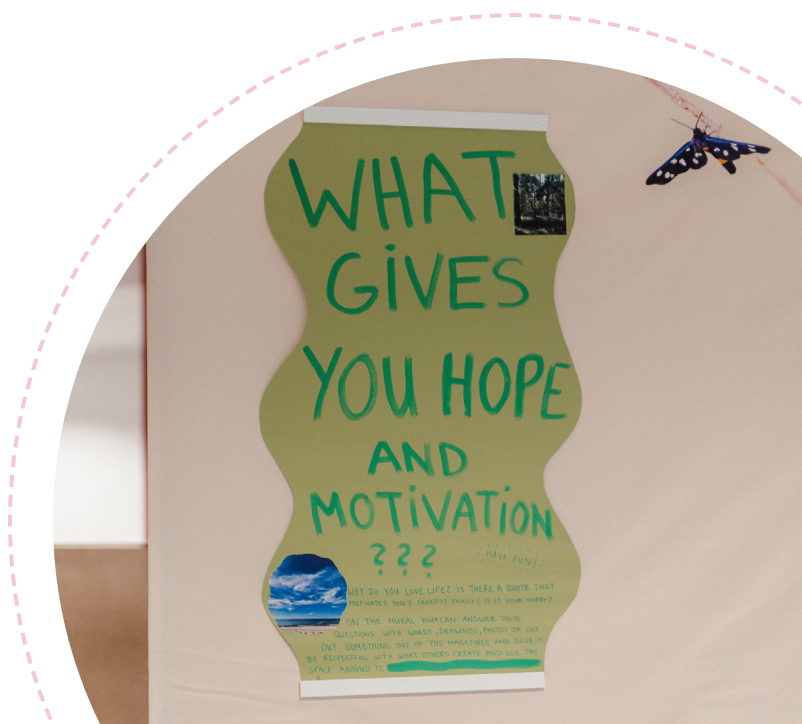
ACTION 22

Develop European policies to encourage banks to finance the ecological transition of farms

We recommend that **EU institutions and Member States** regulate and guide private banks and public investment banks so that they better support the ecological transition of farms, including by requiring them to dedicate a minimum percentage of their agricultural loans to farmers implementing ecological practices, and to increase this percentage progressively in line with the goals of the ecological transition because in some cases banks are reluctant to finance the ecological transition of farms, even though many farmers want to make this transition and need access to loans to do so. Loans are not the main source of funding, but they can represent a large part of the financial support needed by farmers.

Public policy also matters. When EU and national policies do not send a strong and stable signal in favour of sustainable farming, this can discourage both public and private investment.

EU institutions and Member States, particularly to regulate banks and define the framework, as well as private banks and public investment banks.



Awareness and cultural change

What are we calling for

We see awareness raising and cultural change as long-term processes that must accompany – and be supported by – policy measures.

We call for raising awareness of the importance of pollinators and the issue of pollinator decline, including in relation to food production, from a young age and throughout life. These efforts should foster a positive perception of pollinators and inspire a sense of urgency among citizens to take action. It should include concrete tools for individuals and community mobilization.

It is crucial to reach those who are not currently interested in the issue of pollinator decline, and to consider varied target groups when planning awareness-raising activities (e.g. children vs adolescents vs adults, urban vs. rural, people with less time, activists, etc.).

Furthermore, companies must be held accountable for their role in the decline of pollinators. Consumers should be provided with clear information on the impact that the products they consume have on pollinators. At the same time, consumers should be enabled to make the right choices through other means, e.g. funding.

At the same time, we do not see awareness raising as a stand-alone solution. Without supportive policies and incentives, awareness risks remaining disconnected from real change.

Actions we propose

ACTION 23

Add knowledge about the decline of pollinators to the common school curriculum

Ministries of Education and Culture should add knowledge about the decline of pollinators (under the EU biodiversity package) to the common school curriculum from the early ages to young adulthood, in a cross-cutting manner and adapted to the specifics of each country. This curriculum should include more concrete, hands-on actions, such as pollinator week, or welcoming a farmer in school or going to the field for more awareness-raising experiences. Hands-on experiences are transformative. Young people and children (students) can be multipliers.

