



Excursion to the 9th National Forum on Biological Diversity in Berlin of the new Master's Programme *Forestry System Transformation (FST)*



Image: FST course 10th October 2018 at the National Forum on Biological Diversity in Berlin (© Z. Zaimche)

There was a passionate discussion going on at the 9th National Forum on Biological Diversity in Berlin last Wednesday under the motto: "*Action Programme Insect Protection - Together Effective Against Insect Death*". Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze presented concrete [proposals](#) for measures for the action programme, which she then discussed with actors from nature conservation, research and agriculture. In order to stop insect mortality, the habitat for insects must be enlarged, fewer pesticides used and smarter agricultural subsidies developed. The proposals aim, among other things, at a fundamental change in the use of pesticides.

"Nature conservation must be sexy!" or *"Biodiversity cannot be communicated!"* were sentences that Dr. Corinna Hölzer, co-founder of the Initiative *Deutschland summt* (Germany hums/is humming) and one of 9 participants in the three-part discussion had to listen to again and again. In order to promote nature and insect protection, one has to create an identification basis in combination with media-effective actions. This is how the idea was born to bring bees to the roofs of the city and thus to inspire as many citizens as possible to help provide bees with diverse habitats. A great success in terms of measures to protect the insect population.



Eberhard Hartelt, the voice of the farmers and environmental officer of the German Farmers' Association (DBV), made it clear: *"The will to act on the part of agriculture is there."* He brought with him the DBV's new farming strategy, a set of instruments designed to promote sustainable development in agriculture, to safeguard nutrition with healthy food and to protect soil, water, air and biodiversity. However, he also pointed out that we as a society seem to have lost the value of food.

Olaf Tschimpke, President of NABU, also made it clear that a structural change can only take place through a change of direction and that farmers should be rewarded for their conversion. Incentives for farmers to act must be created, especially for those who want to switch back to organic farming. Independent research is also needed, which is why NABU is particularly committed to turning research around. Keyword: *Citizen Science*, a nationwide insect census in Germany, in which nature fans were asked nationwide to observe and count insects from their own environment. Voluntary research must again experience a new appreciation in Germany and above all be taken seriously. Volunteers were also significantly involved in the Krefeld study on insect mortality (with the result that there are around 75% fewer insects in parts of Germany).

But there is a lack of young entomologists in particular, Dr. Robert Trusch (State Museum of Natural History in Karlsruhe) made clear at the forum in his function as "advocate of insects". An interest in everything that creeps and flies must be stimulated already in childhood, which is why there is a great need for action especially in the field of education. Also Professor Dr. Manfred Niekisch of the expert advice for environmental questions (SRU) stressed the action need within the range of the education and communication as well as the larger acknowledgment of honorary work.

Following the panel discussion, the 2018 annual winner of the project competition for the UN Decade of Biological Diversity 2011 - 2020 was awarded and the special prize *"Social Nature"* was presented. Subsequently, the participants of the forum had the opportunity to decide between 10 workshops on the proposed measures for the Insect Protection Action Programme and to deepen their knowledge on topics such as *financing - creating incentives or reducing the use of pesticides* - and to participate in the discussion and shaping process. The results were presented in the late afternoon.

At the same time as the Forum, a four-week online dialogue was launched to offer citizens the opportunity to comment on the action programme's proposed measures and to contribute their own ideas. As an influencer in the online dialogue, you can help shape the action programme to be adopted next summer. The results of the online dialogue and the Forum's discussion events will be incorporated into the draft of the overall programme. This will then be coordinated within the Federal Government and decided in the Cabinet in the summer of 2019.

And what about *interdisciplinarity*? The contents of the forum would be of interest to students of almost all courses of study at the University for Sustainable Development. Prof. Dr. Carsten Mann (head of the FST study programme and professor for sustainable forest resource economics) gave a short introduction before the start of the forum and embedded the contents into the study programme thematically in the form of a discussion round with the students.

For the FST students it was an informative event.