

To: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

Cc. Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans

Berlaymont, Rue de la Loi 200

1000 - Brussels

4 November 2020

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to you to call on the European Commission to issue a new proposal for the post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in order to allow Europe to meet its 2030 goals for biodiversity and climate, including those embedded in the EU Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, and those to be agreed next year at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and reviewed by the UNFCCC.

Biodiversity in Europe is in a critical state, with agriculture the main driver of species and habitat loss. Europe has lost 57% of its farmland birds since 1980, and many species such as the European Turtle Dove and the Grey Partridge, have declined by around 90% since 1980, thus the coming decade is crucial for saving them from extinction in Europe. Insects and key habitats like grasslands are also in a similarly critical state and urgently need rescuing.

The science shows that we have a short window of opportunity to act: the next decade. We welcome your Green Deal and Biodiversity Strategy which would not only restore biodiversity if properly implemented, but would also help to build the health back into the ecosystems we need to continue to produce food in the future.

We therefore also welcome your commitment in the Leaders' Pledge for Nature to "shifting land use and agricultural policies away from environmentally harmful practices for land and marine ecosystems" and 'eliminating or repurposing subsidies and other incentives that are harmful to nature, biodiversity and climate,' which should have already been phased out by 2020 according to EU's International commitments.¹

With the ambition of the Green Deal, the EU is in a strong position to show unprecedented leadership at the CBD negotiations and be a driving force for the international community to adopt concrete actions and a robust implementation framework that can enable the much-needed fundamental change in the way we produce, trade and consume food worldwide.

¹ Aichi target 3: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/targets/T3-quick-guide-en.pdf>

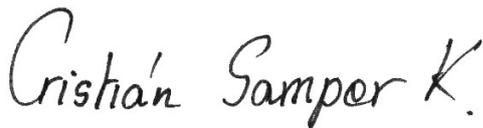
However, the positions agreed in the European Parliament and Council on the CAP, work against the EU Green Deal (and the associated Farm-to-Fork and Biodiversity Strategies). They allow harmful subsidies, put most of the money into funding business-as-usual practices, and actively limit Member States' environmental ambition. Putting a third of the EU's budget into such a system in this critical decade, will make the EU's targets to restore biodiversity in the coming decade impossible to reach.

We therefore urge you to show leadership and courage, in withdrawing the Commission's proposal for the post 2020 CAP, and coming with a new proposal that is truly designed to complement the EU green deal, and help farmers to transition to a regenerative agriculture system that works with nature, and safeguards our long-term ability to produce food.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia Zurita
CEO, BirdLife International



Cristián Samper
CEO, Wildlife Conservation Society



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