ACTION 24

Curriculum, complemented by Green Week, to raise awareness on pollinators

Schools could strengthen environmental awareness among young people by introducing a flexible current-affairs course that allows teachers to adapt topics to evolving social and environmental developments. To complement this continuous learning, **schools** could organise an annual 'Green Week' aimed at drawing attention to environmental issues through activities, workshops, and competitions between schools. **Student councils** could play an active role in raising awareness, organising initiatives and engaging other students in environmental topics. By combining a flexible educational course with visible annual activities such as Green Week, this approach would help ensure both continuity and sustained attention to environmental challenges among students.

ACTION 25

Pollinator friendly branding

To help consumers make more informed choices, a Pollinator-Friendly Branding initiative could be introduced that clearly communicates the impact of products on pollinators. Products that are pollinator-friendly, such as organic options, should be visually highlighted and placed more prominently in stores to make them more attractive and easier to choose. At the same time, products that are not pollinator-friendly should carry a clear label identifying their impact. To ensure the effectiveness of the initiative, the branding should be accompanied by clear communication explaining why pollinators matter and how consumer choices affect them, helping people understand the reasons behind the label.



Monitoring

What are we calling for

The European Union (EU) should have a strengthened role in the monitoring and follow up of pollinator conservation measures by

- establishing stricter oversight mechanisms and clearer accountability for non-compliance, with a clear follow up mechanisms including financial penalties
- providing greater support and incentives for actors who effectively implement these measures.

This monitoring will operate at both national and European levels to ensure coordinated and consistent implementation across countries. Regular review mechanisms should be held to assess progress, ensure transparency, and support continuous compliance with conservation commitments.

Actions we propose

ACTION 26

Establish an independent and public auditing body on the application of the current rules of pollinators' protection (at EU and Member State level)

This body, under coordination of the **EU**, will ensure monitoring of the current rules on pollinators protection. It will proceed with measurements before the implementation of conservation measures, during their application, and after completion, using a set of clear ecological and performance indicators.

EU Member States (and potentially stakeholders) would be required to submit annual reports to the EU detailing compliance with the conservation measures, ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Funding and financial incentives should be linked to outcomes, so that effective measures result in additional support.

ACTION 27

Establish a permanent funding system to ensure an independent and scientific monitoring follow-up

This fund financed through taxes levied on **pesticide-producing companies** to ensure that research and monitoring of pollinator conservation are neutral and free from corporate influence.

Participating scientific institutions must formally declare the absence of conflicts of interest.

The **EU** will manage the collected funds to carry out independent monitoring, with regular audits to verify that those responsible for oversight remain fully independent.

ACTION 28

Systematic and independent monitoring of pollinators to assess the current population status and overall well-being of pollinators.

This monitoring should

- Measure their abundance and richness and assess improvements linked to the conservation measures being implemented.
- Analyse the relationship between the implementation of protection measures and the status of pollinator populations.
- Provide a transparent, outcome-based framework where farmers are incentivized to improve biodiversity and pollinator habitats,

This monitoring must ensure equitable treatment and measurable ecological benefits across the EU. It could lead to financial incentives based on the efforts that contribute most effectively to pollinator conservation and overall ecosystem health. This approach ensures that agricultural and land-use practices are aligned with measurable ecological outcomes.



Enforcement, implementation, and interest groups

What are we calling for

We call for a:

- More consistent implementation of rules.
- Balanced mix of incentives and sanctions.
- Greater transparency in decision-making processes, implementation and law enforcement.
- Clear boundaries for the role of interest groups.
- Reduced influence of lobby groups representing interests that harm nature and the environment.
- Economically stronger actors should not have more political influence than other groups and should not overrule scientific findings.
- A stronger role for citizens, science and civil society in decision-making processes.

Actions we propose

ACTION 29

Sanctions for corruption

More significant and effective sanctions should be imposed for corruption and violations of transparency rules. Enforcement of the existing rules should be improved. Citizens and civil society should have more power to intervene if rules are breached, e.g. with the help of the court system or a Citizens' Assembly.



