

Empower nature, climate and future now!

*Declaration of the “Power to the Peatlands” conference 19th to 21st
September 2023, Antwerp, Belgium*



Antwerp, 21 September 2023

Peatlands can help solve many challenges that people face now and in the future. Peatlands are huge, but vulnerable carbon stocks. They store and regulate water, harbour unique biodiversity, and provide essential social and cultural values. Peatlands must be wet to fully provide these functions.

Drained peatlands cause massive economic and environmental harm; by releasing the previously stored carbon, they globally emit double the greenhouse gases produced by air travel.

We have to act together. Land users, land owners, decision makers, NGOs, scientists and entrepreneurs must find common ground. Conservation, rewetting and restoration of peatlands are key to reach global and EU goals with respect to climate, soil health, water, biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. We feel the urgency, we know what to do. We must act now!

- 1. Preserve all natural peatlands and organic soils within Europe and beyond**
 - Immediately stop any further drainage or reclamation.
- 2. Accelerate rewetting of drained peatland**
 - Rewet to stop CO₂ emissions and to enhance water retention, water quality, and biodiversity.
- 3. Move rapidly to sustainable business models and wet peatland use**
 - Integrate environmental benefits, rural income generation and production of high-quality biomass.
 - Phase out all drainage-based land use and public payments encouraging these.
 - Stimulate the creative entrepreneurship of farmers, land owners and downstream industries.
 - Progress rewetting, paludiculture and carbon farming in agricultural policy and payment schemes.
 - Stop all extraction and use of peat.
- 4. Make high-resolution open-source data available to guide and facilitate conservation, rewetting, restoration and sustainable use**
 - Support peatland mapping, monitoring and research to improve and verify national greenhouse gas inventories, biodiversity reporting, and carbon standards.
- 5. Acknowledge the central and connecting role of water in the landscape**
 - Treat peatlands as integral parts of catchment areas to improve landscape-wide water security.
- 6. Include ambitious peatland restoration targets in the Nature Restoration Law!**
 - Make the Nature Restoration Law consistent with other and overarching EU and global policy targets and commitments.

Power to the Peatlands!

Supporting Organisations:



ADMIRE



Traditio et Innovatio



Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland





ESTONIAN FUND FOR NATURE



Soil Conservation Service of Iceland



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036484 (WaterLANDS). This output reflects the views of the authors and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.