

GREENING EUROPE

PRIORITIES OF BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL FOR THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY – JANUARY TO JUNE 2007

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Introduction from the President of NABU, BirdLife Germany

With the Presidency of both the European Union and the G8 during the first half of 2007, the German Federal Government takes on an enormous challenge. Discussions on the future of Europe and the Constitutional Treaty will take place at the June 2007 Summit. These discussions present an important opportunity for European leaders to address the issues that matter to European citizens. Euro barometer opinion polls consistently show strong public support for EU policy on the environment. Heads of State and Government should therefore continue to champion the environment as a top priority for EU action during discussions on the future of Europe. In addition, halting biodiversity loss by 2010, tackling climate change, protecting Europe's marine environment and safeguarding primary forests must also be top priorities for the Presidency.

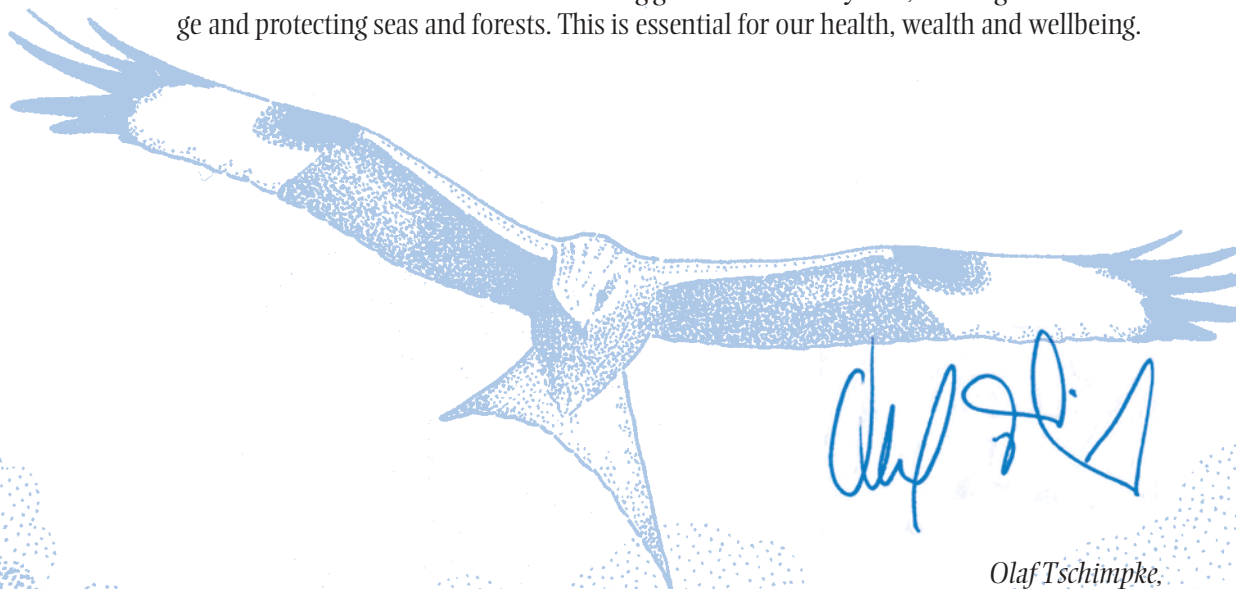
Key challenges for the German Presidency

Halting loss of biodiversity – from commitment to action

The "Biodiversity Communication" that the European Commission published in May 2006 and its "EU Action Plan to 2010 and beyond" clearly show how to reach the target to which Heads of State and Government have repeatedly committed themselves: to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. With only three years to go, the German Presidency will play a vital role in transforming warm words into affirmative action at all levels of government: EU, national, regional and local.

Making Europe's footprint in the world sustainable

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment clearly shows that biodiversity conservation is not a luxury: mankind can only survive if natural resources and ecosystem services can be conserved for future generations, worldwide. Real progress must be achieved during the German EU and G8 Presidencies in halting global biodiversity loss, tackling climate change and protecting seas and forests. This is essential for our health, wealth and wellbeing.