ACTION 30

Annual report on the state of pollinators

Public access to information on the current situation of pollinators and the measures of protecting them on a Member State level through an annual (at least) report – showcased in an engaging communication medium (documentary on Netflix, Spotify podcasts, etc.). The report serves to follow the progress in an accessible way and provides an opportunity for the public to interact better with the findings, while making it more traceable where Member States neglect certain areas.

ACTION 31

A multi-level stakeholder dialogue on pollinators in each EU Member State

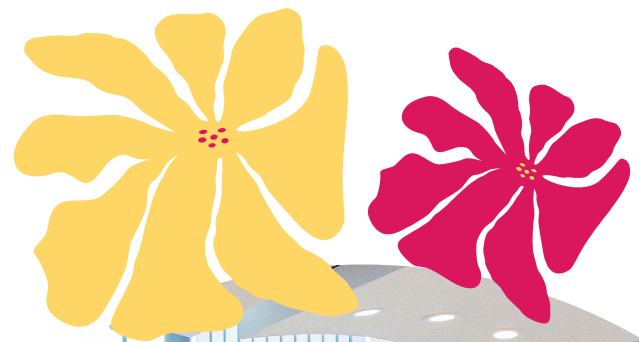
These series of dialogs, from local to national level, should feed into the EU policymaking process. The results should be taken into account in each annual policy cycle through a clear feedback loop. Participation should be optional, except for those receiving EU funding, for whom it should be compulsory. The mass consultation would take place by post, while the local and national forums would be held face to face. As these annual consultations would be costly, we suggest funding them through tax-deductible support from business organisations, while ensuring independence in funding.

ACTION 32

Strengthening the EU transparency register

The transparency register is mandatory and requires precise disclosure of all lobbying, spending, clients, and specific policies targeted. But it should be strengthened and include a legislative footprint: for all money that is passed, internal or external, names have to be shown / communicated, along with what they talked about.

It should include **Members of the European Parliament** and members of the **Council of the European Union** as well.





PART III:

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PERMANENT YOUTH CITIZENS ASSEMBLY



Eurasian Hummingbird Hawkmoth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*).
Lombardy, Italy. Picture by Gregoire Dubois

Statement on the role of young citizens in biodiversity governance

As members of the Young Citizens Assembly on Pollinators, we believe it is crucial that young European citizens have a particular say in biodiversity governance, as we will be **unquestionably affected** by long-term biodiversity loss: we will still be present in 60 years and will have to live with the consequences.

Moreover, we are convinced that we can bring added value to policy discussions and action around biodiversity. As young citizens, we are **open to change, creative, and willing to challenge existing norms**; a mindset needed to address the complex issue of biodiversity decline. Young people always had a spirit of revolution and change. We also have **energy and determination** to invest today and carry this fight into the future.

While we will be most strongly affected, many of us feel **underrepresented** in the current political system, where decision-making power is disproportionately held by older generations and decision-making processes are slow and bureaucratic. We often feel overlooked by politicians and lack the space to really impact policy. We identify these as root causes for the feelings of powerlessness, weariness, skepticism, and loss of faith in politics that many young people experience. There is disinterest due to political immobility and the feeling of being abandoned. Our generation feels that whatever we do, we cannot change anything.

To counter this, we agree on the following principles and conditions to foster young citizens' engagement in biodiversity governance:

- We, as young citizens whose future is mortgaged by today's decisions, should have **an intergenerational right to participate** in policymaking. We support opportunities such as this Assembly; however, we want more than symbolic, one-off consultations. We want our right to participate to be formally recognized, and to be involved in a greater and permanent way.
- These opportunities to participate should be designed to appeal to us and reach us directly online, in school, in our everyday life. To meaningfully participate, we need to know about participation opportunities and be informed about the biodiversity issue and its relevance. **Awareness** is a precondition to our mobilization. Additionally, youth should be empowered as political actors through political education in schools, which should foster a culture that makes us feel responsible and act together.
- For the voice of youth to be legitimate, we need young people from rural, working and vulnerable backgrounds at the decision table too, not only urban, college-educated youth or activists with free time. The **inclusion of all youth** requires incentives and mechanisms such as random selection and fair financial compensation.
- To table the issue of biodiversity loss, we want to emphasize the importance of involving also specifically **affected groups** and **all generations**: all need to cooperate. Not only is the population ageing, but it should not be for the youth alone to carry all the expectations and responsibilities on their shoulders.
- Finally, we call for **clear, transparent follow-up mechanisms** and **accountability** from policymakers: a long report that nobody ever looks at is pointless. Political institutions must be legally obliged to respond to recommendations from young citizens in a reasoned manner, explaining why they accept or reject them. This would foster trust in citizen participation and demonstrate responsible management of public resources. We urge policymakers to stay true to their promise to follow up on our recommendations.



