

Sister Projects Release Joint White Paper Calling for Stronger EU Action to Protect and Restore Europe's Wetlands

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Wetlands are among Europe's most valuable ecosystems, providing essential services such as **water purification, flood regulation, carbon storage, coastal protection, biodiversity support and socio economic benefits** for local communities. Yet they continue to be lost and degraded due to **drainage, reclamation, land use change and climate pressures**. As highlighted in the white paper, this degradation is turning wetlands from **carbon sinks into greenhouse gas sources**, undermining EU climate commitments and increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events.

Four major EU funded Sister Projects, **ALFAWetlands, RESTORE4Cs, REWET** and **WET HORIZONS**, have joined forces with **ForPeat, Wetland4Change** and **Palus Demos** to publish a landmark white paper, **Prioritising Wetland Conservation and Restoration in Europe | United voices for more policy impact**. The document synthesises scientific evidence, policy analysis and on the ground experience from across Europe, calling for urgent, coordinated action to halt wetland degradation and accelerate restoration. *"Despite working in different contexts and geographies, we discovered that many of the barriers we face are shared. Equally, we found strong agreement on the solutions and policy actions needed to unlock progress", said Hannah Porada, from the International Union for Conservation of Nature in the Netherlands (IUCN NL) and co-author of the white paper.*

Drawing on experiences from restoration projects across Europe, the authors identify **four strategic priorities** that should guide future policy development. These include **improving coherence across European policy frameworks, mobilising both public and private investment, enabling restoration at landscape scale** through coordinated governance, and **strengthening monitoring systems** alongside meaningful **stakeholder participation**.

The white paper illustrates how these approaches are already delivering results on the ground. Case studies from **Finland** illustrate how coordinated national programmes, voluntary landowner participation and blended financing mechanisms can successfully restore thousands of hectares of peatlands. Experiences from **Germany** show the importance of participatory governance and the development of sustainable bio-based value chains to make restoration economically viable. Meanwhile, work carried out in **Spain** highlights the need for restoration strategies tailored to the specific hydrological characteristics of each wetland, supported by robust monitoring and scientific evidence.

The Sister Projects call on EU institutions, Member States, regional authorities and stakeholders to act decisively: wetland restoration is not only an environmental imperative, it is a strategic investment in Europe's climate resilience, water security and long term socio economic well being.

[Download the full white paper here.](#)

For more information, please contact:
info@rewet-he.eu