*Olaf Tschimpke,
President of NABU*

2010 - Only three years away

The EU and its Member States have committed themselves under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to significantly reducing global biodiversity loss by 2010. In addition, their Heads of State and Government have promised to halt the loss in biodiversity at EU level by the same date.

The European Commission's Biodiversity Communication and Action Plan of 22 May 2006 have outlined the measures necessary to achieve the 2010 target. Following Council endorsement of the Commission's strategy in 2006, the German Presidency must make sure that it is implemented fully and effectively.

The EU's Birds and Habitats Directives are world-class nature protection laws, the full implementation of which is essential to meet the 2010 target. The Natura 2000 network established by these Directives is almost complete, at least on land.

Now the time has come to make Natura 2000 work and to benefit from its many opportunities: Member States and stakeholders must focus on developing and using site man-

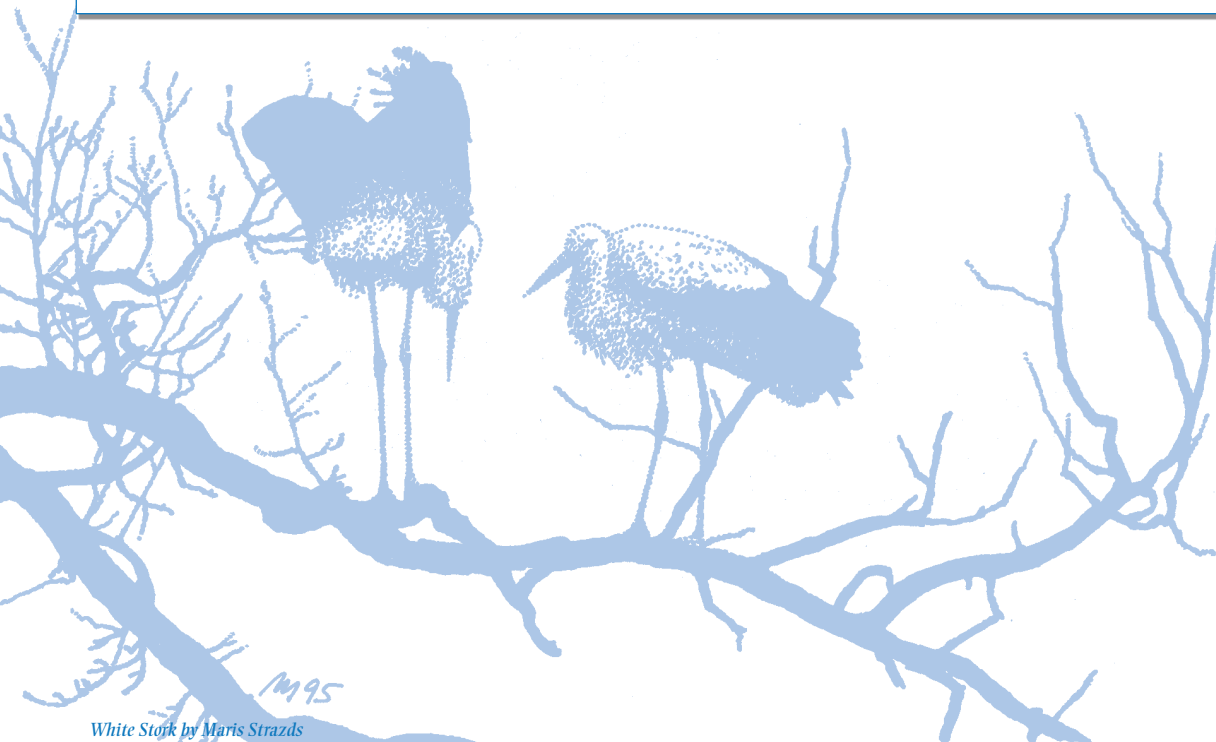
agement plans, on undertaking continuous monitoring of habitats and species, and on increasing the financial support for all these activities. In this way, Natura 2000 can benefit biodiversity and people, especially in the less developed areas of Europe.

