

# Wetlands and peatlands for a resilient Europe

**Aligning National and Regional Partnership Plans with National Restoration Plans to deliver water, climate, and environmental priorities**

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*Session: "National Plans for the Nature Restoration Regulation: Approach, Dilemmas and Demands for Peatland Restoration"*

**Power to the Peatlands**, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

3 September 2026



# Restoring drained peatlands offers exceptional climate benefits and supports biodiversity recovery

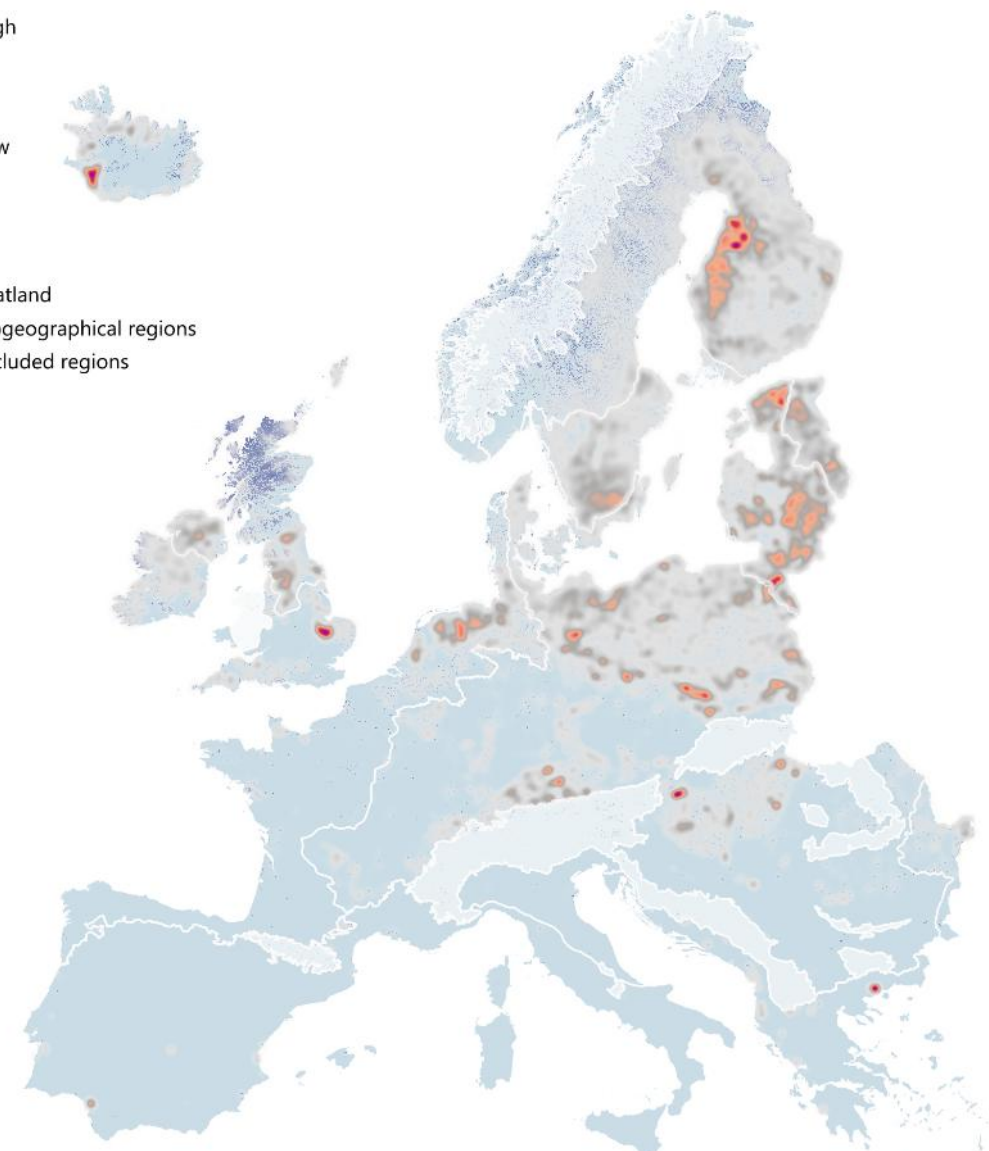
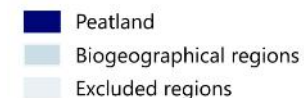
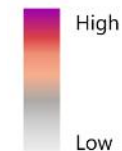
EU NRR's goal for Member States:

