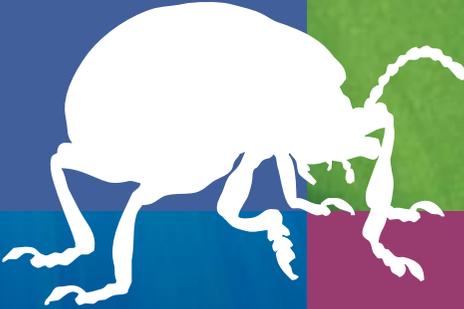
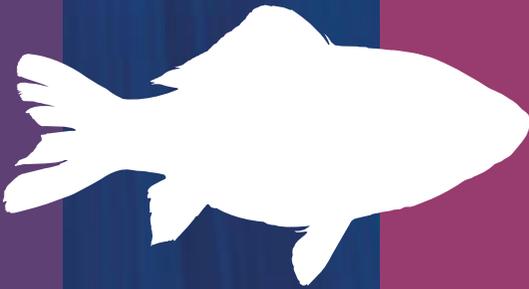


**European Conference**  
Biodiversity and Regions

**Provincie Noord-Brabant**

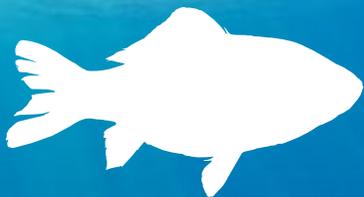
[www.biodiversitybrabant.nl](http://www.biodiversitybrabant.nl)

15 and 16 February 2007, The Netherlands



## Renewal and interaction

In terms of form and presentation, the conference will promote renewal and interaction. Renewal entails par excellence the involvement of young people in Europe. Using techniques that promote interactivity, participants at the conference will be encouraged to express what they would like to say.



## Involving young people

Sustainable development begins with young people. For that reason young people are actively involved in the preparations for the conference. Young people from the Netherlands and other European regions will present their ideas for an agenda for the future, focussing on the balance between biodiversity and economic development. Likewise the Brabantse Duurzaamheidsraad, the provincial council for sustainability, will form part of the groundwork for the conference.

# European regions as champions for biodiversity

**Europe has a big task ahead, with 2010 marking the moment of truth. By that year, European countries and EU member states must have called a halt to the loss of biodiversity (Gothenburg Summit 2001 and Kiev Declaration 2003). By that same year, Europe aims to become the world's strongest economic region (Lisbon Agenda). Flourishing on two fronts, so to speak. It is a tough but inspiring challenge!**

With the launch of Countdown 2010 in 2004 and the publication of the EC Communication "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond" in 2006, the European goal of saving biodiversity has now been given a more solid framework. In the framework of Countdown 2010 a broad coalition of governments, non-governmental organisations and other sectors has underlined the fact that further decline in biodiversity can only be stopped if each individual European country and each region in Europe cooperates to achieve the objective. Without the active involvement of European regions reaching this ambitious goal will be impossible. At all geographical levels, efforts have to be stepped up.

## The Conference

Biodiversity and economic growth are intrinsically interwoven, having a direct influence on each other. So, it is no wonder that many regions are now grappling with



To this end, on 15 and 16 February 2007 in The Netherlands a European conference will take place with the theme

# 'European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010 - Europe meets Brabant, Brabant meets Europe'

The conference is being organised by the Province of Noord-Brabant in The Netherlands and will take place at De Rosep in Oisterwijk.

the challenge of how to combine sustainable spatial and economic growth with the conservation and strengthening of biodiversity. The challenge is to ensure that ambitions do not work against each other, but instead, support each other.

## Organisation

The conference is being organised by the Province of Noord-Brabant, in close cooperation with:

- ECNC – the European Centre for Nature Conservation;
- B&E - Brabant & Europe Partnership for Sustainability;
- the Secretariat of the EU Committee of the Regions;
- the Provinces of Zeeland and Zuid-Holland.

The conference is under auspices of the Countdown 2010 Partnership and the EU Committee of the Regions.

