



Media release

Will Environment Ministers put biodiversity back on its way to recovery?

EMBARGOED: 15 March 2010

Brussels, 15 March 2010 – BirdLife International [1] welcomes the Conclusions of the Environment Council meeting that took place in Brussels today, regarding the 2020 Biodiversity target.

Last January, the European Commission published its communication presenting 4 options for an EU vision and target for halting the loss of biodiversity beyond 2010. [2] BirdLife considers that the first three options presented in this paper were not up to the leading ambitions of the EU. They were either a step backwards from the current biodiversity target or too weak for ensuring a proper protection of biodiversity in the future. BirdLife International together with other local, national and international NGOs urged the Council to adopt a so-called **option "4+"**, which would have made **ecosystem restoration** an overall obligation only limited by ecological conditions, not economic or political ones. Furthermore, we strongly encouraged the Council to mention the already existing legal obligation **to bring species and habitats to favorable conservation status in the EU**.

Although these specific requirements were not met, it is still good to see that Council voted for the strongest option on offer, which calls for "...**halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss**". Now it is the task of the European Heads of State and Government to also adopt this target and negotiate a similar commitment at the global level. "It is crucial that the EU should promote the adoption of an ambitious biodiversity target at the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Convention on

Biological Diversity in Japan in October 2010”[3], says Mr Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife International. “With the newly adopted EU target, they will be in a strong position to show leadership to the rest of the world on a key issue of environment protection, something that was badly missed in Copenhagen”, concluded Mr Brunner.

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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] Four levels of ambition are proposed by the Commission for a mid-term (2020) target to turn the vision into reality:

Option 1: Significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020.

Option 2: Halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020.

Option 3: Halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restoring them as far as possible.

Option 4: Halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restoring them as far as possible, and stepping up the EU's contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

[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>

