PRESS RELEASE

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Unlocking the Value of Nature Restoration

ECONATURES kicks off in Milan

All **nine partners** of ECONATURES, gathered in Milan, Italy, on **22–23 October 2026** to launch this ambitious project, to measure the social and economic benefits of restoring Europe's nature. Hosted by the project's coordinator, the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC) Foundation, the kick-off marked the start of this journey.

The meeting brought together teams from Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium at the CMCC Foundation (Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change) in Milan. Each partner presented its role and outlined the first phase of work: defining restoration concepts and targets, modelling how ecosystems respond to restoration, and tracing the links between ecosystems and the economy.

> *"Nature restoration is about Europe's economic future. Healthy soils, forests and wetlands support farming, jobs and climate resilience. In Milan, we discussed what nature means for the economy and how it can be integrated in key tools and models used to assess policies."*
> **— Johannes Emmerling, ECONATURES Coordinator, CMCC**

The two-day programme also covered the project's business case and local case studies, as well as its strategy for communication, dissemination, exploitation and stakeholder engagement. A representative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment and the project officer from the European Research Executive Agency joined the discussion. Two sister projects, ECOMPASS and NatuRISE, shared their work plan, and an Advisory Board round table and stakeholder workshop brought the meeting to a close.

Over the next 40 months, the project will build a new framework to assess the economic impacts of nature restoration, apply it to the national restoration plans of EU countries, and turn the findings into policy recommendations and a toolbox of knowledge and skills for decision-makers. The goal: solid evidence to help Europe make the most of nature restoration.

> *"EU countries are now submitting their National Restoration Plans. Decision-makers need to know what these plans deliver. We will provide that evidence. Restoration is not just a cost. It is a path to nature-positive growth in Europe."*
> **— Johannes Emmerling, ECONATURES Coordinator, CMCC**

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About ECONATURES:

ECONATURES is an EU funded project aiming to develop a comprehensive methodological framework to assess the socio-economic impacts of nature restoration across Europe, supporting the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.
Moving beyond fragmented approaches and traditional natural capital accounting, ECONATURES integrates the multiple values of nature, including relational, cultural, intrinsic, and instrumental values, to provide a more holistic understanding of the benefits that nature restoration delivers to society.
The project's results will be tested in real-world case studies across five European countries, representing different biogeographic regions, sectors and ecosystems. These cases will reflect Europe's diversity in environmental conditions, policy approaches, and the costs and benefits of ecosystems.
By exploring the two-way relationship between ecosystem restoration and economic systems, ECONATURES reveals how restoration generates cascading effects across supply chains, labour markets, and regional economies, providing the evidence needed to support more effective policies and investment decisions.

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