

Nature summit shows consensus on NGOs position: Birds and Habitats Directives are fit for purpose

In person and online; people and industries from across Europe are in agreement on the need to enforce and fund current nature laws rather than tampering with them.

The Netherlands and Slovakia today [Friday 20th November] added their voices to the growing number of national governments showing their support for the Birds and Habitats Directives, also known as the Nature Directives.

The Commission's Nature Summit, entitled "*Conference on the Fitness Check of EU Nature Legislation*", has been taking place throughout the day in Brussels.

Attended by key figures including EU Environment Commissioner, Karmenu Vella, and the director of the Commission's environment department (DG ENVI), Daniel Calleja Crespo, the summit was a chance to directly call on European lawmakers not to re-open the Nature Directives.

The day began with a 'cheque', representing the more than half a million people who backed the laws in a public consultation, being handed over to Commissioner Vella by volunteers.

The directives are currently undergoing a 'Fitness Check' process under the Commission's concerning drive for 'better regulation'.

As well as driving home the message inside the room that the laws should be safeguarded, the event's official hashtag 'NatureFit4All' was trending on Twitter for most of the day, with the majority of tweets backing the laws.

Ariel Brunner, Senior Head of Policy at BirdLife Europe said: *"This battle to protect the directives and make sure they're better implemented is not won yet – but today was an important milestone for our future. From Member States to Business a wave of support for real action to protect nature is rising. The Commission must ride it."*

Commission proposals on the future of the laws are expected by April 2016, following the end of the 'Fitness Check' process.

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Notes:

More information on the “Conference on the Fitness Check of EU Nature Legislation” event is available here, along with the first findings published last week:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/conference_en.htm

(Twitter: #NatureFit4All)

More information on the Nature Alert campaign is available here:

<http://www.birdlife.org/naturealert>

Photos from the joint action this morning by BirdLife Europe, European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth and WWF are available here: <https://goo.gl/mya5OT>

BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 47 countries, including all EU Member States, and a leader in bird conservation. Through its unique local to global approach BirdLife Europe delivers high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.