The auspices of the European Commission is being strived for.

## Word seeks meaning

Biodiversity is still a young, somewhat unrefined word. It has a wealth of different interpretations. The word is as colourful and intangible as the life to which it refers. For that reason, we are asking everyone to make a one-off donation. Please, give us your definition of the word!

Send your ideas by email to [biodiversity@brabant.nl](mailto:biodiversity@brabant.nl).

Submissions which would seem to give the most appealing definition of the word biodiversity will be presented at the conference.

## Europe meets Brabant, Brabant meets Europe

The Province of Noord-Brabant, responsible for organising the conference, is located in the south of the Netherlands. The Province is very active in the field of biodiversity and is making every attempt to synergise sustainable development and innovation. At the end of 2004, Noord-Brabant was the first region to join Countdown 2010. The Province is currently developing a biodiversity programme and is deliberating the establishment of a plan of action as part of this process. The Province will be involving local authorities in the conference, in the anticipation that Europe might learn something from Brabant and Brabant from Europe.

## Focus on sustainable development

The conference will focus on how to promote biodiversity in two ways. Firstly, the (current and future) regions of the European Union and other European countries must be more closely involved in European policy towards saving biodiversity. Secondly, there is the challenge of how to translate the technical objectives of biodiversity into images and activities which appeal to the public and the users of the land and sea. The central message must be: biodiversity is life, a cornerstone of sustainable development.

## Three goals

The conference has the following goals:

1. The conference aims to further both the European and the regional agenda on biodiversity by enhancing synergies in policy-making on biodiversity and sustainable development of the EU, the EU Committee of the Regions and the regions in Europe themselves. The aims in respect of biodiversity must be attained and fleshed out at a regional level. The public at large and regional target groups must be actively involved; that is particularly so for users of the land and sea;
2. The conference will allow regions and stakeholder to learn from each other how they can work towards regional sustainability by conserving and wisely using biodiversity in a practical way. Best practices at a regional and a local level will be exchanged, with special attention to the relationship between biodiversity and regional identity;
3. The regions and other stakeholders will gain further insight into the tools available to achieve the 2010 goals, to solve conflicts between biodiversity and economic objectives, and to intensify synergy.



## Concrete results

The conference aims to deliver the following, clearly definable results:

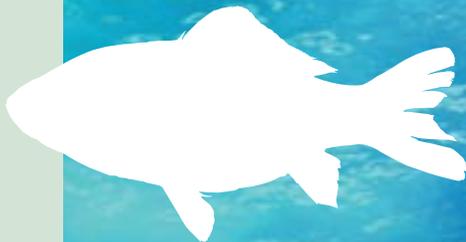
1. Ideas and actions for a follow-up of the Biodiversity Opinion of the Committee of the Regions;
2. New regions and other stakeholders joining Countdown 2010;
3. Concrete tools and ideas to further shape the Biodiversity 2010 objectives with respect to biodiversity at regional and local levels;
4. Outlines for interregional projects in the field of biodiversity and sustainability;
5. An informal network of 'regions for biodiversity 2010' in order to exchange experiences and expertise;
6. A declaration of European consensus, which can be communicated to all European regions, the EU and all relevant target groups involved.

## Who should participate?

The conference is intended for:

- executive representatives and experts of the regions in Europe;
- regional Ministers and MEPs, in particular, those who are involved with regional development, sustainability and biodiversity;
- executive and administrative representatives of the EU Committee of the Regions;
- representatives of relevant Directorate-General's of the European Commission;
- representatives of land and sea users and non-governmental organisations;
- representatives of educational establishments and youth representatives;
- representatives of national governments involved.

A total of 200 participants are expected.



**COUNTDOWN**  
**2010**

**SAVE BIODIVERSITY**

## Countdown 2010 - initiative

The aim of Countdown 2010 is: 'All European governments have, at all levels, undertaken measures which are necessary to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2010'.

The initiative identifies three secondary objectives:

1. encouragement and support for full observance of existing statutory regulations and internationally binding agreements;
2. drawing maximum levels of attention from the general public throughout Europe for halting the decline in biodiversity;
3. clearly demonstrating what progress Europe has made in observing the 2010 agreements.