A. Purpose, mandate and functions

The Permanent European Young Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity (the Assembly) is an independent, consultative body that amplifies the voice of young people in European decision-making. Its main role is:

- To identify and set priorities on critical issues related to biodiversity and pollinators (agenda-setting)
- To provide formal recommendations and guidance on legislation, policies, and initiatives affecting biodiversity, ensuring that:
 - » policymakers are required to consult the Assembly on relevant topics, and
 - » public authorities are obliged to respond to its recommendations, clearly explaining which aspects have been considered, which have not, and the reasoning behind their decisions.

Within such a process, the Assembly may also express critical opinions and raise concerns regarding policies or measures it considers insufficient or harmful to biodiversity.

The Assembly should also have the capacity to request a temporary moratorium or delay on legislative proposals that may negatively affect biodiversity, allowing additional time for review, deliberation, and response. This period could also be used to raise public awareness, engage stakeholders, and promote informed debate on the potential impacts of such policies.

Given the broad scope of biodiversity, the Assembly may choose to focus its work on specific topics. These may rotate or evolve over time, allowing the Assembly to address different aspects of biodiversity and pollinators according to emerging challenges and collective decisions.

The Assembly gathers input through internal deliberations and broad citizen engagement, including contributions from scientists, citizens, and relevant stakeholders, promoting evidence-based, inclusive, and youth-driven policy recommendations across Europe.

The Assembly addresses itself at both the EU and the local level.

B. Composition, selection and rotation

We suggest that the next Assembly will be composed of:

- 40% randomly selected citizens.
- 40% citizens with experience that is relevant to the topic of the Assembly (either practical, academic, or professional).
- And 20% citizens who were members of the previous Assembly to guarantee the knowledge transfer.

For this last group,

- In case there are more than 20% interested in participating, they will be asked to complete a questionnaire about their motivation, their participation in the task forces, and attendance during Assembly sessions. This serves to identify people with greater ability to transfer knowledge, but also diversity of the group will be taken into account. The places will be distributed among the most qualified randomly.
- In case there are less than 20% who want to participate, the remaining percentage will be distributed between the other two categories equally.



C. Deliberative design

The Assembly should be composed of onsite sessions and online sessions:

- It should meet 4 times per year, every 3 months to have in depth discussions and take decisions
- In between, online meetings for working on documents and reacting to political development should be organized.

Participants should receive structured preparatory support before their first in-person meeting. This should include:

- Online meetings explaining how the Assembly process works.
- Clear guidance on the objectives and structure of the upcoming sessions including knowledge inputs to enable the preparation of questions.
- Background information on the European Union framework (EU institutions, legislation, policy making process).
- Information and links to further resources on the specific topic under discussion (e.g. pollinators). This information should be centralised in a handbook provided at the start of the process and used throughout the sessions. Any necessary additional information should be received prior to each session to enable timely preparation.

Participants have different ways to engage further into this process:

- A coordination group/ core group of voluntary Assembly members should take responsibility for organising the Assembly.
- The next Assembly should decide on the number and selection of the members, the responsibilities and internal organisation of this coordination group/core group.
- Through taskforces: They should be better supported at the beginning, and there should be more coordination across them. They should have more time dedicated to them during the sessions, establishing optional extra days for their members before the sessions in presence (from the second session on). Participants should receive certificates of participation to recognise their work.

Members finishing their mandate in the Assembly should have the possibility of staying involved through an alumni network.

