



Welcome to Safeguard's February Newsletter

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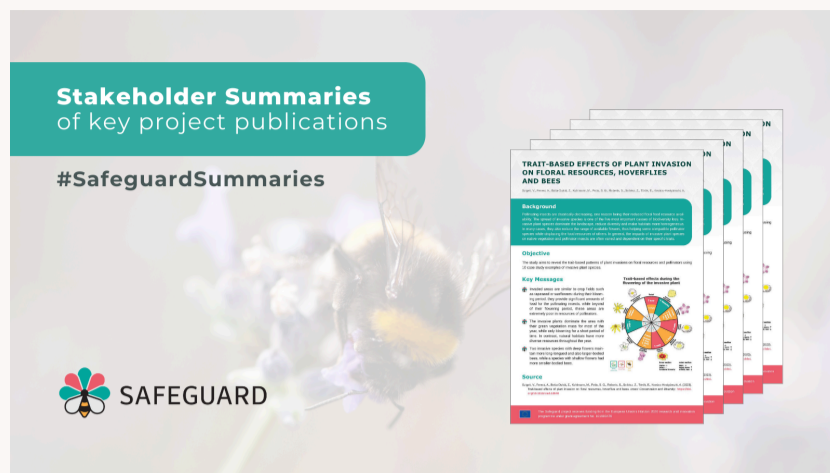


Safeguard's Third Annual General Meeting

Between 20 and 23 February 2024, partners from 25 institutions across 15 countries gathered in Padua, Italy for Safeguard's third Annual General Meeting. The consortium members showcased project results and discussed future actions towards sustainable pollination and reversing the losses of wild pollinators across Europe. Organised by the partner institution the University of Padua, the four-day meeting was full of enlightening presentations, fruitful discussions, and valuable workshops.

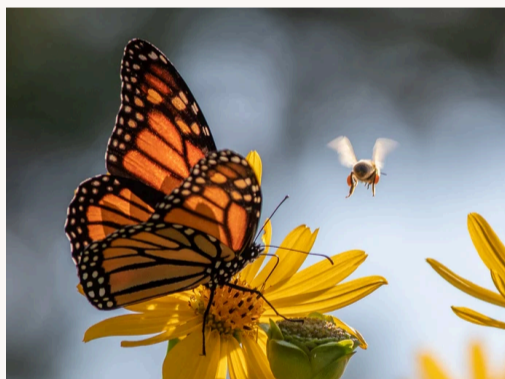
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Making results widely accessible: Safeguard stakeholder summaries collection



Following our mission to protect European wild pollinators, Safeguard has published an extensive amount of project publications with great practical value. To make results more understandable and easily available to stakeholders, Safeguard issues a series of stakeholder summaries of key project publications, outlining the background, main objective, results, and take-home messages of each study. Starting in January 2024, the summaries are shared individually each week in the Media center of the website and as part of a new social media campaign #SafeguardSummaries.

[Read more](#)



Safeguard's Open Science Collection featured on CORDIS

The Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) featured Safeguard and the project's open-access collection of research articles in the *Research Ideas and Outcomes* (RIO) journal.

[Learn more](#)



Nature Restoration Law: Adoption of the Proposal by the Parliament

The Nature Restoration Law has been adopted in a plenary vote at the European Parliament on 27 February. Formal approval by the Council will follow on 25 March. Once the Law enters into force in April, Member States will have to detail their Nature Restoration Planning (NRPs), to be adopted within two years of the Law's entry into force (around June 2026). The NRL will set a legally binding target for Member States to take measures to reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030 and to set up pollinator monitoring.

[Learn more](#)

Evaluation of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030

The Commission is due to publish in 2024 an assessment of the progress in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 – likely postponed until Q4 2024. It will also assess the governance effectiveness (performance of the EU Biodiversity Platform) and the alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework. The findings will feed into the Council conclusions foreseen in June 2024 that will help define the priorities for the next Commission. The Commission confirmed in a working group meeting in November 2023 that there would be no mid-term review of the Strategy, so this is likely to be a light touch assessment.

[Learn more here and here](#)

Sustainable use of pesticides regulation (SUR)

The ongoing farmers' protests and the run up to the EU elections have been exacerbating pressures on the EU's environmental ambitions for agriculture. On February 6, Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen announced she would propose the withdrawal of the highly debated SUR proposal at the European Parliament plenary in Strasbourg. The President justified the decision by declaring that the SUR had become "a symbol of polarisation". A key conflict point was the placing of restrictions on pesticide use in protected areas, with the most recent protest led by wine growers. The Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive continues to be in place, with its article 12 requiring that Member States '*shall ensure that the use of pesticides is minimised or prohibited in certain specific areas*', including Natura 2000 sites. However, the withdrawal does not send a strong signal to Member States that their failure to do this will be policed by the Commission.

[Learn more here and here](#)

EU Commission providing exemptions on land lying fallow (CAP conditionality rules)

On 13 February, the Commission adopted a regulation which grants a partial exemption for EU farmers from the conditionality rule on land lying fallow (GAEC 8 in the Common Agricultural Policy). The exemption will apply for one year until December 2024. Instead of keeping land fallow or keeping unproductive features on 4% of their arable land, EU farmers growing nitrogen-

fixing crops (such as lentils, peas, or favas) and/or catch crops without plant protection products on 4% of their arable land will be considered as meeting the GAEC 8 requirement. Member States can still choose not to allow the exemption for their farmers or to put stricter conditions in it, as might happen in Germany which advocated for a more ecological approach. Most probably, all Member States will allow it and cut down the requirements on their eco-schemes that pay for unproductive areas to take account of the changed baseline.

[Learn more](#)

Strategic Dialogue on the future of agriculture

The Commission President also launched in January the so-called “Strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture”. The first meeting took place on 25 January. This dialogue aims at preparing the future CAP (from 2027 onwards). In her opening speech, the President declared *'We must work together with the men and women in EU farming to secure our food supply for the future. [...] With this Strategic Dialogue, we are creating a forum to deliver a clear vision for the future, to the benefit of all'*. The Commission has also announced a climate resilience initiative but has withdrawn their planned water resilience initiative.

[Learn more](#)

Events



Safeguard showcased at the European Bee Award



This year's edition of the European Bee Award, which took place in Brussels, Belgium on 29 November 2023, brought together several bee- and pollinator-oriented projects and initiatives across Europe. During the event organised by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Industry Association (CEMA), Safeguard showcased a diverse array of materials and attendees gained comprehensive insights into the project's mission, objectives, and actions through engaging mediums such as a policy brief, a one-pager, and stickers.

[Read more](#)

Safeguard outputs showcased in Budapest



On 31 January 2024, project partner Dr. Viktor Szigeti from the HUN-REN Centre for Ecological Research held an educational public presentation in Budapest, Hungary, sharing insights into plant-pollinator relationships. During the presentation, Viktor showcased results from a 2023 Safeguard study published in the journal *Urban Ecosystems*, investigating the impact of rare mowing and flower sowing on pollinators, floral resources, and vegetation attributes in urban areas of Hungary.

[Read more](#)



Safeguard 2023 highlights



Find out what Safeguard has achieved in 2023 in our video highlighting some of the project's most notable accomplishments – from published papers to attended and organised events.

[Watch here](#)



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