**Restore 30 % of degraded wetland habitats & 30 % of drained agricultural peatlands by 2030 (Art.11.4)**

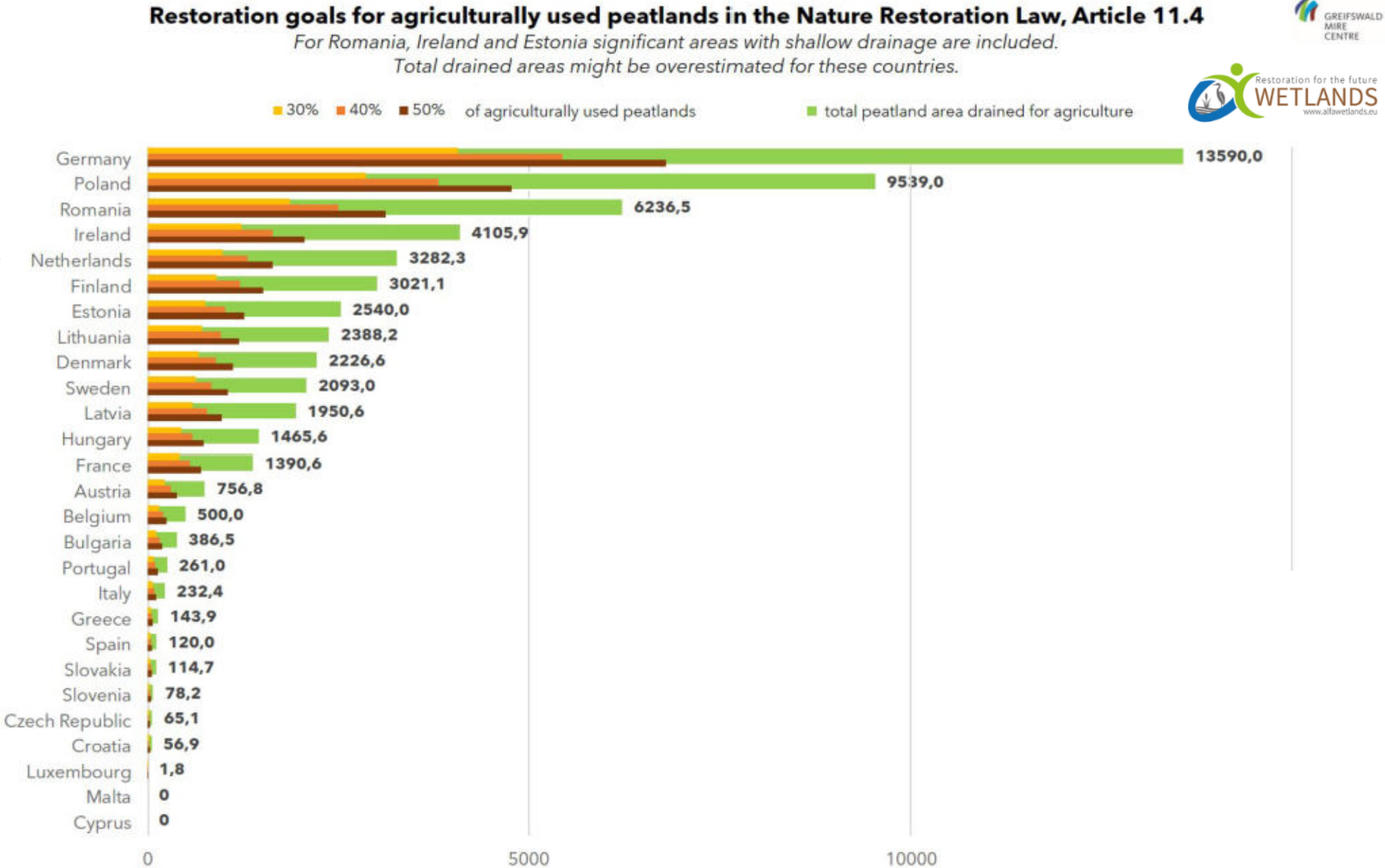
## Peatland greenhouse gas emission hotspots within European biogeographic regions

