



Media Release

Discover Natura 2000's hidden gems with the EU Commissioners

Brussels, 12 February 2010 – BirdLife International [1] welcomes the newly appointed European Commission, the second under the leadership of President Barroso. On this occasion, as part of the activities organized during the UN International Year of Biodiversity, BirdLife International, together with its EU-27 Partners, has invited President Barroso and all the Commissioners to visit a Natura 2000 [2] site in their home country. Through this visit they would stress the importance of the Commission's commitment and efforts to preserve Europe's common heritage and underline the construction of a sustainable future for Europe.

Biodiversity loss and climate change are the two most alarming manifestations of our current overuse of natural resources and disregard for the ecological consequences of our actions. Tackling those inextricable problems requires joint up thinking that puts the science of ecosystems management at the heart of decision making.

"The International community has failed to meet the 2010 targets and now more than ever the EU must lead in the adoption of an ambitious 2020 target that not only aims to halt the loss of biodiversity, but also to champion the recovery of habitats and species" commented Angelo Caserta, Regional Director of the BirdLife European Division.

BirdLife International believes a new 2020 target should stop further biodiversity loss, improve the status of threatened species and habitats by speeding up their recovery, enhance and restore ecosystems to increase their resilience and recognize both the inherent and the utilitarian value of biodiversity.

BirdLife is an official partner of International Year of Biodiversity. With its sound base in science, and the BirdLife Partnership's global repository of information on bird populations, BirdLife International is uniquely placed to comment and report on the

state of biodiversity for the CBD, whose meeting will take place in Nagoya, Japan, later this year. [3]

“We hope that in the next five years President Barroso and the whole College of Commissioners will provide a strong and clear voice for the protection of the environment and biodiversity through their different portfolios and we wish them a very successful mandate”, concluded Angelo Caserta.

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Notes for the editor

[1] BirdLife International is a global Partnership of nature conservation organisations working in more than 100 countries and territories. BirdLife is the leading authority on the status of birds, their habitats and the problems affecting them, and is working on a wide range of environmental issues. BirdLife has 42 Partners in Europe, and is represented in all 27 Member States.

For more information about the work of the BirdLife European Division:

<http://europe.birdlife.org>

[2] Natura 2000 is a unique ecological network of protected areas in the territory of the European Union. Natura 2000 sites are not fenced-off areas, but encourage sustainable and nature friendly land-use and business. They are established under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, which are binding law for all EU Member States

For more information see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature>

[3] The 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10) and the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP 5) will be held in Nagoya, Aichi, from 18 to 29 October 2010. More information at <http://www.cop10.jp/aichi-nagoya/english/cop/cop.html>