

Environmental NGOs call for EU budget shift from perverse subsidies to investments in ecosystems and green economy

Title

Environmental NGOs, including BirdLife Europe, highlighted in a public hearing at the European Parliament the environmental impacts of the EU Budget and the potential for a quality spending of European taxpayers' money. The Coalition for Sustainable EU Funds (BirdLife Europe, CEE Bankwatch Network, Conservation International - Europe, European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth Europe, Transport & Environment and WWF) argued that the current EU Budget does not deliver what European taxpayers expect: well-being, jobs and a healthy environment. They urged European decision-makers to prioritise the elimination of harmful subsidies; which increase energy consumption, CO2 emissions and biodiversity loss. They also called for significant resources to be reallocated to urgent investments in sustainable sectors such as energy savings, adaptation to climate change, and nature conservation and restoration. "The new EU Budget is a golden opportunity to help put the EU on the road towards a real resource-efficient economy" said Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife Europe. "The current levels of misuse of taxpayers money are not tenable when the EU is squeezed between budgetary constraints and ongoing ecological crises", concluded Mr. Brunner. These seven NGOs have come together to ensure that European investments contribute to a sustainable Europe by highlighting three key priorities; climate change, biodiversity loss and inefficient use of natural resources. To this end, they have tabled detailed proposals to European decision makers on reforms of all the main EU funding instruments such as agricultural and fishery subsidies. They have also asked for a strengthening of the LIFE+ instrument, the only dedicated environmental funding stream of the EU that currently receives a paltry of 0.2% of the overall budget.
