

This prize recognises the time, dedication and efforts that Europeans invested in nature protection.

The Award aims to raise awareness about Natura 2000 and the role it plays for safeguarding our natural heritage and in promoting social and economic wellbeing.

Twenty-five finalists from seventeen European countries have been selected out of seventy five eligible applications. The finalists are distributed in [five categories](#): **conservation, socio-economic benefits, communication, reconciling interests/perceptions** and **Cross-Border Cooperation and Networking** and will be assessed by an independent jury. The winners will be announced at the high level Ceremony on [17 May in Brussels](#).

[Natura 2000](#) is the largest network of protected areas in the world. It offers a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats and have as a main task to **preserve the biodiversity**.

Vote now

[The public vote](#) to select the winner of the European Citizen's Award is now open. In addition to the [five category winners](#), people can vote online for their favourite finalist application. The finalist receiving the most votes will be rewarded with the **European Citizens' Award**.

The public vote **is open until 22 April**.

Past European Citizens' Award

2016: [Collaboration between public and private bodies saves the Iberian lynx from extinction in Spain](#)

2015: [Natura 2000 Day](#)