

Brussels – 29 October 2015

## MEPs call on Juncker and Timmermans to protect nature laws

**Just days after nine major European Governments called for key nature laws to be safeguarded, MEPs from across the political spectrum have now also spoken out against European Commission proposals to weaken the legislation.**

BirdLife Europe is strongly welcoming a letter from key representatives of seven of the European Parliament's eight political groupings<sup>[1]</sup> to Commission Vice-President, Frans Timmermans, and Environment Commissioner, Karmenu Vella, urging them not to re-open the Birds and Habitats Directives (also known as the Nature Directives).

The MEPs spoke for their political groups, that make up 697 of the 751 seats in the chamber. Coupled with the nine governments who spoke out earlier this week<sup>[2]</sup> and who represent more than 60% of the EU population, this demonstrates the overwhelming opposition to President Juncker's original desire to see the Nature Directives "overhauled" under the guise of better regulation.

The MEPs are calling for these important laws to be better implemented, including in their letter the line: "the nature directives can be considered as smart regulation *avant la lettre* by their concise and coherent form".

**Ariel Brunner, Senior Head of Policy for BirdLife Europe, stated:** *"Support for the Nature Directives is snowballing. Half a million citizens, nine governments and now all bar one of the political groups in the European Parliament are asking for enforcement, not re-opening of the nature directives. It is time for the Commission to drop their deregulation agenda and look seriously at how make our laws work on the ground".*

BirdLife is now expecting a clear signal from the European Commission, at an upcoming conference on the Nature Directives in Brussels, and that it listens to the voice of the people, Members of the European Parliament and governments of Europe.

**ENDS**

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**Notes:**

[1] – The MEPs who signed the letter are: Mark Demesmaeker (ECR), Norbert Lins (EPP), Karin Kadenbach (S&D), Catherine Bearder (ALDE), Lynn Boylan (GUE), Margrete Auken (Greens-EFA) and Marco Affronte (EFDD).

[2] - The letter from the environment ministers of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia and Luxembourg is available on our website:

[http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/fitness\\_check-letter\\_nine\\_ministers\\_to\\_vella\\_26.10.2015.pdf](http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/fitness_check-letter_nine_ministers_to_vella_26.10.2015.pdf)

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.