

PRESS RELEASE: BirdLife Europe's reaction to the conclusion of the EU public consultation on the "No Net Loss" initiative

Brussels 17 October 2014

Today the European Commission finished its public consultation on measures aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe. BirdLife Europe's press statement: "We do not need new laws, but the implementation of the existing ones".

Today the European Commission finished its public consultation on the "No net loss initiative", a measure aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe. Under Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020^[1] the Commission 'will carry out further work with a view to proposing by 2015 an initiative to ensure there is no net loss of ecosystems and their services'. The public consultation is meant to inform the development of the initiative.

Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife Europe stated: *"We do not need new dedicated EU legislation on No net loss. We need additional resources to improve enforcement of EU environmental legislation we already have. Full implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Water Framework Directive can turn the tide for EU ecosystems. The new Commission needs to focus on this as soon as they are in office. The Commission – continued BirdLife's Brunner - already has on its desk a full toolkit that can help achieve no net loss of biodiversity. It should negotiate an ambitious Clean Air Quality Package, it should work to put No net loss obligation on all EU spending and take forward the proposals on Environmental Inspections and Access to Environmental Justice."*

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Background notes

Air quality

The deposition of nitrogen is a problem for biodiversity, mainly in western Europe. Many plants and animals cannot survive in an environment with a lot of nitrogen. The Clean Air Quality package^[2] is a package of measures to improve the air quality in Europe and includes a legislative proposal that amends of the National Emissions Ceilings Directive setting new targets for several nitrogen containing substances.

^[1] <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

^[2] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/clean_air_policy.htm

Environmental inspections

In many Member States, inspections of people, companies and institutions with environmental legislation are not good enough. The Commission is working on a legislative proposal to improve environmental inspections, which should include strategic planning of inspections, and minimum standards for inspections.

Access to Environmental Justice

Concerned citizens and NGOs often are the first to spot breaches of EU environmental legislation. However, they can in many Member States not go to court to protect biodiversity, which means that a lot of damaging developments go unchallenged, leading to loss of biodiversity. The Commission has therefore put a legislative proposal forward to ensure Access to Environmental Justice^[3]. Even though the Commission seems to have withdrawn this proposal, legislation remains still an option. The No net loss initiative should include a new legislative proposal.

Links

1. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>
2. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/clean_air_policy.htm
3. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/legislation.htm>

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^[3] <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/legislation.htm>