

**Science and Policy  
Advisory Council**

September 16, 2025

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Marine ecologist

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Norwegian School of Mgt

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Founder, The Natural Step

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Per Espen Stoknes  
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David Suzuki  
Scientist and broadcaster

Dominique Voynet  
Former Env. Minister, France

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker  
Founder, Wuppertal Institute

**Re: Endorsement of Sebastian Winkler IUCN Regional Councillor for West Europe**

Dear IUCN Members,

As Co-founder of Global Footprint Network and co-creator of the Ecological Footprint concept, I am pleased to offer my strong endorsement for Sebastian Winkler's candidacy for Regional Councillor for West Europe.

Sebastian served as Vice President for Programme & Outreach at Global Footprint Network from 2010 to 2016, during which time he played a pivotal role in driving our impact globally. His leadership in establishing our Geneva office, maintaining our Brussels presence, and building out our regional engagements across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Mediterranean demonstrated the kind of strategic vision and operational excellence that IUCN needs in its leadership.

**Architect of Science-to-Policy Integration**

During his tenure with us, Sebastian led the implementation of our five global initiatives that fundamentally changed how countries, businesses, and local authorities approach resource constraints. His work on our Environmental Policy Initiative successfully inserted Ecological Footprint analysis into key multilateral and regional processes, precisely the kind of science-to-policy integration that IUCN must champion more effectively.

His strategic engagement with our Finance Initiative, developing the E-RISC methodology to assess ecological country risks in sovereign credit analysis, highlighted his ability to translate environmental science into financial frameworks that decision-makers use. This innovative approach to making sustainability economically visible reflects the transformational thinking conservation needs today.

## **Global Network Builder**

What distinguished Sebastian's leadership was his understanding that sustainability responses require an understanding of our global context and local implementation. His engagements across regions wasn't just organizational expansion; it was but the strategic recognition that ecological challenges require culturally competent, regionally grounded responses supported by rigorous, tested methodologies.

His work on our City and Local Authorities Initiative, preparing urban planners for resilience, demonstrated his grasp of how global environmental challenges manifest at the local level. This multi-scale thinking and multi-cultural experience is exactly what IUCN needs as it works to implement conservation strategies across diverse contexts.

## **Systems Thinking for Resource Constraints**

Sebastian's leadership of our Competitiveness 2.0 Initiative helped governments revisit their competitiveness frameworks to include ecological risks, demonstrating his understanding of our "collective biophysical metabolism." He recognized that economic competitiveness and ecological sustainability aren't competing priorities but interconnected necessities for thriving societies.

His work on our Human Development Initiative, defining what it means to meet human needs while maintaining natural capital, exemplified his recognition that resource security is paramount to eradicating poverty. This integrated approach to development challenges reflects the systems thinking essential for addressing human well-being, biodiversity loss and climate change simultaneously.

## **Proven Leadership in Resource-Constrained World**

As we face persistent ecological overshoot, IUCN needs leaders who understand both the urgency of our planetary predicament and the practical pathways to meaningful responses and winnable strategies. Sebastian's six years of leadership with us proved his ability to build institutions, mobilize resources, manage complex programs, and deliver measurable results across multiple continents.

His representation and fundraising work during his tenure helped establish Global Footprint Network as a trusted partner to governments, businesses, and international organizations. This track record of building credibility and delivering impact positions him perfectly to strengthen IUCN's influence on the global stage.

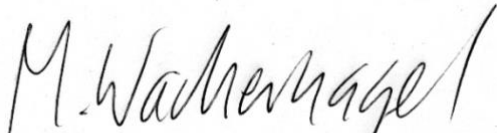
## **The Metrics-Driven Leader We Need**

Sebastian understands that "you cannot manage what you do not measure." More importantly, he knows how to build the systems and partnerships that make measurement meaningful for decision-makers. His experience translating complex ecological data into actionable frameworks for finance, policy, and urban planning makes him uniquely qualified to help IUCN bridge the gap

between conservation science and real-world implementation.

For all that, I encourage IUCN members to support Sebastian Winkler's candidacy. His proven ability to scale conservation impact through strategic partnerships, innovative methodologies, and inclusive global networks will strengthen both West European representation and IUCN's capacity to address our planetary emergency.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Wackernagel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr. Mathis Wackernagel**

Co-Founder and Board Member, Global Footprint Network

Co-creator, Ecological Footprint concept

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