

Title On Wednesday 27 June, the day before EU leaders come together in Brussels for a first top-level negotiation round on the future EU budget 2014-2020, the Environment Committee of the German Federal Parliament adopted a ground breaking decision calling for a significant strengthening of the EU's environmental programme LIFE. As proposed by Angela Merkel's CDU/CSU group, and in agreement with almost all political parties, the Environment Committee of the German Bundestag calls for a budget increase that would translate, according to NABU (BirdLife in Germany), to more than doubling of the European Commission's proposal of 3.6 billion EUR over the seven years period of the EU's financial framework, or 0.7% of the total EU budget as proposed by the Commission. Currently LIFE receives a mere 0.2% of the EU budget, with the European Commission proposing a cosmetic increase to 0.3% combined with a significant widening of the thematic scope. The German Parliamentarians now insists that LIFE should be enabled to fund 10% of Natura 2000 costs. These were estimated by the European Parliament, Commission and Member States to amount to approximately 6 billion EUR per year. In recent months a number of other Member States had expressed sympathy for this position that has already been put forward by the German Ministry of Environment. BirdLife Europe and its German Partner NABU today welcomed, that in its resolution the German Parliament's Environment Committee stressed the exceptional efficiency of the LIFE fund, as well as its essential role for the EU's biodiversity policy. It is also very encouraging that decision makers seem to start looking at the value for money, especially in this time of crisis. BirdLife Europe and many other European green NGOs ask for an increase of the LIFE budget to 1% from the EU budget, allowing funding of 15% of the Natura 2000 network and many other essential environmental measures. For more information, please contact [Konstantin Kreiser](#), EU Task Force Coordinator on nature conservation and biodiversity at NABU (BirdLife in Germany)