

Joint Press Release WWF and Birdlife Europe

EU ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS FAIL TO STAND UP FOR NATURE IN FACE OF FARM LOBBY INTERESTS

Brussels, 19th December 2011 – Birdlife Europe and WWF express dismay at the outcome of today's EU Environment Council where the interests of the farm lobby purveyed over the interests of biodiversity protection.

We are deeply concerned by the long and painful efforts produce by certain EU Environment Ministers in weakening biodiversity protection to protect the interests of EU farmers. The inclusion of specific biodiversity protection measures in agriculture has been blocked due to Germany's absolute refusal to refer to the CAP in any level of useful detail.

Ariel Brunner, Head of European Policy at Birdlife Europe, said: *"Looking at Environment Ministers compromising for hours on the protection of what should be the core of their political mandate, biodiversity, is a dangerous preview of the fate of biodiversity left completely in the hands of Agriculture Ministers."*

"Biodiversity can't be held hostage to agricultural interests – yet again. If farmers and their organisations know what is good for them, they would welcome protecting biodiversity as one of their strongest arguments for receiving public funds."

Tony Long, WWF European Policy Office Director, stressed: *"This was the key opportunity for Environment Ministers to send out a clear signal to their Agriculture colleagues on their position on the current on-going discussion on the CAP. Now Agriculture Ministers will be on their own to decide on the level of integration of environment in the CAP."*

"Biodiversity should be mainstreamed in all relevant EU and national policies if we want these policies to deliver the economic and environmental benefits they are created for."

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Notes to editors:

1. Stichting BirdLife Europe
BirdLife International is a global Partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. The BirdLife Partnership operates in 117 countries and territories worldwide. BirdLife Europe supports the European and Central Asian Partnership for BirdLife International and is present in 45 countries and all EU Member States.
<http://europe.birdlife.org>

For more information, please contact:

Elodie Cantaloube, Media and Communication Assistant at BirdLife Europe

Tel. +32 (0) 2 541 07 81

E-mail: elodie.cantaloube@birdlife.org