

## Public consultation

### Recognizing the rights of nature in Europe

Marie Toussaint - September / October 2021

#### **Context**

The Earth is facing an unprecedented decline of its biodiversity in human history. In total, one million animal and plant species are threatened. With them, entire ecosystems are endangered, damaged and destroyed. How much longer will we be able to see hedgehogs, brown bears, bats...? How much longer will we be able to walk in the forests of Argonne or Morvan in France, or along the great rivers of Europe?

The European Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2020 called on Member States to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020. This target has not been met. Across Europe, 22% of animal species are at risk of extinction. New strategies are being put in place for the next decade, with new targets. But the solutions put forward are almost always based on the financialisation of nature and the 'services' it provides. Instead, we need to propose legal solutions, such as the recognition of the rights of nature

#### **Recognizing the rights of nature in Europe**

This idea is not new. For about 20 years, many countries have already recognised the rights of natural entities. And the movement is growing in Europe around inspiring initiatives such as the [Loire Parliament](#), the [initiative for the rights of the Mar Menor](#) or the [Tavignanu River](#).

In October 2020, I initiated [a large series of European conferences on the rights of nature](#), in order to compare the points of view of jurists, political representatives, associations, artists, etc. Then in July, with Notre Affaire à Tous and the magistrate Vincent Delbos, we published [a guide for local authorities on how to implement the rights of nature](#) in their territories.

In the Parliament, we obtained several victories, notably by demanding the recognition of a legal status for Europe's forests, or the recognition of the intrinsic value of ecosystems.

**But nothing can be done without you !** The fight for the recognition and protection of nature's rights can unite us all who work for the protection of nature, those of NGOs, citizens and public service actors such as forest rangers or mountain guides. With this consultation, we can define together how we translate and want to translate the rights of nature into our law and institutions.

#### **Convincing European institutions**

At the end of this process, we commit to present the results of this consultation to the European Commission and Parliament, and to promote the main recommendations of this consultation in all environmental legislation discussed at European level.

**Thanks to you, we can outline a European approach to the rights of nature, and defend it at the highest level!**

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