ALFAwetlands (2026). *Rewetting for Resilience: Cost-Effective Strategies for Restoring Agricultural Peatlands. An integrated approach to biodiversity recovery, climate change mitigation and sustainable agriculture. Policy Brief.* September 2026.

Hotspots of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Peatlands

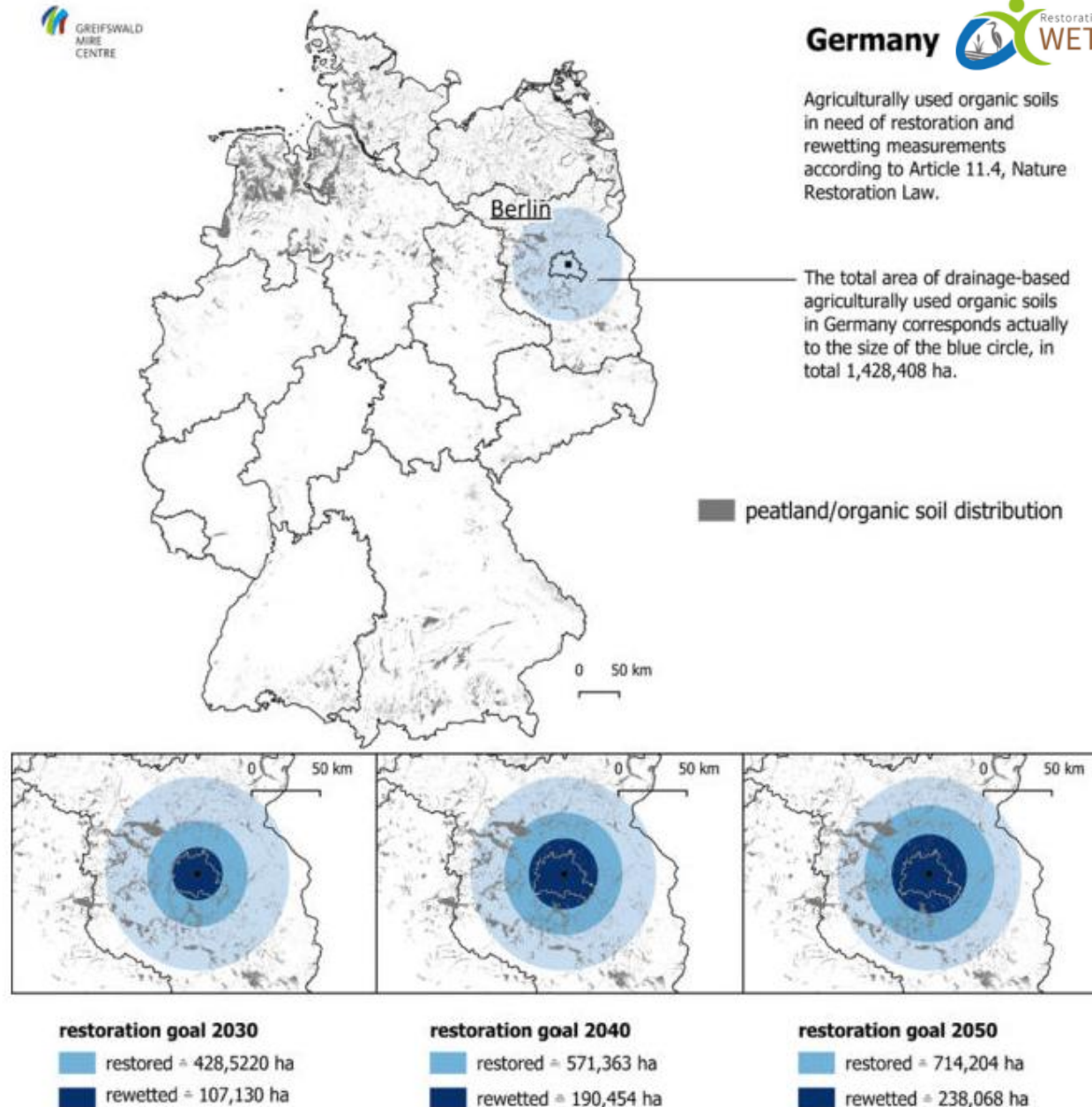


Some Member States have substantial peatland areas to be restored for reaching EU NRR's goal



Some Member States have substantial peatland areas to be restored

e.g. Germany more than 400,000 ha till 2030



# From degradation to resilience:

## Lessons from the WaterLANDS Action Sites

**The Problem:** Drained and degraded landscapes

**The Solution:** Resilient and multifunctional wet landscapes

**80%** of Europe's wetlands lost  
over the past century

**89%** of protected wetland habitats  
in bad or poor condition

Co-Creation

Lessons from WaterLANDS:  
32 partners from 14 countries  
**6 Action Sites**

# From drained and degraded landscapes to resilient and multifunctional **wet** landscapes

## Threat to competitiveness:



Rising public costs and investment uncertainty

## Benefits to competitiveness:



### Ems-Dollard estuary (Netherlands)

- Savings of **€40–61m** versus imported clay over 10 years
- Up to **€18m** in present-value climate benefits from avoiding peat oxidation across 100 ha



### Great North Bog (UK)

- Supplies drinking water to 15 million people
- Significant **positive knock-on effects** across the regional economy and job creation



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# From drained and degraded landscapes to resilient and multifunctional **wet** landscapes