In order to help nature to adapt to climate change, the coherence and connectivity of the Natura 2000 network must be improved, and biodiversity concerns fully integrated into all types of land management activities, inside and outside protected areas.

But the Directives do not work in isolation. The 2010 target can only be met if biodiversity conservation is integrated into all EU policies (in line with Article 6 of the EC Treaty), otherwise harmful subsidies or legislation (e.g. through the Common Agricultural Policy) can jeopardise the successes achieved by the Nature Directives. It is therefore essential that other policies in areas such as agriculture, forestry, transport, structural and regional planning are made more biodiversity friendly and that new instruments for responsible and sustainable EU land management are explored.

The German Presidency should:

- Strongly promote the full and swift implementation of the "EU Action Plan to 2010 and beyond" and ensure that best practice is shared between Member States and all levels of government
- Support and promote the completion of the Natura 2000 network at EU, national and regional level, including management planning, monitoring and adequate financing. In this respect, special attention should be paid to marine Natura 2000 sites
- Make significant progress on integrating nature conservation and environmental protection into all policy areas and their financing instruments, particularly in the agricultural, transport, forest and regional planning sectors

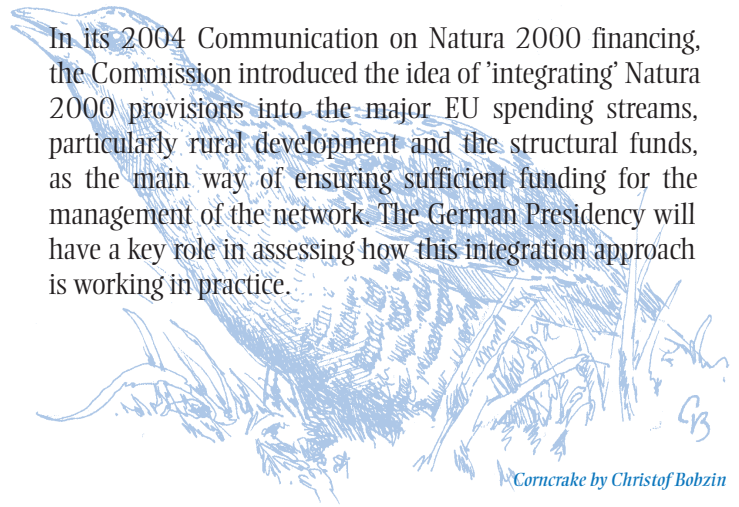


LIFE+ and Natura 2000 financing

The German Presidency will be tasked with finding final agreement on the much-delayed EU financial instrument for the environment, LIFE+.

When negotiating a final deal on the financial perspective 2007-2013 in April 2006, the EU Institutions allocated an additional EUR 100 million to Natura 2000 measures under LIFE+. Yet only EUR 50 million of this additional funding has so far been allocated to the LIFE+ budget, leaving the remainder in a financial black hole. This situation must be rectified. At the same time, 50% of LIFE+ funds should be ringfenced for biodiversity.

In its 2004 Communication on Natura 2000 financing, the Commission introduced the idea of 'integrating' Natura 2000 provisions into the major EU spending streams, particularly rural development and the structural funds, as the main way of ensuring sufficient funding for the management of the network. The German Presidency will have a key role in assessing how this integration approach is working in practice.



