



Media Release
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Biodiversity: do we have the courage to save it?

Brussels, 22 May 2010 – Today, with its groundbreaking new report on the state of biodiversity in the EU, BirdLife International [1] denounces the EU's failure to reach its target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010 and indicates the necessary steps needed to stop the loss of biodiversity and to enhance its recovery in the EU.

"The message from this report is clear: the EU needs to take decisive action if it wants to turn the tide on the deepening biodiversity crisis and follow on the pledge of the European Heads of State, who adopted a new ambitious target during their last European Council" commented Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife International European Division. "We know what to do. The question is: do we have the will and the courage to take action before it is too late?" [2]

The report, entitled "*2010-Turning or Breaking Point for Europe's Wildlife?*" [3], was compiled in cooperation with BirdLife Partners in all 27 EU Member States, and analyses the progresses towards the 2010 biodiversity target against 10 major groups of indicators. Worryingly, three were rated as 'highly insufficient', while all the others as "inadequate". [4]

"The EU has failed to achieve the 2010 target and is still a long way off from preventing further loss of wildlife and habitats. The picture emerging from our assessment is one of **continuing impoverishment of biodiversity and inadequate responses**" continued Mr Brunner. "Despite the overall failure, however, there are many examples of best practices and local success stories that show how the EU already has powerful conservation tools, such as the EU Birds and Habitats Directives". [5]

As highlighted in the report, a **strong post 2010 EU biodiversity policy must be properly implemented**, especially focusing on its integration with other EU policies and on funding instruments. The report suggests specific actions that would enable a new

EU biodiversity policy to achieve its goals, such as stronger enforcement of EU nature legislation, develop 2020 biodiversity strategies for key sectoral policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), new investments in green infrastructure and strong measures to counteract the causes of biodiversity and ecosystem loss.

The status of national biodiversity strategies shows that **insufficient attention is paid to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at national level**. Therefore it is essential that the EU leads by example in the preparation of the next Nagoya COP10-CBD meeting later this year. [6]

“BirdLife International, official Partner of the International Year of Biodiversity, spotlights the need for the EU to show leadership by setting itself real and binding future targets ahead of next conference of the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, this October”, concludes 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] Last March the Environment Council voted for the strongest of the 4 options from the European Commission’s Communication, 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". Following the Environment Ministers' decision, on 26 March European Heads of State and Government endorsed this target in their conclusions.

[3] Download the report at www.birdlife.org/eu/biodiversity_assessment

[4]

Results at a glance	
Status of birds in the EU: <i>Forest birds are the only category with 'good' status.</i>	Inadequate
Status of birds globally: <i>Red List Index of birds steadily going down as more species are added each time</i>	highly insufficient
Status of species and habitats of European Community importance: <i>Only 17% of the habitats and species are in a favourable condition</i>	highly insufficient
National biodiversity legislation: <i>Transposition of relevant international legislation, integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies and land use planning and enforcing National Red Lists are all considered inadequate while National Biodiversity Strategies are highly insufficient.</i>	Inadequate
Implementation of national biodiversity legislation: <i>Both enforcement of relevant legislation and national administrative capacity are inadequate</i>	Inadequate
National protected areas networks: <i>Terrestrial Natura 2000 network and State protected area network are incomplete, while the marine Natura 2000 network and national ecological networks are highly insufficient. Management plan coverage is also highly insufficient.</i>	Inadequate
Research and monitoring: <i>National bird monitoring is rated good, while both national biodiversity monitoring and national biodiversity research are inadequate</i>	Inadequate
Financing: <i>Financing for all categories: Natura 2000, biodiversity outside N2K, monitoring and research are all highly insufficient</i>	highly insufficient
Public awareness: <i>Public awareness of biodiversity in general as well as of Natura 2000 generally low in most countries</i>	Inadequate
Governance: <i>Public participation in environmental decision-making is inadequate while public access to environmental information is considered adequate</i>	Inadequate

[5] Despite the missed 2010 biodiversity target, there are several **positive achievements** to be highlighted, such as the recovery of some of the most threatened bird species listed in the Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and the great progresses made in setting up the terrestrial Natura 2000 network, not forgetting however that the marine component still lags behind. 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. See <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature>

[6] 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>