## Threat to security:



**Higher exposure to climate and water risks**

## Benefits to security:



### **Venice Lagoon (Italy)**

Support adaptation to sea-level rise, keep navigation channels clear and improve water quality



### **Pärnu catchment peatlands (Estonia)**

Recovers natural water regulation, reducing fire and downstream flood risks

# From drained and degraded landscapes to resilient and multifunctional **wet** landscapes

## Threat to values:



Loss of  
biodiversity,  
identity and  
trust

## Benefits to values:



### Cuilcagh–Anierin Uplands SAC blanket bog (Ireland)

- >1,000 ha of peatland under agricultural use restored
- Higher agri-environment payments for many farmers



### Dragoman Marsh (Bulgaria)

- Supports education and ecotourism
- Involved hundreds of volunteers and pupils

To deliver benefits at scale → Restoration goals must guide EU investment and planning decisions

# From restoration targets to investment:

Aligning National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) with National Restoration Plans (NRPs)

## The core policy ask



**Ensure that National and Regional Partnership Plans clearly support the delivery of National Restoration Plans**

Under the **2028–2034 EU budget**, National and Regional Partnership Plans should translate the Nature Restoration Regulation's objectives into long-term funding, legal frameworks, and coordinated planning for wetland and peatland restoration across governance levels.



**Back this with a dedicated biodiversity spending target and transparent tracking**

A **dedicated biodiversity spending target** and transparent tracking framework are needed to ensure that the financing needs, implementation, and outcomes of National Restoration Plans can be clearly identified, assessed, and monitored.