Participants should receive recognition for these engagements.

D. Knowledge

Throughout the process, the Assembly must have a balanced debate and full exposure to perspectives from diverse and opposing viewpoints. The Assembly members will need to meet:

- Controversial and affected stakeholders
- Experts
- EU Officials

Assembly members should have a say in experts' selection as this increases engagement and leads to more relevant knowledge provision.

Expert and stakeholder input should be delivered preferably in smaller groups (e.g. working groups) where participants can ask questions freely, interact directly, and engage more deeply in a lower pressure setting. Participants shall receive prior information to prepare questions for the discussions. Experts and stakeholders should be well briefed on the knowledge needs and expectations of the Assembly.

Regarding EU officials, the knowledge must be data-based and fact-supported. Assembly members must have the ability to submit questions before their presentations and vote on prioritizing them. There should still be room for open questions to balance the previously sent questions. Unanswered questions need to be answered in written form after the Assembly session.



E. Communication

The Assembly should have a professional, visual communication style for dissemination and sharing the results. It must be based on a broad multichannel communication strategy. Such a communication strategy should cover a broad range of channels, including traditional and modern types of media, to reach out to persons of all ages, especially young people, and to generate trust in the Assembly. This should include newspapers, ads/explanatory videos on TV, cinema, social media, public transport, virtual reality (VR), festival booths. This strategy should also try to reach out through networks and/or established partner organizations such as teachers, and elders' organizations.

Specific attention should be put on:

- The future official invitations to become an Assembly Member so that people do not think it is a kind of scam and feel reassured this is an official initiative.
- The website of the Assembly should be overworked by a team of young graphic designers that can match the style and user behavior of young people. It should:
 - » Have a dedicated page and domain name that is easy to find through google and other search engines.
 - » Improve from the current citizen engagement platform.
 - » Have an easy way to access documents in a more organised way,
 - » Provide the wider public with a more attractive and engaging way to give feedback on the topics under discussion.
 - » Be coherent with the visual identity of the Assembly, as described above.



F. Link with national authorities

Assembly representatives for institutional engagement and dissemination

At the end of each Assembly, 27 elected participants (one from each EU Member State) should be appointed to represent the Assembly at different levels of institutions (national and EU) in order to strengthen the visibility, legitimacy, and dissemination of the Assembly's work across Europe.

The elected representatives would act as points of contact between the Assembly and European or national institutions. We recommend that they work alongside experts in order to reinforce their credibility. This body would change after each new Assembly to ensure fair representation across the different Assemblies.

In parallel, each participant in the Assembly will help share information about the process and disseminate its results within their country during and after their participation.

To ensure the effectiveness of this system, elected representatives and all participants should be provided with communication tools and guidance, as well as official support from the EU institutions to ensure it does not go unnoticed. These tools should allow us to easily explain the Assembly's role, its recommendations, and its impact.

Connecting the Assembly with national public debate across Europe

The Assembly should encourage public debates at local and national levels (e.g. raising awareness, putting key issues on the public agenda, and creating spaces for dialogue, etc.) to ensure that the discussions and outcomes of the Assembly resonate beyond the European level. This could be achieved in collaboration with NGOs, experts, civil society organisations, and local institutions.

To support this objective, communication with the Assembly should also be significantly strengthened to ensure that it becomes visible and well known at different levels. This could include inviting at least one journalist from each EU Member State to attend the Assembly, ensuring media coverage across Europe.

We believe working with communication professionals, such as a dedicated social media manager, could help develop high-quality content and a coherent communication strategy.

G. Link with EU authorities

We request to delegate to a few members of the Assembly the right to act as an advisory body to the European Parliament's designated committees (AGRI/ENVI) connected to pollinators to provide the perspective of the youth during the deliberation.

There should be clear contact persons for the Assembly on the political side (the European Commission, but also the European Parliament and the Council)

We request to receive feedback on our recommendations from the European Parliament in written form within 4 months. Feedback needs to answer feasibility and provide detailed justification on why something is possible or not. Asking for a transparent tracking/status update to see where our recommendation package is within the policy process and sharing feedback gradually.





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