Corncrake by Christof Bobzin

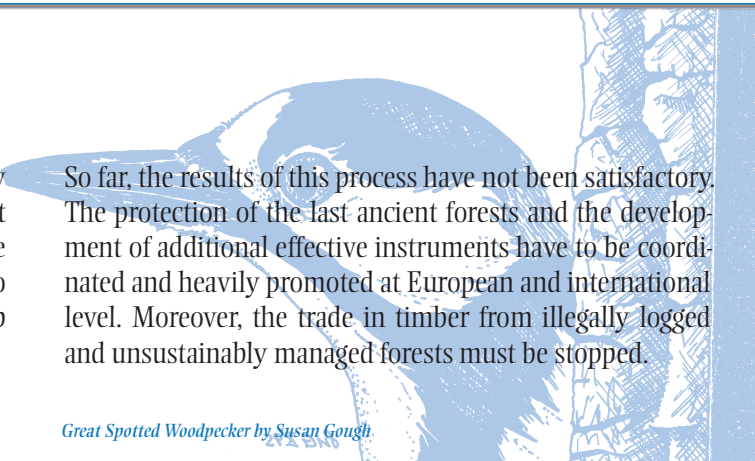
The German Presidency should:

- Ensure that the management of project funds under LIFE+ is not split between Member States and the European Commission; this would be unworkable and ineffective
- Ensure that the additional EUR 100 million is allocated to Natura 2000 measures under LIFE+, in accordance with the Inter-Institutional Agreement on the financial perspective of April 2006
- Allocate at least 50% of the LIFE+ budget to nature and biodiversity, reflecting the financial perspective deal and the importance of LIFE+ for achieving the target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010
- Urge the Commission to undertake a thorough analysis of the 'integration' approach to Natura 2000 financing and make suggestions to tackle any problems identified
- Arrange a joint conference of European Environment and Agriculture Ministries, in order to discuss and initiate new integrative approaches for financing Natura 2000 based on the experiences from the then completed financing programme phases (LIFE+, agricultural, structural and fisheries funds)
- Ensure that Natura 2000 financing is a key issue for the EU Budget Review in 2008/2009

Protection of forests

Europe is one of the biggest market places for illegally logged timber from tropical- and primary forests. At European level the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process has been initiated in order to stop these imports on the basis of voluntary partnership agreements.

So far, the results of this process have not been satisfactory. The protection of the last ancient forests and the development of additional effective instruments have to be coordinated and heavily promoted at European and international level. Moreover, the trade in timber from illegally logged and unsustainably managed forests must be stopped.



Great Spotted Woodpecker by Susan Gough

The German Presidency should:

- Guarantee a standard for the negotiations on voluntary partnership agreements as measures against illegal logging (EU FLEGT Process) that satisfies the sustainability demands of the World Summits in Rio and Johannesburg
- Press ahead with the negotiations on Prevented Deforestation as a cross-sectional task of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), so that both long-range protection of the last primary forests and the urgently needed reduction of fossil CO₂ emissions are ensured
- Urge the European Commission to present proposals for further legislative EU measures to stop the import of and trade in illegally logged timber by March 2007 at the latest. These proposals should be swiftly adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers

Rural Development and Agriculture Policy

Over recent decades, intensive agriculture promoted by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has led to the degradation of habitats, water and traditional landscapes and to the dramatic loss of wildlife across Europe.

The agricultural reforms agreed in 2003 represent an important step forward in reconciling the interests of the environment, farming and society. However, the CAP is still failing to deliver for the EU's environment and wildlife:

The German Presidency should:

- Start a debate, in the run-up to the EU Budget Review, about the future funding priorities of the CAP and the need for a comprehensive and targeted system to pay for the environmental services delivered by farmers and other land managers. Such a system should be the long-term substitute for the current ineffective mechanisms of the CAP's first pillar (direct aid and market expenditure)
- Ensure that the mid-term review of the CAP budget in 2008 secures sufficient funding for agri-environment schemes and Natura 2000 by significantly increasing compulsory modulation
- Ensure that existing environmental standards are not lowered as part of the CAP simplification process
- Ensure that the development of energy crops delivers significant greenhouse gas savings while not increasing pressure on biodiversity, water and soils. This includes the creation of an effective certification system to guarantee that bioenergy is produced in a sustainable way, both domestically and abroad. Particular attention should be given to ensuring the maintenance of the biodiversity benefits currently provided by mandatory set aside

the financial perspective 2007-2013 slashed the funds for rural development, precisely the forward-looking part of the CAP that provides targeted funding for the delivery of environmental objectives and sustainable development. A full review of EU spending is envisaged in 2008. This opportunity must not be missed and requires an urgent and serious debate about the long-term funding priorities of the CAP and the need for an immediate and substantial shift of CAP funds into rural development.

