

28 September 2020

The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities and its 63 institutions join the European Commission Global Coalition “United for #Biodiversity”

Last May, the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) became one of the first official supporters of the European Commission Global Coalition [“United for #Biodiversity”](#).

Today, CETAF is proud to announce that all [its 37 members](#), representing 63 leading Natural Science Museums/Natural History Museums, Botanic Gardens and research centres from 22 European countries, are joining the Global Coalition.

Launched on World Wildlife Day by EU Commissioner for Environment Virginijus Sinkevicius, the Global Coalition calls for strong mobilisation of all national research centers, science and natural history museums, botanic gardens, zoos, parks, aquariums and beyond to unite forces and make their voices heard about the nature crisis ahead of the [UN Biodiversity Conference \(COP15\) in 2021](#).

We are endorsing the Global Coalition’s partners’ call to world leaders to take ambitious measures to preserve nature as they are participating in the inaugural [UN Biodiversity Summit on Wednesday 30th of September](#).

CETAF members, as a science-driven community, dedicate their work to study, curate, preserve and make accessible the heritage of over 1,5 billion specimens hosted in biological collections that represent nearly 80% of all described species worldwide. We hope our resources, our expertise and our knowledge will contribute to the Global Coalition’s efforts to raise awareness among citizens on the environmental crisis that is affecting biodiversity across the planet.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the urgency to drastically rethink our society's relationship with nature and build a momentum for environmental protection. Continuous human pressure on ecosystems has had such an impact on nature's equilibrium that it threatens the sustainability of life on Earth with unpredictable effects. The emergence of zoonotic diseases - of which the scientists have been warning for many years - is only one of the possible negative consequences that our society is currently facing.

The 2019 Report from the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* ([IPBES](#)) already showed that biodiversity is declining globally at higher rates than ever before in human history, with up to a million species facing extinction, with serious impacts expected for people around the world as a result of this loss. This means ecosystems may no longer be able to support humanity by providing water, food, clean air and timber. Their services such as pollination, climate regulation, soil formation and prevention of floods would be seriously affected.

Addressing climate change and shrinking biodiversity requires ambitious and aligned actions from our decision-makers and stakeholders globally. An open and broad discussion where the wider civil society is involved at both local and global levels. In the similar, international and direct manner that the world is addressing the current pandemic, the nature crisis requires a collective and immediate response from governments and citizens, in partnership with researchers and professionals, in finding prompt solutions.

Rebuilding in harmony with nature

As conservators of the natural world's heritage, our Natural Science Collections community takes a seat at the table, with the firm commitment to support and encourage socially inclusive and science-based solutions at the core of a more sustainable future for our societies.

As stated in the Global Coalition [pledge](#) we all sign today, **“we belong to nature, we need nature, and nature now needs us like never before”**. Policy-makers and business leaders need to listen to communities dedicated to studying and protecting nature and to support new generations of change makers and citizens on a mission to build the sustainable societies we intend to live in.

As Natural Science Museums, Natural History Museums, Botanic Gardens and research centres, we have the scientific and societal responsibilities to speak up for nature. Now more than ever.

We encourage citizens and institutions around the globe to share the message through their social media channels using the hashtag #biodiversity2020 and reach out to coalition members for collaboration opportunities.



CETAF General Secretariat

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Notes for Editors: CETAF

CETAF is an active community of over 5.000 scientists from across Europe who play a key role in the understanding and the preservation of biodiversity and geodiversity worldwide, and who provide a sound knowledge-base for policy changes which address societal challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change and emerging health crises.

The CETAF community unites major Natural History and Natural Science Museums, Botanic Gardens and research centres in Europe to create a unique network made up of 63 institutions in 22 countries. Natural sciences collections and the taxonomic knowledge generated by the research done using collections provide the necessary evidence and the scientific basis from which to understand biodiversity and geodiversity dynamics over time. As the hub for European taxonomic and geological expertise, CETAF members jointly support actions addressing both preservation in the present, and evolution modeling for the future.

CETAF, together with the Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo), the European Research Infrastructure to facilitate digital access to FAIR data from collections that is being built on top of our community efforts, has started a COVID-19 Task Force with experts from all over the world contributing a science-based response to the pandemic and to preventing the occurrence and propagation of potential future health crises such as the one caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2.a. Numerous other research organizations, research infrastructures and initiatives (GBIF, iDigBio, ELIXIR, GloBi, TDWG, SPNHC, Plazi and Pensoft) are also collaborating in this initiative that anchors on the study and analysis of data from natural science collections and scientific publications as well as biodiversity and genomic data repositories.