



A MANIFESTO FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE
European Elections 2019

The background image shows the European Parliament building in Brussels, a large, modern, circular structure with a glass facade and a central dome. The building is surrounded by a green lawn and some trees. The sky is overcast.

Parliament can set environmental ambition

Nature is vanishing. From farmland birds to insects, we are losing the web of life that supports our own life. But conservation has proved to work - from saving endangered species to protected areas, good EU policies are bringing species and habitats back from the brink. Choosing conservation or destruction is a political choice. And vital choices are made at the European Parliament. The outgoing European Parliament played a crucial role in preventing the weakening of the Birds and Habitats Directives. They pushed the European Commission to be strong on enforcing the protection of Natura 2000 sites and they fought against the illegal killing of birds and unlawful spring hunting derogations. The Parliament has championed allocating more funding to the LIFE programme, which is the backbone of conservation work across Europe and has helped create numerous benefits for society in terms of jobs and wellbeing. The Parliament can decide if Europe destroys or protects nature. Anti-environmental lobbies have managed to orchestrate majorities in the Parliament to do real damage. These majorities have opposed the necessary radical reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, the introduction of strict sustainability criteria on cutting forests for biomass and they voted to continue allowing the drowning of turtles in fishing gear and the capture of juvenile fish before they can reproduce. The European Parliament can make a real difference for nature and for all of us. We all depend on healthy nature and every individual MEP counts and can make a difference.

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Parliament can protect and restore ecosystems

Europe is failing to meet biodiversity targets. Despite its good intentions, the EU is about to miss its 2020 target of halting biodiversity loss. Biodiversity continues to vanish, mainly due to intensive farming and damaging infrastructure development. But all is not lost: the EU has been able to contribute to conservation outcomes through the Birds and Habitats Directives, including creating Natura 2000, the largest network of protected areas in the world, and also massively reducing destructive practices, such as spring hunting and trapping of birds. But the EU has to get serious about implementing and enforcing its nature conservation, water protection and invasive alien species laws. For this, it must allocate enough resources from the EU budget, radically reform its farming policy, and support nature restoration. The European Parliament has crucial decision power alongside national governments and can help make or break conservation efforts.

MEPs must:

- Ensure that the EU budget sets aside enough money to finance the full implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives, in particular the Natura 2000 Network, the implementation of the Invasive Alien Species Regulation and support nature restoration
- Ensure the full implementation and enforcement of the EU's Birds and Habitats Directives in all Member States, reversing the erosion of the rule of law of recent years
- Champion a significant increase of funding for the highly successful and efficient LIFE Programme to seed funding for financing innovative conservation actions
- Ensure that the adoption and implementation of new EU environmental initiatives strengthens and complements Natura 2000, while increasing the resilience of ecosystems in the wider landscape
- Oversee the correct implementation of the new Invasive Alien Species Regulation
- Commit to a robust and legally binding Biodiversity Strategy post-2020 that can effectively direct the development of major EU policies, such as agricultural, fisheries, energy, climate and transport
- Preserve the EU Water Framework Directive and ensure prompt enforcement



Parliament can bring oceans back from the brink

Oceans are going down the drain. European seas are among our finest natural assets and home to some of the world's greatest populations of seabirds. But our oceans are degrading because of human activities, resulting in seabird bycatch, pollution, uncoordinated offshore development and climate change. The reformed Common Fisheries Policy and Marine Spatial Planning Directive brought some hope that years of fisheries mismanagement and damage to ecosystems would end. However, Member States still have a long way to go in order to have ambitious and robust implementation of these tools and to ensure their support by the right financial investment. Europe needs to be a global leader in ocean conservation by setting an example at home. This can be done by pursuing solutions for an ecosystem approach to management of our seas' resources and achieving Good Environmental Status of its marine waters by 2020 as set out in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The European Parliament has driven the progressive reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to minimise the impact of fishing on the marine environment, but more recently has been backtracking and giving in to private interest gains at the cost of societal benefits. The next EP must do better

MEPs must:

- Demand urgent mapping of the sensitivity of marine species and habitats to human pressures before determining areas of human activities in their marine spatial plans
- Demand that the marine Natura 2000 network of protected areas is effectively managed including through development of management plans and application of spatial solutions
- Ensure that the limited EU financing for European oceans invests in ending human threats to the oceans, incentivises environmentally friendly solutions, and is accessible to all stakeholders
- Ensure that Member States implement, control and enforce fishing rules across its fleets including those fishing in distant waters, to end bycatch of seabirds, marine mammals and sea turtles
- Ensure that Member States collect data from vessels on their impacts on biodiversity in Europe and when fishing outside European waters
- Demand that Member States apply missing national programmes to tackle human threats to the marine environment in order to achieve Good Environmental Status of European Seas
- Ensure the 50% reduction of plastic waste depositions target until 2020 is met through ambitious measures in resource protection and recycling, prevention of waste as well as ecologic product development directives



Parliament can make food and farming nature-friendly

Intensive farming is eradicating European wildlife. It drives climate change and pollution and undermines our long term food security. Agriculture is the biggest driver of biodiversity loss in Europe. Farmland birds are witnessing far more dramatic declines than other types of birds, such as 30% in the past 15 years in France. Farmland species such as the turtle dove are being driven to near extinction. Intensive farming practices, which result in the loss of both habitats and food sources, are widely accepted as the major culprit. They are also damaging other biodiversity, the environment and the climate, not to mention human health. It is urgent to act now to reform farming and spend public agricultural funds on transitioning out of the current dominant intensive farming model. The European Parliament agriculture committee has killed past reform effort and has been a constant obstacle on the road to more sustainable farming. This must change.