Wild Bird Trade

BirdLife International, alongside other nature conservation, veterinary and animal welfare organisations (e.g. the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the World Parrot Trust) call on the EU to ban unsustainable imports of wild birds. The EU is the last large-scale importer of wild birds, accounting for nearly 90 % of global imports of registered wild birds, totalling 1.7 to 2 million birds each year. Germany is one of the EU's main consumers of exotic wild birds. Scientific studies suggest that up to 60 % of birds die during capture, transport and quarantine, raising serious questions about waste and welfare in this trade. Import of wild birds could also pose a significant and costly pest control problem to the EU.

Experience in other countries such as the USA (Wild Birds Conservation Act, 1992), Canada, Israel and Australia show that halting imports of wild birds may also reduce the illegal trade significantly, preventing large-scale laundering

opportunities. Stricter regulation could therefore also make customs controls easier, contributing to lower bureaucracy and administrative costs in Europe.

Due to health risks associated with Avian Influenza, the European Commission has established a trade ban since autumn 2005, which was recently prolonged until March 2007.

During the German EU-presidency, also COP 14 of CITES takes place in June 2007 in the Netherlands, which will look into ways how to improve protection of endangered species and improve trade with them. BirdLife International recognises the role and successes of CITES in regulating trade of endangered species, but believes that as an environmental leader the EU should adopt much more progressive measures. The trade of wild caught birds should be banned unless sustainability and conservation criteria can be explicitly met by exporting countries.

The German Presidency should:

- As a priority, put the issue of the wild bird trade on the agenda of one Environment Council and adopt Council conclusions calling on the Commission to initiate an assessment and change in policy
- Commit itself to a general ban on wild bird imports unless traders can show scientifically, on a case by case basis, that the trade is sustainable, guaranteeing conservation benefits for the species concerned

Marine environment and fisheries

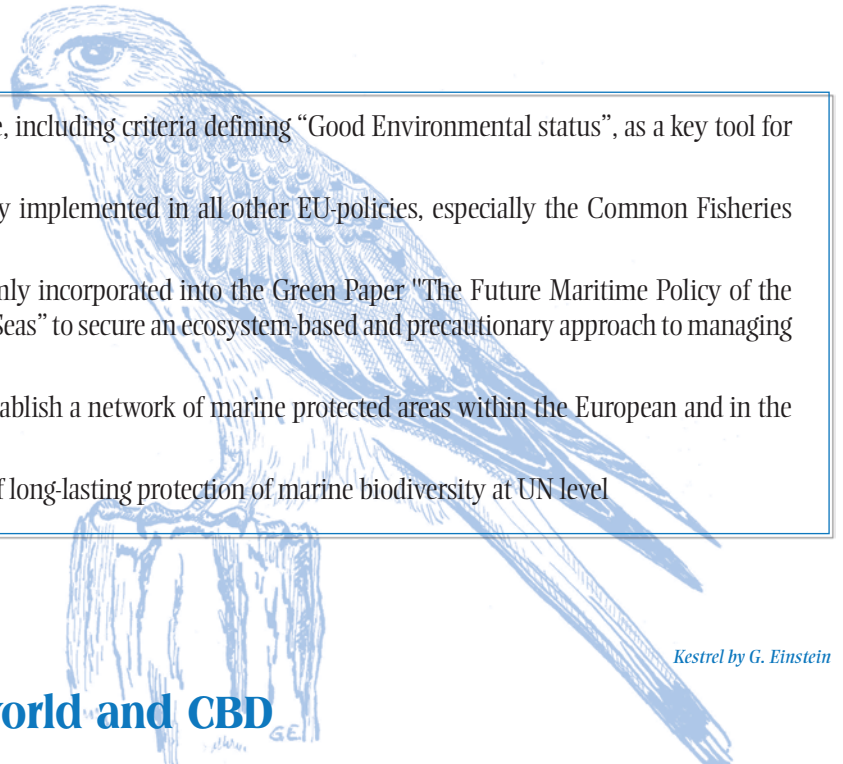
As a response to the increasingly critical state of European Oceans and seas, and the obligations outlined in the Sixth Environmental Action Programme, the Commission published a Thematic Strategy for the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment, accompanied by a legislative instrument: the Marine Strategy Directive.

