



To:

Svenja Schulze  
Federal Minister for the Environment,  
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety  
11055 Berlin  
Germany

OPEN LETTER

Brussels, 01 July 2020  
*Ref.020/044*

**Subject: BirdLife Europe and NABU priorities for the German Presidency of the Council of the EU.**

Dear Minister Schulze,

BirdLife Europe, representing over 2 million EU citizens, and its German Partner, NABU, are writing to you to share our priorities for the upcoming presidency of Germany in the Council of the EU in the area of environment, with focus on biodiversity.

Germany is taking over the Presidency of the EU in challenging times—when the EU and the world are facing an unprecedented crisis related to the COVID19 pandemic, which determines the focus of the Presidency program. We welcome that in parallel to efforts to overcome the COVID19 pandemic, the German Presidency is also looking to the future. The COVID19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of our societies and economies, creating a clear case for the EU to invest into long-term benefits to our society and help make our economies more resilient to future shocks.

#### **EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY**

The German Presidency under your leadership must ensure ambitious Council conclusions on the EU Biodiversity Strategy that will endorse all the commitments proposed by the European Commission. In particular, the commitment to adopting a legally binding target on **restoration is an absolute priority** and needs to be implemented no later than in 2021 by means of an EU Regulation. Also, the **commitment for having 30% of the EU's land and sea area protected by 2030—of which 10% strictly protected**—is important to halt biodiversity loss. Equally important is securing Member States' **commitment to fill the financial gap**, estimated at EUR 20bn/year for implementing the Strategy on the ground. Finally, without **enforcement of environmental legislation** and integrating the Strategy into national policies, the EU will hardly be able to show progress on its biodiversity objectives.

Given that farming and fishing are the biggest drivers of biodiversity loss, it is important that biodiversity conservation and the restoration of ecosystems—on which our food depends— also become a main pillar of the relevant policies, such as the Farm to Fork Strategy. For this **reason, it is paramount that both the**

**Biodiversity and the Farm to Fork Strategies are seen as complementary and hence discussed together in the Environment Council** as they both need to deliver on crucial issues of climate, environment and human health.

#### **THE EU's LONG-TERM BUDGET (MFF)/EU RECOVERY FUND**

Despite the overwhelming evidence that climate change and biodiversity loss pose an existential threat that will negatively affect human well-being, food security and economic prosperity, it is not adequately reflected in the EU's funding priorities and instruments. **Therefore, we ask you to push for additional financial resources of 5 000 Mio. € under the Recovery Instrument as a top-up to the planned LIFE Programme** from 2021-2027 to finance climate adaptation and mitigation activities by focusing on nature-based solutions. This should go in parallel with a legally binding ring-fencing of **10% or at least 20 bn. € of the MFF for supporting biodiversity.**

#### **CAP REFORM**

If the EU wants to stop and reverse the decline of biodiversity and start delivering on its own targets, it needs to reform its deeply flawed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). To boost the CAP's performance for nature, climate and farmers **the reformed policy must set a minimum of 10% space for nature on all farms as part of "conditionality", ring-fence money for nature and hence ensure sufficient income for farmers from targeted biodiversity measures. It must also transform all direct payments into funding for a just transition**, so farmers can invest in the future. We understand that your colleague Julia Klöckner will aim to achieve a general approach on the CAP reform in the AGRIFISH Council. If the new CAP is to deliver higher environmental and climate ambition as requested by citizens, and to be in-line with the European Green Deal, **it is crucial that Ministers of Environment are effectively—and in a timely manner—involved in that CAP debate**, including at the EU level via the Environment Council. That is why we call on you to create platforms for such an involvement of environmental authorities by including the discussion on the CAP on the agenda of the Environment Council.

The German Presidency offers many opportunities for putting the EU on a trajectory towards a sustainable and resilient economy that embodies an understanding of the importance and care for biodiversity. We would be very happy to offer our support to you and your colleagues during this period and work with you towards progress in the above-mentioned areas. The BirdLife Partnership in Europe has a representative in each EU Member State and beyond, hence through NABU or directly with our regional office in Brussels you can always count on our entire network.

Yours faithfully,



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