



# Freshwater, wetlands, and sponge landscapes for a resilient Europe – Policy insights from flagship projects

10 March 2026, 13-17h CET  
Maison de la Poste, Brussels and online

Registration and information

<https://project-merlin.eu/brussels2026.html>



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WaterLANDS

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spongeworks

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# Tentative agenda

**12:00 – 13:00**

## **Participants check-in**

**13:00 – 13:15**

## **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Host institutions

Robert Konrad

(DG ENV biodiversity director's main advisor on natural capital)

**13:15 – 14:30**

## **Part I: Showcasing Success and Tools**

### **What have Europe's flagship restoration projects achieved?**

- Moderator introduction
- Short video messages from implementers (MERLIN, WaterLANDS, SpongeScapes, SpongeWorks)
- Flash presentations highlighting key policy results and transferable tools (e.g., Large-Scale Rewetting for Climate and Biodiversity; Stakeholder Engagement as a Driver for Transformation; Large-Scale River Basin Restoration).

**14:30 – 14:45**

## **Break**

**14:45 – 16:05**

## **Part II: Forward-Looking Policy Exchanges**

### **Theme 1: Scalability of NbS for resilient landscapes**

Panel discussion, Moderator Ellis Penning

Joachim Maes (DG ENV), Willem Jan Goossen (DG CLIMA),

Craig Bullock (WaterLANDS), Sebastian Birk (MERLIN)

**Fishbowl discussion**

### **Theme 2: Economic Sectors & Financing**

Panel discussion, Moderator Christian Albert

Antonia Lütteken (DG AGRI), EIB representative, Emma Hart

or Shane McGuinness (WaterLANDS), Josselin Rouillard (MERLIN)

**Fishbowl discussion**

**16:05 – 16:40**

## **Synthesis of Part II Discussions**

Short wrap-up of key insights from both themes, identifying cross-cutting policy needs and next steps

**16:40 – 17:00**

## **Closing Reflections & Outlook**

Concluding remarks and final policy take-home messages



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