

Press release

Ireland votes in favour of Nature Restoration Law at EU Council meeting

From [Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage \(/en/organisation/departments/housing-local-government-and-heritage/\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments/housing-local-government-and-heritage/)

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Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, and Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Eamon Ryan, have today indicated Ireland's support for the revised Nature Restoration Law proposal at the EU Council.

This follows many months of negotiations at the national level and with other Member States across Europe to reach agreement, led by EU Presidency holders, Sweden.

At the meeting of the EU Environment Council in Luxembourg this morning, agreement was reached on a general approach that will serve as a mandate for negotiations with the EU Parliament and Commission (known as trilogues) on the final shape of the legislation.

The revised text maintains the high ambition for nature set by the EU Commission while providing flexibility with regard to implementation at the national level by allowing Member States to define appropriate restoration measures to reach the targets through the preparation, content, assessment and review of the Nature Restoration Plans. The government has made several drafting proposals throughout the negotiations to ensure the best fit for Ireland's nature and people, taking account of the particular landscape, seascape, land use, climate, challenges and opportunities for nature restoration in this country. Ireland's contributions have also underlined the important role that agriculture and food production holds, both economically and culturally, and the need to balance the future of viable farming with the restoration of nature.

Minister Noonan commented:

"Today is a great day for nature. I believe that the text agreed here in Luxembourg this morning is a balanced and positive one that will benefit nature and people right across Ireland. The Irish Government has worked collaboratively at the national level and with its partners in Europe to ensure that the EU Council's proposal is ambitious and implementable. It will see increased investment in rural Ireland through voluntary and well-resourced schemes, while also bringing back wildlife and restoring wild places so that they can continue to provide us with the many ecosystem services that we depend on.

"The proposed Nature Restoration Regulation brings with it an overarching restoration objective for the long-term recovery of nature in the EU's land and sea areas with binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species. Nature is our lifeline and it's vital that we restore it."

Minister Ryan said:

"The EU and its Member States must continue to show leadership on the global stage when it comes to tackling the biodiversity crisis. Ireland supports the text presented today by the Presidency and thanks the Swedish team, and colleagues in the Member States, as well as the Commission for their tireless work in getting this proposal to the table today.

"In planning how we will implement the regulation, when adopted, we fully recognise the numerous stakeholders that need to be involved, including our farming and fishing communities. They see the realities of biodiversity loss and climate change first-hand and its impacts on the everyday running of their businesses. Restoring nature is something many Irish farmers are already engaged in through our current and future agri-environmental schemes, such as ACRES and organic farming. The government will continue to support them to take these actions so they can prepare for a sustainable and resilient future."

Key elements of the Council proposal include:

- a definition of rewetting that allows each Member State to determine for itself how best to achieve the targets as they relate to national circumstances
- new provisions relating to the development of renewable energy within a nature restoration context
- targets for cities and urban areas, such as increased tree canopy cover to help keep streets cool
- further targets for marine ecosystems, rivers, pollinator populations, agricultural ecosystems and forests

The European Parliament's Environment Committee will vote on 27 June followed by a vote by the entire European Parliament in July. Following this, the European Commission, Council and Parliament will enter negotiations. Ireland will then have a two year window to prepare a national plan covering the period 2026-30.

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