

PRESS RELEASE

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European Natural History Institutions Join Forces with Industry to Face Critical Challenges

- *At CETAF's 2nd Directors' Summit in Berlin, leaders highlight the need for collective resilience and collaboration in critical times.*
- *Discussions focused on safeguarding scientific integrity, protecting biodiversity and geodiversity knowledge, and reinforcing collaboration with the private sector throughout Europe's research community.*

Berlin, 12 November 2025. The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) concluded its 2nd Directors' Summit in Berlin, bringing together the leaders of Europe's major natural history museums and biodiversity research institutions under the theme "*Trusted Partners, Critical Times.*"

The Summit gathered directors from across Europe to strengthen collaboration and share strategies for tackling the pressing scientific, societal, and ethical challenges that natural history institutions face today. The event reaffirmed the importance of developing new partnerships. In the light of the biodiversity crisis working with the private sector is seen as critical.

The event also reaffirmed the critical role of natural history institutions as centres of expertise and trusted knowledge in democratic societies, providing essential services and safeguarding long-term biodiversity and geodiversity data.

Edwin van Huis, CETAF President, stated: "In critical times, trust and collaboration are our greatest assets. The natural history institutions of Europe have collectively built an extensive knowledge base that is vital for science and policy. The private sector lacks this knowledge, yet it remains the strongest force shaping our planet. By standing together, we are more powerful and better prepared to help humanity navigate the future."

Dialogue and Reflection: Building Trust in Critical Times

Under the title "Trusted Partners, Critical Times," the first session featured speakers from the private sector on the evolving role of natural history institution in Europe. The session also placed these debates in the broader European context, marked by new sustainability frameworks such as the Nature Restoration Regulation and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, which call for stronger biodiversity expertise and accountability.

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Dr Helge Maas (Senior Director – Sustainability Lead Public Sector Germany, Capgemini Invent) and Mr Robert-Alexandre Poujade (SG Analyst, Biodiversity Lead – BNP Paribas AM) and the leaders of CETAF institutions discussed how natural history museums, botanical gardens and bio- and geodiversity research institutions serve as a vital link in a complex, science-based environment, highlighting opportunities for responsible collaboration that align innovation with integrity.

Museums Stand Together

Moderated by Patrick Michaely (MNHN, Luxembourg), the second session invited directors from leading European institutions to reflect and explore how to navigate partnerships while preserving scientific independence.

During the director's reflection panel Klement Tockner (Senckenberg Society for Nature Research), Gilles Bloch (MNHN, Paris), Ursula Warnke (State Museum of Nature and Human, Oldenburg), and Esme Ward (NHM, Manchester) discussed the potentials and risks of private sector collaboration. They concluded that it is essential to promote accountability, transparency, and impact-based metrics while still encouraging active collaboration with the private sector. To secure stability and autonomy, natural history institutions must stand united to ensure that scientific priorities, credibility, and continuity are maintained across political cycles.

About CETAF

The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) is a network of leading European natural history museums, botanical gardens, and research institutions that hold biological and geological collections and promote research, training, and public engagement on biodiversity and geodiversity. Together, CETAF members represent the largest scientific community in Europe dedicated to understanding and preserving the natural world.

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