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To the members of the press – for immediate release

Von der Leyen’s proposed Commission looks like a promising Green Start

BirdLife Europe & Central Asia is encouraged that new EU Commission President-elect von der Leyen shows, in the team she’s assembled and the Mission letters she’s sent to them, that the ecological crisis is finally being taken seriously. We applaud her giving real power to Executive Vice-President-designate Timmermans, putting teeth into her European Green Deal promises.

Not only is each Commissioner responsible for ensuring the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals across their portfolios, EVP-designate Timmermans is also responsible, with the two new Commissioners for Environment & Oceans and Agriculture, for delivering the protection of biodiversity, and zero-pollution. The portfolio includes focusing on a new Farm to Fork strategy covering every step from production to consumption. All of this reassures us that the Commission will finally grasp the nettle of sustainable ecological and agricultural transition.

The one terrible idea is the ‘one in one out rule’ which makes no logical sense, suggesting that if one problem is to be dealt with, another equally critical one must be left to the side. Saving our planet cannot be a zero sum game. We call on Members of the European Parliament to get rid of this failed idea.

It is extremely positive to see, in Commissioner-designate Virginijus Sinkevičius, an empowered Environment and Oceans Commissioner tasked specifically with protecting biodiversity and curbing its loss. Responsible for leading on zero-pollution ambitions, the important portfolio also includes a new Circular Economy Action plan as well as responsibility to stop overfishing through sustainable fishing and zero-tolerance for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. After 15 years of leniency in the enforcement of our potentially powerful nature laws, it is exciting to see a clear mandate to ramp up enforcement.

We are equally encouraged by the Mission letter to Commissioner-designate for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski. Recognizing that agriculture is central to achieving climate neutrality, President-designate von der Leyen directs that the reformed CAP policy must be ambitious in terms of environmental and climate objectives. The new ‘Farm to Fork’ strategy must be sustainable across the food chain, and aim for zero-pollution.

Indeed it is also worth noting that in its recent Court of Auditors opinion judging the Commission’s CAP policy reform, Commissioner-designate Wojciechowski, in his previous role on the Court, signed on to the judgement that the “Commission proposal does not reflect a clear increase in environmental and climate ambition..” We couldn’t agree more whole-heartedly. He now has the real opportunity and obligation to follow his own recommendations.

This is a credible and encouraging start to a new European Commission finally appearing to take our planetary crises in climate, biodiversity, oceans, and agriculture seriously. We remain vigilant and ready to work hand-in-hand with this new team.

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[BirdLife Europe and Central Asia](#) is a partnership of 48 national conservation organisations and a leader in bird conservation. Our unique local to global approach enables us to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is one of the six regional secretariats that compose BirdLife International. Based in Brussels, it supports the European and Central Asian Partnership and is present in 47 countries including all EU Member States. With more than 4100 staff in Europe, two million members and tens of thousands of skilled volunteers, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, together with its national partners, owns or manages more than 6000 nature sites totalling 320,000 hectares.