

EU Policy Headlines and Impact for Golf

Nature Restoration

“EU policy is now asking every land manager to think not only about reducing harm, but about restoring function, measuring results and contributing to connected nature at scale. Golf has a real opportunity to be part of that solution as a managed green space, a habitat mosaic and a partner in landscape restoration.”

Policy direction

- **From protection to restoration.** The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 sets the strategic direction, while the Nature Restoration Regulation introduces binding restoration targets and national plans. The focus is shifting from avoiding harm to restoring habitats, species, connectivity and ecosystem functions. Under the Regulation, countries must submit detailed plans explaining how they intend to bring at least 30% of forests, peatlands, coral reefs and rivers into good condition.
- **From EU commitments to national action.** As [Member States begin submitting their national restoration plans](#), a second round of public consultations in 2027 will offer an important opportunity for golf federations to engage with national authorities. This is a chance to demonstrate how golf courses can support restoration priorities and ensure that golf’s land-use perspective is considered as plans are finalised. As of October 2026, nine Member States—Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden—have submitted their draft plans to the European Commission, according to the European Environment Agency’s public database.
- **Golf fits the landscape-level logic.** Courses beside rivers, wetlands, grasslands, dunes, heaths and other semi-natural areas can help strengthen ecological connectivity rather than functioning as isolated sites.
- **Restoration delivers wider benefits.** Cleaner water and air, pollination, flood reduction and climate resilience connect biodiversity work to course resilience, water stewardship and community value.
- **Measurement matters.** Golf federations can standardise biodiversity indicators, document habitat gains and show how management changes translate into measurable outcomes.
- **Partnership and participation.** The Regulation emphasises dialogue, engagement and long-term implementation across larger areas, bringing a wider range of stakeholders into the process.

Key takeaway for national associations

Golf should engage now as national nature restoration plans are developed and finalised through 2027. National associations can work with authorities and local partners to show how well-managed golf courses can restore habitats, improve ecological connectivity and support national restoration targets. By sharing evidence and practical examples, the sector can demonstrate its contribution to water management, resilience, community value and ecosystem services—ensuring golf is seen as a constructive partner in delivering nature restoration.

Further reading

- [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#)
- [EU Nature Restoration Regulation](#)
- [Natura 2000](#)
- [Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

EU Policy Headlines and Impact for Golf

Water Stewardship

“EU water policy increasingly asks every land manager to think beyond the boundary of the site, understand the catchment, reduce pressure on shared resources and prepare for a more variable climate. Golf has an opportunity to be part of that solution by becoming more water-efficient, improving water quality and demonstrating responsible water stewardship.”

Policy direction

- **Resilience, efficiency and protection.** The EU’s Water Framework Directive is being revised in the context of an emerging EU Water Resilience Strategy. The aim is to focus on scarcity, climate adaptation, pollution prevention, reuse and a water-smart economy.
- **Golf sits within the river basin.** Courses interact with surface water, groundwater, drainage systems and neighbouring land uses. River Basin Management Plans provide the wider context for managing abstraction and reducing nutrient, sediment and chemical losses.
- **Course and community resilience.** Efficient irrigation, soil and turf management, rainwater storage, wetlands and drainage design can help respond to drought and heavy rainfall while protecting water quality.
- **Reuse depends on national conditions.** EU water-reuse rules set minimum quality requirements for treated urban wastewater used in agricultural irrigation; national rules and local risk management remain important for golf.
- **Monitoring supports progress.** Consistent data on abstraction, irrigation efficiency, sources, reuse, runoff and water quality can strengthen dialogue with water authorities and demonstrate progress.

Key takeaway for national associations

Golf needs a catchment-based and collaborative approach to water stewardship. Federations and clubs should work with water authorities and local partners to understand shared pressures and identify practical solutions. By improving efficiency, protecting water quality, exploring appropriate reuse and sharing reliable data, golf can contribute to wider water resilience while preparing for a more variable climate. Proactive engagement is important to position golf as a committed partner in water stewardship and catchment management.

Further reading

- [Water Framework Directive](#)
- [Water Reuse](#)
- [Urban Wastewater Treatment](#)
- [EU Water Resilience Strategy](#)
- [Groundwater Directive](#)

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Integrated Turfgrass Management

“From 2027, digital recording will provide a common baseline for professional pesticide use across European golf. The opportunity is to go beyond compliance: connect reliable data with Integrated Turfgrass Management, demonstrate responsible decision-making and show how golf can maintain quality while reducing environmental risk.”

Policy direction

- **From chemical control to integrated management.** Soil health, grass selection, irrigation, fertility, mowing, drainage and monitoring can help prevent problems and reduce unnecessary interventions.
- **Digital accountability.** From 1 January 2027, professional users of plant protection products in the EU must keep electronic, machine-readable application records under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/564.
- **A common baseline.** Records cover type of use, product, time, dose, location, treated area and crop or land use. Clubs should check national requirements and select suitable recording systems.
- **Recording is more than compliance.** Consistent data can show why applications were made, how use changes over time and where alternatives may work.
- **Link data to decisions.** Consider application records alongside weather, disease pressure, soil and turf conditions, irrigation, fertility and playing-quality requirements.

Key takeaway for national associations

Golf needs a coordinated approach across borders. National federations should brief affiliated clubs, engage with national competent authorities and identify suitable systems or tools that meet the regulatory requirements. The EGA Data Working Group is also developing broader guidance, resources and a data-connectivity map to support more consistent reporting across European golf. Together, these steps can strengthen professional practice, transparency and confidence while reducing environmental risk.

Further reading

- [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2023/564](#)
- [EU Sustainable Use of Pesticides](#)