

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

NATURE RESTORATION LAW

VdA EXPERTISE



August 2024

Regulation (EU) 2024/1991, of 24 June, known as the Nature Restoration Law, was published on 29 July 2024.

Following a long negotiation process, the new legislation corresponds to a key element of the European Green Deal, strengthening the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the EU Forest Strategy for 2030.

The main goal of the Nature Restoration Law is to enhance Member States' obligation to restore ecosystems across the EU, aiming to recover **at least 20% of the EU's land areas and at least 20% of sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.**

Scope

The Nature Restoration Law foresees specific legally binding targets and obligations for each of the following categories of ecosystems:

- Terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems;
- Marine ecosystems;
- Urban ecosystems;
- The natural connectivity of rivers and natural functions of the related floodplains;
- Pollinating insects;
- Agricultural ecosystems;
- Forest ecosystems.

National Restoration Plans

In order to achieve the targets established, Member States must adopt and implement **National Restoration Plans**, covering the period up to 2050. These plans shall include, among others, the quantification of the areas to be restored, the description of the restoration measures planned, as well as monitoring rules. The first drafts of the National Restoration Plans must be submitted by 1 September 2026.

Other obligations

Besides obligations to achieve the restoration targets through National Restoration Plans, and to enhance compliance with such targets, the new Regulation imposes the following requirements on Member States:

- To contribute to the **planting of at least three billion additional trees**, when identifying and implementing restoration measures;

- To guarantee that habitats subject to restoration measures are **not subject to any deterioration** after restoration, and **prevent significant deterioration in areas in good condition** where restoration measures have not been implemented;
- To **invest on knowledge regarding the conditions of habitats**, in order to adequately quantify their improvement, by complying with the ecosystem-specific targets laid down in the Regulation for the determination of habitat conditions.

Monitoring and reporting

The Nature Restoration Law requires Member States to monitor specific elements relating to the ecosystems covered and the restoration measures implemented under this legislation.

In addition, Member States will need to report to the European Commission on the areas subject to restoration measures, every three years, starting in June 2028, and to submit progress reports every six years, starting from June 2031. The European Environment Agency will collaborate with the Commission on the analysis of the reports submitted and the preparation of Union-wide technical reports consolidating the progress, achievements and meeting of nature restoration targets.

Next steps

The Nature Restoration Law will enter into force on 18 August 2024. Following this, the European Commission shall adopt implementing acts to operationalize the nature restoration system, namely, regarding the uniformization of National Restoration Plans, the definition of the satisfactory levels of restoration of ecosystems and of monitoring methods, and the content of reporting obligations.

Though the obligations arising from this Regulation are directed at Member States, it is expected that the implementation of the imposed measures might also have an impact in the exercise of private rights over territory.

Contacts



ASSUNÇÃO CRISTAS
ACR@VDA.PT



CATARINA PINTO CORREA
CPC@VDA.PT



JOÃO ALMEIDA FILIPE
JDAF@VDA.PT



CAROLINA VAZA
CVS@VDA.PT