# **Short report “1001 for biodiversity”**

20 May 2016, Brussels, Belgium

**Event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ratification by Belgium of the Convention on biological diversity.**

In collaboration with the Brussels, Flemish, Walloon and Federal authorities the Belgian National Focal Point to the Convention organized a series of activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ratification by Belgium of the Convention on biological diversity. These are formed around three elements, that came together during an event on the 20th May 2016, called “1001 for biodiversity”:

* ***1001 ideas***: a competition, targeting the public at large, with as goal to identify good and effective new actions in support of biodiversity. The award ceremony took place during the event on the 20th.
* ***1001 actions***: the actions of our booklet “366 tips for biodiversity” are enriched with new ideas emanating from the competition and presented in a new format, a “biotips machine” that produces personalized lists with actions and allows for distribution of appropriate actions through social media.
* ***1001 decisions***: also the political world was involved, with a common press release and (video)messages by all competent ministers, and a debate to which were invited representatives of the youth organisation of political parties present in the Belgian parliaments.

The three components were all very successful, as illustrated by:

The competition received 260 submissions, involving between 600 and 900 persons in the development and presentation of the ideas; touching many additional persons directly or indirectly (e.g., parents of actively contributing school children; visitors to libraries,…). During the event 104 children, youth and adults received their award. A total of 74 awards were handed over to both individuals as well as groups, amongst others by Mr René Collin (Walloon minister for Nature), Mrs Marie Christine Marghem (Federal minister for the Environment), and Prof. Faustin Toengaho, rector of the University of Kisangani, DR Congo. Even those who submitted ideas that were not retained saw their efforts rewarded by bags of flower seeds.

The new ***biotips machine***, and e-platform with actions to support biodiversity, can now be consulted on the trilingual site [www.1001biodiv.be/actions](http://www.1001biodiv.be/actions), together with action movies illustrating three particularly special ideas. This new website further contains a series of photographs and movies, and more are being posted regularly.

During the conference “***1001 decisions”*** 175 participants listened to messages by federal Secretary of State Philippe De Backer (competent for the North Sea) and the ministers in charge of environment Joke Schauvliege (Flanders), Céline Fremault (Brussels) and Marie Christine Marghem, while Mr. René Collin presented an outline of his policy. Their common press release was presented by Mr. Roland Moreau, president of the coordination committee for international environmental policy. It was distributed in the three Belgian national languages (French, Dutch, and German), and in English, the latter in response to a request by the DG Environment of the European Commission. To the debate, moderated by Mr. Eddy Caekelberghs (French-language Belgian radio and television broadcaster), contributed nine young politicians: Nathan Blondé (Jongsocialisten), Lieven Demolder (Jong CD&V), Steven Detry (Jeunes MR), Jean-Noël Gillard (Défi Jeunes), Samuel Moiny (Jeunes Socialistes), Liza Lebrun (COMAC; Jeunes PTB), Nico Patelli (Jeunes cdH), Caroline Saal (écolo j) and Jeroen Van Lysebettens (Jong Groen). A large number of interesting remarks were published via twitter, to the extent that the hashtag #1001biodiv became trending in Belgium during the debate (see <https://twitter.com/1001Biodiv>)!

The opinion and reactions of the participants were polled using an voting system. This interactive response fed the debate with outspoken opinions and identified the most active and convincing panellists. Some remarkable ascertainments:

* The public consisted mainly of 35-64 year olds (75%), of which a majority claimed to be aware of the importance of biodiversity, and to effectively take care of it in its daily life (96%).
* Uptake of biodiversity in education programmes (58%) and dissemination of positive experiences (32%) are the most speaking methods to put biodiversity in focus.
* 85% is convinced that supplying information and incentives to companies can convince these to minimize their impact and to protect biodiversity.
* Transformation towards a green economy is expected to have the most positive effect on biodiversity (65%).
* 79% is positive about implementing measures to protect biodiversity abroad, rather than nationally.
* Belgian policy can support the protection of biodiversity in developing countries most effectively by promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity by local communities (43%) and, to a slightly lesser degree, by building capacity with local scientists and policy persons (35%).
* Only 4% of participants to the event is of the opinion that politicians and policy pay sufficient attention to biodiversity…

As an immediate ***result*** of these 1001 activities our social media impact evolved as follows:

\* **Facebook**: the number of followers increased from 200 to over 550 on the French-language page, and from 250 to over 600 on the Dutch-language page;

\* Our new **Twitter-account** collected already more than 100 followers and ambassadors

\* the **newsletter** "I give life to my planet” was renamed "1001 for biodiversity" and reaches over 7.000 subscribers;

\* Over 20 **videos** have already been uploaded to the new YouTube-channel "1001 for biodiversity", and more will follow;

The web site and media channels are at the disposition of the partners of the 1001 project to contribute to a common and therefore stronger voice for biodiversity.