At its First Reading vote in November 2006, the European Parliament sent a clear message to the Council regarding the

need for a more ambitious Directive with specific and legally binding criteria for the definition of "good environment status" and better integration of environment concerns into other Community policies, especially the Common Fisheries Policy. Building on the work of the Finnish Presidency, the German Presidency must ensure that the Marine Strategy Directive is robust and effective, and that it provides long-term protection for Europe's seas.

The German Presidency should:

- Adopt a strong and robust Marine Strategy Directive, including criteria defining "Good Environmental status", as a key tool for conserving marine biodiversity
- Ensure that the targets of the Directive will be fully implemented in all other EU-policies, especially the Common Fisheries Policy
- Make sure that the Marine Strategy Directive is firmly incorporated into the Green Paper "The Future Maritime Policy of the European Union: A European Vision for Oceans and Seas" to secure an ecosystem-based and precautionary approach to managing human activities in the marine environment
- Urge the Commission and the Member States to establish a network of marine protected areas within the European and in the High Seas
- Advocate a coherent European position in support of long-lasting protection of marine biodiversity at UN level



Kestrel by G. Einstein

Footprint of Europe in the world and CBD

Several studies have underlined that the global loss of biodiversity is still ongoing at a frightening rate. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a major study by 1.400 scientists, estimated that approximately 60 percent of ecosystem services have been dramatically impaired over the past 50 years. Europe and its Member States are clearly responsible for much of this global biodiversity loss. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has provided a

conceptual framework for understanding the problem and analysing existing data. Leading scientists and NGOs consequently call for the establishment of a permanent body of scientists to assess trends in biodiversity, similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The French government is currently funding a consultative process called "IMoSEB" on this issue.

The German Presidency should:

- Build political momentum, both as EU and G8-President, in favour of achieving the 2010 target, including by tackling climate change, protecting primary forests and safeguarding high seas, and, in so doing, reduce the EU's "ecological footprint". Reaching these targets will depend on an integrated strategy for the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits of biological diversity throughout the world
- Work, together with the following EU Presidencies (Portugal and Slovenia), on ambitious goals for COP 9 of the CBD in May 2008 in Germany
- Help to make IMoSEB work and try to ensure regular funding sources for this mechanism

Combating Climate Change and adapting to its effects

According to the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if no action is taken, human-induced global warming may lead to a rise in average global temperature of up to 5.8°C by 2100. Such a massive, short-term temperature rise would push the world's adaptation capacities to a breaking point and cause a massive crisis for humankind's physical, economic, political and social infrastructures.

Climate Change also poses the biggest long-term threat to global biodiversity. Even under a 'mid-warming' scenario, up to one-third of all land-based plants and animals could by the 2050s be committed towards extinction. We must immediately direct our efforts to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, so that temperature rises are restricted to less than 2°C. Above this, climate change will be dangerously out of control, risking triggering 'tipping points' such as the melting of major ice-sheets, producing impacts that are both devastating and irreversible.

