

# Disappointment over European Court of Justice Decision involving SOR (BirdLife in Romania)

## Title

On 14 April 2011, the European Court of Justice ruled against the European Commission in a case brought against the Romanian Government on grounds of inadequate designation of protected areas for birds. The Ornithological Society of Romania (SOR), BirdLife's Romanian partner organisation, provided a large amount of information to support this case. When Romania acceded to the European Union in 2007, it was obliged under EU law to designate a network of Special Protection Areas for birds. However, 30% by area of the country's Important Bird Areas (IBA's - identified by SOR/BirdLife) were excluded from the network and 21 sites have no protection at all. This means that a large percentage of the populations of iconic species such as Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* and Corncrake *Crex crex* are not protected. The case failed on procedural grounds. Ciprian Fantana, of SOR, stated "We are, of course, extremely disappointed by this judgment. However, the case against the Romanian government to fulfill its duties to protect our sites of European Importance remains. Therefore, we will press the European Commission to bring a new legal action."

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