## Four levers to scale up wetland restoration

1

Long-term  
funding and  
implementation  
capacity



Ensure funding  
beyond  
stand-alone  
environmental  
Projects

2

Governance  
that works in  
practice



Clarify responsibilities,  
planning permissions,  
and coordination  
across  
Institutions

3

Landscape-level  
planning across  
sectors



Integrate restoration  
into wider land  
management and  
investment decisions

4

Co-creation,  
public support  
and long-term  
stewardship



Support early  
engagement and  
sustained dialogue

# Wetlands, water and communities: Knowing and protecting what sustains us

Across Europe,  
across cultures  
and across generations.

Working together to restore  
wetlands while sustaining  
livelihoods, local identity,  
and resilient landscapes.

WaterLANDS  
Action Sites



1 © John Gaillogly, Philip Farrelly & Co  
Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands  
SAC blanket bog, Ireland

~400  
residents  
created a  
shared vision



2 © Wim Dijkman  
Ems-Dollard estuary,  
Netherlands



3 © Anna Birgitta Erikson  
Pärnu catchment  
peatlands, Estonia

Körsa citizen  
science trail

Engaged 145  
landowners and  
pupils from five  
local schools



4 © Joseph Holden  
Great North Bog, UK

Films, guided walks,  
and creative  
workshops



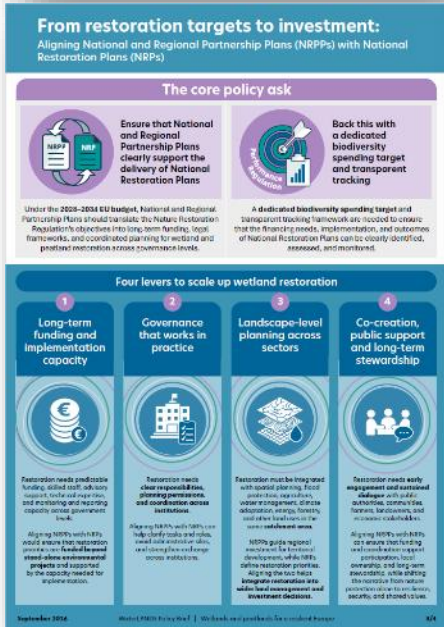
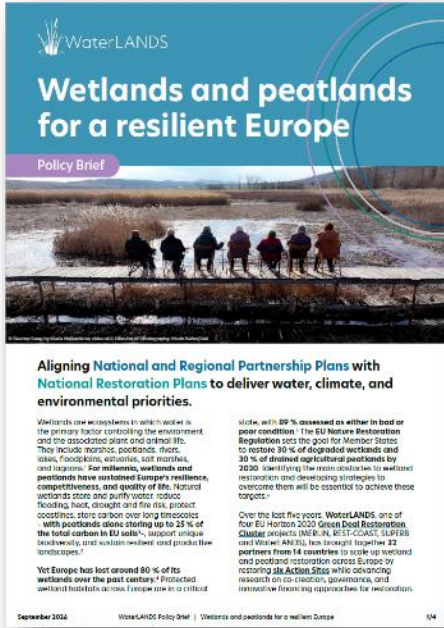
5 © WahV  
Venice Lagoon, Italy

Giants of the  
Lagoon  
>800 pupils and  
teachers



6 © BALKANI Wildlife Society  
Dragoman Marsh,  
Bulgaria

Community-based  
video *Swamp  
Song* at 2026  
Venice Biennale



# Wetlands and peatlands for a resilient Europe:

## Aligning National and Regional Partnership Plans with National Restoration Plans to deliver water, climate, and environmental priorities



Share with your networks!

WaterLANDS (2026):  
Wetlands and peatlands for a resilient Europe

# Thank you!

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**Plan Bleu**



**WaterLANDS (2026):**  
**Wetlands and peatlands for a resilient Europe**



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