



FEDENATUR'S manifesto for their participation in the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona 5-14 October 2008)

More than 80% of Europe's population already lives in urban and metropolitan areas and, by 2050, it is predicted that over 70% of the world's population will be concentrated in towns and cities.

Over the last few decades, urban sprawl has been spreading around towns and cities, and this has created the so-called "metropolisation" phenomenon. The urban sprawl has led to a loss in the functionality of the land with regards the environment, agriculture, fauna, flora, landscapes, etc. This in turn has affected the quality of life of town and city dwellers and biodiversity in general.

The inhabitants of towns and cities have the right to benefit from environmental (biodiversity, pure air, climate stabilisation, trapping of pollutants, etc.), social (leisure, sports, healthcare, etc.) and economic (drinking water, landscape, community-supported agriculture, etc.) benefits provided by nature around cities (Fedenatur 2004 – "The role of periurban natural areas in the sustainable city").

Over the last few years, several cities have introduced active policies to preserve and enhance natural areas within their boundaries, in particular large periurban areas. Increasingly, they feel that these natural areas play an important role in improving city inhabitants' quality of life, and contribute actively to the maintenance of biodiversity. In order to implement these policies, they have encouraged the creation of public structures whose goal is to guarantee the management of these natural areas.

Fedenatur, as a result of the points raised during workshop 173 ("Protected periurban areas, essential elements for biodiversity conservation and our citizens' quality of life"), asks the relevant administrations at all levels (local, supramunicipal, regional, national and supranational) to do the following:

1. To integrate, enhance and safeguard natural, agricultural and forestry areas during the development of our metropolised societies, because the future of these societies is in the sustainability of these areas, and, faced with urban sprawl, to take these spaces into account with regard to both public policies and those controlling land development.
2. To understand natural agricultural and forestry areas as a coherent whole, represented as a network, which represents one of the structuring systems of the metropolitan area. This involves a global, multi-scale and inter-territorial approach.

3. To no longer be content with merely a sectoral, administrative and often corporatist approach to these natural, agricultural and forestry areas, which makes them vulnerable and eventually unstable, but to decompartmentalise and structure the worlds of technology and politics, whose actions affect periurban natural areas to a greater or lesser degree: the worlds of agriculture and forestry, urban management, bio-environmental management, leisure and tourism management, etc.
 4. To build the economic, social, cultural and environmental identity of metropolises through the multifunctional identity of periurban natural areas, ensuring their long-term survival.
 5. To consider natural, agricultural and forestry areas as spaces with their own individual challenges, projects and social and economic policies, which compete with metropolitan projects and not as empty spaces or land set aside for development. This means that, as far as possible, the areas immediately beyond the strategic limits of the nature-city should be turned into sanctuaries and the green system of natural, agricultural and forestry areas should be recognised as an asset that enhances each metropolitan region.
 6. To ensure all public land-use policies focus on metropolitan natural area projects and make the creation and management of green areas a fundamental element in all urban planning and development projects.
 7. To adopt a global, differentiated policy for each metropolitan area's green system, which above all recognises the exemplary role different types of park play in terms of management, enhancement, protection and research.
 8. To accelerate the protection of natural and rural areas in the vicinity of cities and to defend and enrich the diversity of metropolitan ecosystems and landscapes. To encourage the maintenance and diversification of sustainable agriculture, considered an important "facet" of the management of periurban areas, relying on a mixture of complementary environments: biological reserves, agricultural, leisure and recreational, and corridors etc.
 9. To increase the measures that promote the preservation, maintenance and restoration of these areas so that they can play their essential role in maintaining biodiversity and in the sustainable functioning of the land and cities.
 10. To meet citizens' leisure requirements, allowing them to access leisure activities in a natural environment, whilst raising their awareness of environmental issues and respect for the environment and promoting the participation of all stakeholders.
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