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Environment designate Commissioner Vella fails hearing. Birdlife Europe and EEB call for rejection

Today Maltese designate Commissioner for the Environment and fisheries Karmenu Vella appeared in front of the Environment and Fisheries committees in the European Parliament.

According to Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at Birdlife Europe: “Vella was vague, evasive and often inaccurate. Claiming that there is no need for a Vice President on sustainability because the issue is “self-evident” is naive and ultimately unsustainable.” Brunner added “Blue fin tuna quotas are not politically determined? Gold cannot be extracted without cyanide? Malta has less infringements on Nature directives than Germany (how about adjusting by country size)? The Birds directive must be reviewed because it’s being interpreted in the Courts just like any other law? I don’t think we can feel reassured in any way by his performance.”

Pieter de Pous, EU Policy director at the European Environmental Bureau, stated: “Either Vella was not allowed to make any commitments during his hearing or he did not have sufficient knowledge to do so. Either way the conclusions for the Environment Committee should be crystal clear. They cannot let him pass if they want the European Parliament to be taken seriously in the next 5 years.”

Angelo Caserta, Director of Birdlife Europe concluded: “No one expects a new commissioner to be on top of all the dossiers, but they should at least to show ambition and determination to tackle environmental issues. Vella clearly failed on this front. If you add to that the fact that Juncker has essentially ignored both the appeal of the environmental community and that of the members of Parliament, starting from his President Schulz, to assign sustainability to one into his Vice-Presidents it is clear to me that this Commissioner must be rejected, to force Juncker to reconsider his approach. Juncker and Vella – adds Director Caserta - must get this message loud and clear: we cannot support this Commission.”

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BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 49 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.

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