Increasing energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energies are key tools for tackling climate change. Renewables must however be developed in truly sustainable way. As far as the development of biofuels and biomass production is concerned, it is essential that these renewables deliver real greenhouse gas emissions reductions and do not harm biodiversity (e.g. through an EU wide mandatory certification system).

There will be many opportunities for taking forward the EU's climate change agenda during the German Presidency. For example, there will be a full review of the EU Emissions Trading System. Secondly, discussions will take place on opting aviation into the Emissions Trading System. Thirdly, there will be a debate among leaders at the Spring Summit on an "Energy Policy for Europe". The EU must seize these opportunities to cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly and rapidly. This is essential if Europe is to demonstrate international leadership on climate change.

For decades to come however, climate change is irreversible. Therefore adaptation strategies must be developed which enable wildlife and people to adapt to its likely consequences. Biodiversity conservation and the protection of the natural environment are essential if we are to improve our ability to cope with climate change.



Aquatic Warbler by Tomasz Cofa

The German Presidency should:

- Negotiate for a 'Post Kyoto' agreement under which all major polluting countries are bound to targets capable of limiting the average global temperature rise to 2°C. Action must also be taken to halt emissions from tropical deforestation, which currently account for at least 20% of global emissions
- Champion policies in the EU that will deliver substantial emission cuts across Europe. Crucially, the German Presidency must press for a meaningful and enforceable cap on emissions through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and allocate permits through auctioning
- Promote an EU energy policy with environmental sustainability at its heart. The policy must seek to improve energy efficiency and to increase the use of renewable energies, while taking biodiversity concerns into consideration
- In the discussions on the revision of Biofuels Directive champion the creation of an EU wide mandatory certification system to ensure sustainability of biofuels both domestically produced and imported
- Support the development of an EU adaptation strategy, which stresses the importance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity in a changing climate

Delivering a green and prosperous Europe

Protecting wildlife benefits society: ecosystems deliver the services and resources our economy depends on and sustain and enhance our health; nature conservation offers educational opportunities and it contributes to the regeneration of communities. While we should protect nature for its own sake (because it has a right to exist), doing so safeguards the environment that we depend on for our quality of life and long-term survival, and hands over a healthy planet to future generations.

It is essential that discussions on the Lisbon strategy at the Spring Summit 2007 recognise the links between environmental protection, human wellbeing and economic development. “Better regulation”, which is likely to feature strongly in the debate, must not lead to the stifling of new environmental policy initiatives or a rolling back of existing environmental legislation. Rather, this agenda should bring about a renewed commitment to mainstreaming environmental protection into all EU policies.

EU environmental policy has been a success story. For example, the EU Birds Directive is working well in the broadest public interest across Europe safeguarding important areas for people and wildlife. Moreover, evidence shows that good environmental regulation promotes competitiveness and planning security for investors: the Nordic countries score very highly on global competitiveness, yet have high levels of environmental protection. Recent studies undertaken in the Member States have emphasised the value of high standards of environmental regulation in creating economic competitiveness.

There is a strong political as well as policy case for EU ambition on the environment. Opinion polls consistently show strong public support for action at EU level on the environment.

The German Presidency should:

- Highlight the links between environmental protection, human wellbeing and economic development during discussions on the Lisbon strategy at the Spring Summit
- Ensure that the debate on “Better Regulation” does not lead to the stifling or weakening of EU environmental policy
- Champion environmental protection as a top priority for EU action on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and during discussions on the “Future of Europe” at the June Summit, and
- Take forward delivery of the Sustainable Development Strategy that was adopted at the Summit in June 2006, including the development of a set of indicators to measure the progress of the Strategy. A biodiversity indicator – such as the “common bird index” – must feature in this limited set of indicators



Little Owl by Joaquín López-Rojas

BirdLife International Partnership

The BirdLife International Partnership strives to conserve birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. This memorandum to the German Presidency was produced by the European Division of BirdLife International and NABU, the Partner of BirdLife International in Germany. For further information please contact either:

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