



Joint Management of European Nature:

The Natura 2000 Network and Nature Restoration as an Opportunity

27 November 2025 | 09:00 – 14:00

*Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU
Rue Joseph II 14, 1000 Brussels*

As Europe faces growing environmental challenges and increasing demands for sustainable land use, the joint management of natural resources has never been more vital. This conference brings together key stakeholders from across the EU to explore how the Natura 2000 network and nature restoration initiatives can serve as powerful tools for biodiversity preservation, climate resilience, and rural revitalization. By highlighting cross-sector cooperation and shared experiences, the event aims to spark dialogue and inspire concrete actions toward a more integrated and ambitious approach to managing Europe's natural heritage. With nature restoration high on the political agenda, this is a timely opportunity to align policy, practice, and partnership.

Programme

08:30 – 09:00 *Registration of participants*

09:00 – 09:30 **Welcome and Opening remarks**

- **Dr. Draško Veselinovič** – Director of the Slovenian Business & Research Association, Brussels (SBRA)
- **Andreja Viher White** – Deputy Head of Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the EU
- **Miran Gajšek, M.Sc.** – State Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia
- **Maša Žagar, M.Sc.** – State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia
- **Andrea Vettori** – European Commission, DG for Environment, Director of Directorate D – Biodiversity, Head of Unit ENV.D.3 Nature Conservation
- **Gregorio Davila Diaz** – European Commission, DG for Agriculture and Rural Development, Director of the Directorate for Common Agricultural Policy Joint Undertaking, Deputy Head of Unit B2

- 09:30 – 09:45 Opportunities for Natura 2000 and Nature Restoration: Framework and Key Challenges**
- **Dr. Katarina Groznik Zeiler** – Director General of the Directorate for Nature of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning from Slovenia

- 09:45 – 10:05 The implementation of European priorities within the current financial perspective**
- **Andrea Vettori** – Head of Unit ENV.D.3 Nature Conservation, DG for Environment, European Commission
 - **Gregorio Davila Diaz** – Deputy Head of Unit B2 – Environmental Sustainability, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

- 10:05 – 10:15 The Common Agricultural Policy, Natura 2000, and Nature Restoration: Challenges and Pathways to Solutions**
- **Doc. Dr. Tanja Šumrada, Prof. Dr. Emil Erjavec** – Professors, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

- 10:15 – 10:25 The fragile biodiversity of transitional European regions**
- **Prof. Dr. Peter Trontelj** – Professor, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

- 10:25 – 10:35 Natura 2000 in a Changing World: Insights from Long-Term Monitoring in Slovenia Assist.**
- **Prof. Dr. Al Vrezec** – Scientific Counsellor, President of Scientific Council, National Institute of Biology, Slovenia

- 10:35 – 11:00 EU Member States' Experiences and Perspectives on Natura 2000 and Nature Restoration**
- **Ivana Jelenić** - Head of Biodiversity Sector, Nature Protection Directorate, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition, Croatia (TBC)
 - **Dr. Fernando Magdaleno Mas** – Deputy Director General of Biodiversity, Forests and Desertification, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Spain

- 11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break**

- 11:15 – 12:45 Panel discussion: Towards a Thriving Natura 2000: Restoration, Cooperation, and Impact**
- **Moderator:**
 - **Miran Gajšek, M.Sc.** – State Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia
 - **Speakers:**

- **Confirmation received; specific speaker TBD** – European Commission, DG for Environment, Director of Directorate D – Biodiversity
- **Confirmation received; specific speaker TBD** – European Commission, DG for Agriculture and Rural Development, Director of the Directorate for Common Agricultural Policy Joint Undertaking
- **Dr. Katarina Groznik Zeiler** – Director General of the Directorate for Nature of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning from Slovenia
- **Maša Žagar, M.Sc.** – State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia
- **Igor Kreitmeyer** – Director General, Directorate for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition of the Republic of Croatia (TBC)
- **Maria Jesús Rodríguez de Sancho** – Director General for Biodiversity, Forests and Desertification of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge of Kingdom of Spain

Q&A and discussion

12.45 – 12.55 Coexistence of high-quality wine production and nature conservation in Slovenia

- **Robert Gorjak** – dip. WSET, Belvin (Wine School), Slovenia

12:45 – 14:00 Networking Luncheon