

Member states endorse new EU Biodiversity strategy calling for CAP and CFP reform

Title

BirdLife Europe welcomed the Council of Ministers' endorsement of the EU Biodiversity strategy and its six targets towards reversing the decline of biodiversity and ecosystems by 2020. The NGO now calls on Member states to follow on their new commitment by reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and allocate sufficient funding for biodiversity in the new EU budget. "European governments have declared their will to take a decisive action to avert the biodiversity crisis", said Angelo Caserta, Regional Director of BirdLife Europe. "Now they need to find the political courage to act by putting our common futures ahead of vested interests." The strategy provides a six-point battle plan for tackling the collapse of biodiversity, ranging from properly managing the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas to combating the spread of invasive alien species, from habitat restoration to supporting developing countries in their own nature conservation efforts. But it also clearly highlights the key role played by the two most problematic natural resource-based sectors under EU control: agriculture and fisheries. The strategy calls for far-reaching reforms including finally matching fishing effort to the regeneration capacity of fish stocks and the extension of biodiversity-friendly agri-environmental schemes. "In the run up to the Council negotiations, strong pressures have been applied by anti-reform elements in the fisheries sector trying to block the endorsement of the strategy", said Angelo Caserta. "Fortunately European governments stood firm and put the public good on top of their agenda. We hope they will show the same resolve in the coming reforms discussions." **Notes** In 2010 EU Heads of State promised not only to reverse the decline of biodiversity but also to start restoration efforts by 2020. At global level, at the biodiversity summit in Nagoya/Japan last year, the EU committed in addition to achieve sustainability in its farming and fishing sectors and to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies - all by the end of this decade. The endorsed strategy and its six targets is the first step towards living up to these pledges. The following and decisive step will need to be taken within the next months as the packages of actions to respond to the challenge addressed by each of the six targets are further designed. The result of this process will testify of the determination of the EU and the Member States to add action to its rhetoric. A bold framework for action could set an ambitious tone for the upcoming EU decisions about the Community budget and sectoral policies for the 2014-2020

period. It is clear that without meaningful reforms now, the new Biodiversity Strategy's chances for success will be reduced to almost zero from the start. ----- **The final text of the Strategy, as well as Commission press release and other supporting documents, such as a "citizen summary" are available now at**
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>
