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## Take action: say no to biodiversity offsetting

25 SEPTEMBER 2014

In its "No Net Loss" initiative, the European Union proposes to introduce a regulation on biodiversity offsetting, i.e. making up for biodiversity loss in one area by introducing protections in another, a strategy that, according to Friends of the Earth Europe, is deeply flawed and bears high risks. ([https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee\\_position\\_nature\\_is\\_not\\_for\\_sale.pdf](https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee_position_nature_is_not_for_sale.pdf))

The European Commission, the executive body of the European Union, is currently holding a public consultation on this issue until the 17th of October (<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=NoNetLoss&lang=en>). Friends of the Earth Europe is asserting that this policy of biodiversity offsetting will create additional pressure on Europe's biodiversity, and is calling on its supporters to make use of this consultation and voice their concerns about this mechanism. By promising to restore or even increase biodiversity somewhere else to make up for its destruction, the mechanism paves the way for destroying it in the first place – it delivers a 'license to trash'.

**Friedrich Wulf, biodiversity campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe**, warned of the dangers of such an approach: *"A market-based offsetting mechanism will put a price on nature and turn it into a commodity to be traded on markets. This ignores the fact that each part of Europe's biodiversity is unique and – due to its complexity – cannot be truly replaced. There is certainly no way of offsetting extinction of a species, which is what we risk with a policy that mistakenly treats nature like an accountant's ledger."*

These concerns are discussed further in Friends of the Earth Europe's new position paper on biodiversity offsetting ([https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee\\_position\\_nature\\_is\\_not\\_for\\_sale.pdf](https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee_position_nature_is_not_for_sale.pdf)).

In its recommended answers to the European Commission's public consultation, Friends of the Earth Europe demands that approaches to avoid damage in the first place must be strengthened – for example, by paying more attention to biodiversity in land-use planning and land management decisions, setting incentives for biodiversity retention, and implementing existing conservation obligations, laws and regulations.

**Friedrich Wulf** continued: *"Over thirty years of experience with offsetting shows how difficult it is to replace nature once destroyed. Offsetting efforts have often had poor overall results and there has been no case where this mechanism has been able to achieve no net loss on a national level. Rather, it lowers protection standards and sanctions the destruction of nature for economic profit. That's why we and our supporters are calling on the EU to abandon biodiversity offsetting and concentrate on policies that prevent biodiversity loss in the first place."*

Friends of the Earth Europe has provided recommendations for its supporters taking part in the public consultation ([https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/public\\_consultation2.pdf](https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/public_consultation2.pdf)), which can be filled out on the European Commission website. (<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=NoNetLoss&lang=en>)

**Position paper: Nature is not for sale (September 2014)**  
 .pdf 334.41 KB  
 ([http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/news/foee\\_position\\_nature\\_is\\_not\\_for\\_sale.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/news/foee_position_nature_is_not_for_sale.pdf))

**Friends of the Earth Europe recommendations on filling in the No Net Loss consultation**  
 .pdf 378.49 KB  
 ([http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/news/public\\_consultation2.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/news/public_consultation2.pdf))

### Related Issues

[Biodiversity \(/biodiversity\)](#)

### More resources

**European Commission: Public consultation on the 'No Net Loss' initiative**  
 ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/nnl\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/nnl_en.htm))