

Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) – Overview

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The **Nature Restoration Regulation** (NRR) (EU) 2024/1991 is the first EU-wide law on the restoration of nature and is a key component of the **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030**, which aims to reverse biodiversity loss and make ecosystems more resilient. It **obliges all Member States to take concrete measures to restore degraded ecosystems, halt biodiversity loss and make cities more climate resilient**.

How? By 2030, at least 20 % of degraded land and sea areas in the EU are to be restored, and by 2050 all degraded ecosystems are to be brought into good condition.

Why is the NRR necessary?

- 85% of habitats in the EU are in a poor state.
- Protection alone is not enough – nature must be actively restored.
- Biodiversity is crucial for the economy, climate adaptation and global food security.
- Cities play a key role in bringing nature back into urban areas.

Core areas of the NRR

- ✓ Restoring damaged ecosystems on land, in water bodies and in cities
- ✓ Promoting pollinators and reversing the decline in pollinators by 2030
- ✓ Restoring rivers and wetlands, removing artificial barriers
- ✓ Maintaining and expanding urban green spaces and tree canopy cover
- ✓ Reducing pesticide use and nutrient losses in agriculture
- ✓ Planting 3 billion trees in the EU by 2030

Articles relevant for cities

Article 8 - Restoration of urban ecosystems

- No net loss of urban green spaces and tree canopies by 2030.
- From 2031: increase in urban green spaces every six years.
- Integration of green spaces into buildings and infrastructure.

➔ From the Biodiversity Strategy 2030: Cities with over 20,000 inhabitants should draw up Urban Nature Plans (UNPs) and fit Article 8 in the NRR.

Article 9 - Restoring the connectivity of rivers and floodplains

Removal of artificial barriers to restore 25,000 kilometres of free-flowing rivers and complementary measures to restore floodplains and wetlands.

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Articles relevant for cities continued..

Article 10 – Protection of pollinators

Reversal of pollinator decline by 2030 and continuous monitoring. Cities must create pollinator-friendly green spaces and flower strips.

Article 11 – Restoration of agricultural ecosystems

Promotion of biodiversity-friendly landscape elements (hedges, flower strips) as well as the reduction of pesticides and promotion of agroecological methods.

Article 13 – Planting three billion trees

Creation of new urban forests, parks and green spaces to improve air quality and the urban climate as well as the preservation and maintenance of existing urban trees.

National Restoration Plans and their significance for cities

Each member state must draw up a National Restoration Plan (NRP) by 2026 (NRR Article 14). These plans specify how the binding restoration targets will be achieved at national level. Cities are actively involved in planning, particularly in the area of urban nature. As stated in recital 83 of the NRR, Member States should ensure a fair and inclusive approach to national restoration plans, involving local and regional authorities, stakeholders and the public at all stages. They should encourage dialogue and promote science-based information on biodiversity and the benefits of restoration.

Components of National Restoration Plans:

- Identification and mapping of ecosystems that need to be restored.
- Definition of urban ecosystems that contribute to achieving the objectives (whole city or parts).
- Measures to achieve a positive trend in urban green spaces and tree canopy from 2031.
- Integration of green spaces in new buildings and infrastructure.
- Monitoring and financing to make progress measurable.
- Article 14, Point 20: Member States shall ensure that the preparation of the NRP is open, transparent, inclusive and effective and that the public, including all relevant stakeholders, has an early and effective opportunity to participate in the preparation of the plan.

 UNP's serve as a basis for the implementation of National Restoration Plans at local level.

(Note: No guidance was given by the European Commission to Member States on how to engage municipalities in developing the structure for NRPs.)