

NATURA 2000 – BEYOND 2010

Olli Lauri Pellervo Ojala

European Commission DG Environment

Natura 2000 is based on EU Habitats and Birds Directives and it forms the largest co-ordinated network of conservation areas in the world. It is the cornerstone of the European Environmental policy and it is one of the key tools to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU and to maintain the essential ecosystem services – biodiversity and nature provision. Despite the recorded success, a lot remains to be done. The network still needs to be finalised, financed appropriately and managed efficiently. Also, the knowledge base needs to be strengthened and the influence of the network on the public needs to be enhanced. Co-operation with other policy sectors offers great opportunities and challenges. It is a major tool for climate change adaptation and mitigation, a core element of green infrastructure, especially suitable for policies aiming at the provision of ecosystem services, a model for sustainable development and a key indicator for the post-2010 biodiversity policy.