

## Introduction

Hello. In this video we're going to talk about the topic "mobilising the private sector". First, I'm going to talk about what the European Commission is doing to mobilise businesses, to best preserve natural capital. Then, I'm going to speak a little about the incentives for companies and businesses to act to preserve natural capital. Then, we'll finish with a few suggestions for the future.

### 1. European platform for Business and Biodiversity

I'd like to speak to you about the European platform for Business and Biodiversity in the European Commission. Everyone in a society is important for preserving biodiversity. That includes national, regional, and local authorities, the academic world, citizens, and of course, the private sector which includes SMEs and large multinational businesses. It's important because the size of the private sector is very large, and thus so is its impact on biodiversity. And I'm going to take a few minutes to talk to you about that.

In 2014, the European Commission launched the Business and Biodiversity platform to create a strategic dialogue between the Commission and the private sector about the aims of the 2020 biodiversity initiative. It allows the Commission to work directly with businesses and financial institutions by giving them the chance to present and to develop their work linked to biodiversity. The Business and Biodiversity programme has a big message. It's enough to see the growing number of members which has now reached over 250, with more than 100 businesses, and that includes SMEs and large multinationals. In general, we observe that beyond the platform, there's a growing number of businesses of all sizes who are engaging in activities for biodiversity and for natural capital, and this is a positive trend.

### 2. Activities and motivations for businesses to take action on the preservation of natural capital, as there is an ever growing number

Secondly, I'm going to talk about the activities and motivations for businesses to take action on the preservation of natural capital, as there is an ever growing number. More and more businesses are aware of the problems linked to the loss of biodiversity and to the expression "natural capital". The importance of managing natural capital is acknowledged more and more by management services beyond questions of sustainability. More and more companies are also active in taking stock of natural capital by creating environmental account sheets or environmental profit and loss accounts.

There are also innovative solutions such as green infrastructure which produces advantages for the environment, as well as for the economy and the company. Green infrastructure consists of working with nature whilst offering long term economic efficiency. It's a case of, for example, using natural water purification systems instead of using the traditional water treatment plants. The idea of green infrastructure is known to several businesses nowadays, which wasn't the case only five years ago.

The financial sector is also more and more involved in preserving natural capital. For example, there are some initiatives which focus explicitly on the importance of including natural capital in financial decision making for banks, insurance firms, and other financial players. Finally, several businesses have new incentives to take natural capital into account. At the beginning it was a case of reducing impacts on natural capital to a minimum amount with a view to limit risks in the supply chain or in future laws. Now, beyond that aspect of risk management, several firms consider natural capital management as an opportunity to provide more responsible services and products in terms of environmental damages and as the way to attract a more informed and responsible client base. This contributes to a more sustainable firm in the long term.

In the European Union, several member states have already launched, and continue to launch, business and biodiversity platforms. After the launch of a platform in Finland in 2014, Poland followed with its platform in 2015, and now two or three member states are in the process of preparing the launch of business and biodiversity platforms. Now, of the twenty eight member states, there are platforms in more or less half of them.

On the whole, we're happy to see the existence of an impressive list of initiatives. This also allows different players to commit to working together in a collective spirit of transparency and cooperation so as to cast light on the importance of natural capital for all members of society, to better communicate the good practices of growth in the way that we consume and produce.

## **Conclusion : Despite the progress, a greater mobilisation is necessary**

To conclude, the message is that despite the progress a greater mobilisation is necessary. The evaluation half way through the European Union strategy in favour of biodiversity shows that despite these efforts, the loss of biodiversity continues in Europe and in the world with devastating effects on the environment, society, and economy. We must intensify our efforts to implement the existing legislation, to better integrate biodiversity in the main sectors and to make sure that all operators recognize the value of biodiversity in their decision making. There are already good examples, especially in the private sector, but we must mobilise more and more to really be able to reverse the negative trend and to see concrete improvement.