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Endorsement for Sebastian Winkler as IUCN Regional Councillor for West Europe

Dear Fellow IUCN Members,

I consider Sebastian Winkler as uniquely qualified for the position of IUCN Regional Councillor for West Europe. Sebastian worked closely with me during my years as Director General, and we have stayed in touch ever since due to our respective engagements in critical conservation efforts around the world.

With his deep understanding of nature conservation efforts – governance, finance and innovative initiatives – Sebastian has what it takes to embolden the IUCN agenda at this critical juncture.

Results That Matter

Sebastian's track record speaks directly to IUCN's current priorities. He:

- **Doubled IUCN's unrestricted income** to €19 million annually as Acting Head of Conservation Finance, demonstrating the financial acumen our Union desperately needs
- **Founded the Countdown 2010 Movement**, mobilizing over 2,000 organizations across business, government, and civil society—proving his ability to build the coalitions essential for today's conservation challenges
- **Co-founded the Conservation Finance Alliance**, creating lasting infrastructure for conservation funding
- **Led negotiations for the CBD 2020 Aichi Targets** as government negotiator, showing he can deliver policy wins on the global stage

The Leader West Europe Needs

What sets Sebastian apart is his rare combination of insider knowledge and external perspective. His 13 years with IUCN Secretariat—from Environmental Economist to Senior EU Policy Advisor—gives him comprehensive understanding of how our Union works. His subsequent leadership roles with governments, businesses, and partner organizations provide for the fresh thinking we need to tackle biodiversity loss at scale.

As someone who has lived in 20+ countries across three continents and holds four nationalities, Sebastian embodies the global perspective West Europe must bring to IUCN's table. His fluency in all three official IUCN languages plus German and Italian ensures no voice goes unheard.

This Election Matters

IUCN addresses unprecedented challenges: accelerating species loss, climate impacts, and the urgent need to translate science into policy action. We need Councillors who can navigate complex negotiations, mobilize resources, and build bridges between diverse stakeholders. Sebastian has done all three—successfully and repeatedly.

His current role- maintaining an office at IUCN HQ while actively serving on SSC and CEESP - demonstrates his ongoing commitment to our Union's success. He understands both governance and ground-level conservation realities.

A Personal Recommendation

In my years of conservation leadership, I have learned to recognize exceptional talent. Sebastian Winkler possesses that rare combination of strategic vision, diplomatic skill, and operational excellence that distinguishes effective leaders. Above all—he delivers conservation results.

May I urge you to vote for Sebastian Winkler as your Regional Councillor for West Europe. Our Union—and our planet—will benefit from his leadership.

With highest regards,



Dr. Maritta R. von Bieberstein Koch-Weser

Former Director General

IUCN – The World Conservation Union