

## **SOER 2015 denounces the poor state of European nature and demands a U-turn in Juncker's plans to weaken nature protection laws and in detrimental agricultural policies**

*Brussels, 3 March 2015*

The SOER 2015 released today by the European Environment Agency sends a dramatic message of alert on the state of European nature. It also sends a message to European policy makers by stating clearly that EU legislation plays a crucial role in improving the environment but that much more needs to be done. It offers no backing for calls to deregulate environmental legislation but rather points at the urgent need to fully implement the 7<sup>th</sup> environmental action plan. Furthermore it makes a powerful case for going beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP and setting even higher levels of ambition.

Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy, states: «We hope that today's report marks a new dawn and that the Commission will now up its game in terms of environmental ambition. President Juncker has started on the wrong foot, with the environment left out of its political guidelines and downgraded in its structure, and its first actions have been entirely focused on deregulation. European citizens desperately need a healthy environment, thriving nature and the prosperous green economy that can deliver both».

«The report - continues Birdlife's Brunner - sounds the alarm in particular about the dramatic loss of grassland biodiversity. This shows the consistent failure of the CAP to reward the delivery of public goods by farmers, an inexcusable lack of enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives in the farming sector and the nefarious consequences of Europe's perverse subsidies to energy crops for biofuels and biogas»

According to BirdLife the key findings of the report on biodiversity are:

- A high proportion of species and habitats are in unfavorable conservation status, particularly those affected by agriculture. The report talks about “dramatic loss of grassland biodiversity”;
- “The ability of soil to deliver ecosystem services is under increasing pressure. Observed rates of soil sealing, erosion, contamination and decline in organic matter all reduce soil capability”. These findings clearly call for a “coherent soil policy at EU level”;
- Marine species and habitats are doing particularly poorly;
- “Large scale challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss can have potentially wide ranging, long term, irreversible effects on human health and wellbeing”.

### **ENDS**

BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of nature conservation organisations in 48 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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