# Programme outline

## Day 1

### High-level part - setting the political agenda

- Introduction to the challenges
- How to communicate biodiversity commitment in the regions
- Finding synergies and avoiding conflicts with the Lisbon Agenda
- Reflecting consensus into action (forum discussion with audience)

Conference dinner with Brabant's regional slow-food

## Day 2

### Learning from each other and experiences in making things work

- Virtual excursions through Noord-Brabant and Europe
- Workshops:
  1. Creating awareness and involvement from stakeholders in the 2010 biodiversity commitment
  2. Measuring progress in regions on Biodiversity 2010
  3. Towards a dedicated network of European regions on biodiversity 2010
  4. Developing Interregional "Biodiversity 2010 and beyond" projects
- Europe meets Brabant, Brabant meets Europe - local biodiversity actions

Reception, hosted by the Province of Noord-Brabant, the Province of Zeeland and the Province of Zuid-Holland.

**A more extensive description and  
up-to-date programme can be found at:  
[www.biodiversitybrabant.nl](http://www.biodiversitybrabant.nl)**

## A high-level and an expert part

The conference is divided into two parts: a high-level part and an expert part. In the high-level part regional ministers, their representatives and others concerned will consider these challenges and work towards agreement on approaches and priorities. In the expert part of the conference, the challenges of the European Biodiversity 2010 target and the Countdown 2010 initiative will be more closely defined, worked out in greater depth and embodied in a concluding declaration, which will be presented during the high-level closing part of the conference.

The Conference contains many innovative and interactive elements. Participants will be surprised...

## Best practices

The conference will provide an excellent platform for exchanging best practices, by means of presentations, discussions, poster sessions, etc. The results of several projects in the Dutch Provinces of Noord-Brabant, Zeeland, Zuid-Holland and other European regions will be presented, which may serve as an inspiration for tackling similar problems elsewhere. Likewise, a link will be made between other activities in Europe, such as the smart Grow approach (interreg 3C) and the LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE project (interreg 3B).

## Continuity

The conference is part of a series of meetings about diversity, following on from:

- EU Green Weeks 2006, in particular the seminar about practical examples;
- European expert meeting on biodiversity in June 2006, organised by the Province of Noord-Brabant;
- the Seminar, 'Biodiversity offers opportunities: local initiatives which contribute to a greener Netherlands', organised by the Province of Noord-Brabant, ECNC and IUCN Dutch Committee on 10 and 11 October 2006.



## Participation and registration

There is no charge for participation at the conference. Registration can be made via [www.biodiversitybrabant.nl](http://www.biodiversitybrabant.nl). You can also contact Mrs. Karin Zantingh of Artishock Projecten BV by telephone, email or fax (see contact details below).

## Contact

**For programme-related questions, please contact the following persons at the Province of Noord-Brabant:**

- Mr. Luc Adolfse,  
Tel. 0031-(0)73-681 26 84 or email [biodiversity@brabant.nl](mailto:biodiversity@brabant.nl);
- Ms. Kim van Ingen,  
Tel. 0031-(0)73-680 88 75 or email [biodiversity@brabant.nl](mailto:biodiversity@brabant.nl).

**For registration or organisational questions, please contact:**

Artishock Projecten BV  
Mrs. Karin Zantingh  
Tel. 0031-(0)73-690 15 04  
Fax 0031-(0)73-690 15 16  
Email [k.zantingh@artishock.info](mailto:k.zantingh@artishock.info)

## Website

On the website [www.biodiversitybrabant.nl](http://www.biodiversitybrabant.nl) you will be able to find all the latest details on the conference. You will be able to download on the site a detailed document with information about the conference, plus a (draft) programme.

  
**B&E PARTNERSHIP**

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

**COUNTDOWN**

**2010**

**SAVE BIODIVERSITY**

  
**ECNC**

european centre for nature conservation

**Provincie Noord-Brabant**