MEPs must:

- Demand ring-fencing of 15 billion EUR per year for targeted biodiversity action within the reformed CAP
- Demand that at least 50% of both Pillars in the future CAP go to dedicated environmental, including climate, spending
- Ensure that the future CAP does not further fuel the intensification of European farming, by putting strong environmental safeguards on all CAP spending (the same goes for the EU budget in general)
- Ensure the proper and scientific monitoring of the effectiveness of all CAP spending, including individual schemes
- Ensure that environmental experts have responsibility for the environmental aspects of the future CAP, and that all stakeholders, including environmental NGOs are fully involved in the development and implementation of CAP strategic plans
- Ensure implementation and enforcement of strong environmental legislation against agricultural pollution
- Instigate a European food policy to tackle unsustainable consumption and food waste
- Demand a stricter and more transparent pesticide approval procedure as well as a ban on all neonicotinoids, as well as push for a real implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive



Parliament can prevent dangerous climate change

Europe is running out of time to stop climate change. Today, dangerous temperature increases pose an existential threat to society and will push a huge number of species to extinction within the next few decades. The EU has been at the forefront of the international efforts which led to the Paris Agreement, but at home the efforts have faltered. If the EU is to keep its position as the international leader in the fight against climate change and heed the commitment to limit global temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial times, it needs to considerably step up its climate ambition. There is a need for a new, long-term climate protection strategy with the goal to reach climate neutrality, including a transition to a clean, properly sited, sustainable renewables-based energy system that works in harmony with nature. The European Parliament has consistently improved the EU climate ambition and strengthened its legislation. But much more needs to be done.

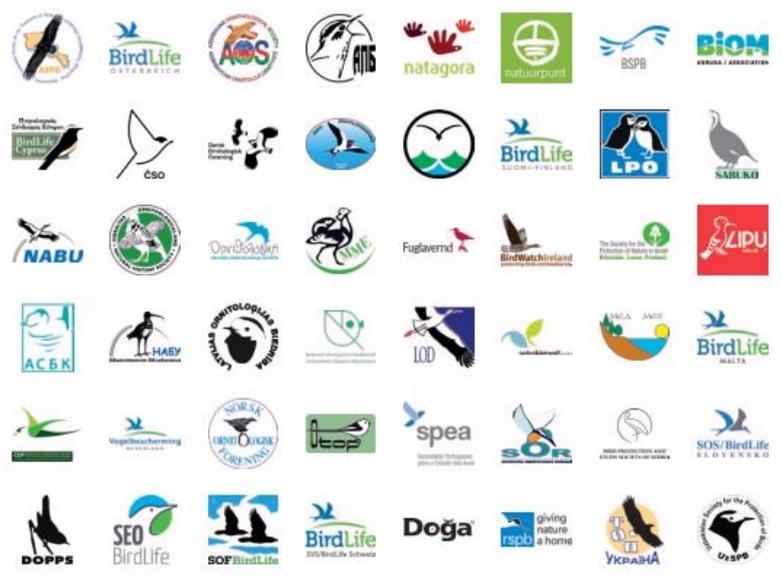
MEPs must:

- Call for and support ambitious climate goals, in line with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by at least 55%, energy efficiency has to be increased by 40% and the share of renewable energies must increase to at least 45% by 2030. These commitments must be approved, together with a 'net-zero' EU emissions target by 2050 at the latest, under a new low carbon roadmap for the EU. This must be presented to the UN by 2020 as the revised EU commitment under the Paris Agreement.
- Ensure that renewable energy deployment is pursued with urgency and resolve, in harmony with nature. Strong spatial planning can ensure that technologies such as wind and solar are placed in the best locations to minimise impacts on biodiversity. A radical revision of support to bioenergy is needed to ensure its use truly delivers emission savings and does not increase pressure put on forest and farmland ecosystems.
- Ensure that land use policies contribute to climate mitigation and reduce emissions from agriculture and maximising sustainable carbon sequestration through restoration of natural forests, wetlands and grasslands and more ecologically benign management of farmland and production forests. This must be based on honest and robust carbon accounting.
- Call for urgent investments in nature based solutions to support climate adaptation, such as the restoration of floodplains and wetlands to mitigate floods and droughts, and of coastal ecosystems to deal with rising sea levels. These are likely to be more cost-effective than conventional, technological solutions such as big dikes and dams, and provide additional services to society.



We are BirdLife Europe

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.



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