



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

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, Head of Unit ENV.D.3 Nature Conservation, DG for Environment, European Commission
- **Gaëlle Marion** – Head of Unit, 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

- **Prof. Dr. Emil Erjavec** – Professor, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

10:15 – 10:25 From Alps to Adriatic: Slovenia's Biodiversity in Focus

- **Prof. Dr. Peter Trontelj** – Professor, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

10:25 – 10:45 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)
- **Confirmation received; specific speaker TBD** – Spain

10:45 – 11:00 Presentation by Denmark, in its capacity as Presidency of the Council of the European Union (TBC)

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
 - **Maša Žagar, M.Sc.** – State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia

- **Dr. Katarina Groznik Zeiler** – Director General of the Directorate for Nature of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning from 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
- **Christian Holzer** – General Director for Environment and Circular Economy, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Climate and Environment, Regions and Water Management of the Republic of Austria (TBC)
- **Robert Gorjak** – Belvin Wine School, Slovenia

Q&A and discussion

12:45 – 14:00 Networking Luncheon