

Mid-term review of the EU's biodiversity strategy

2015/2137(INI) - 02/02/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 592 votes to 52, with 45 abstentions, a resolution on the mid-term review of the EU's biodiversity strategy.

Increased political will: whilst welcoming the Commission report of mid-term review of 2 October entitled "[Mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020](#)", Parliament expressed extreme concern about the constant loss of biodiversity. It noted that **the 2020 targets will not be achieved without** additional, substantial and continuous efforts and that despite the positive impact of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, there is still great potential for improvement.

Parliament noted that **habitat fragmentation, degradation and destruction** as a result of land-use change, climate change, unsustainable consumption patterns and the use of the seas are some of the main pressures and drivers causing biodiversity loss in the EU and beyond its borders.

Deploping the fact that, in Europe, around a quarter of wild species are at risk of extinction and many ecosystems are degraded, it recalled that the socioeconomic opportunity cost of missing the biodiversity headline target is estimated to be **EUR 50 billion a year**.

Accordingly, Parliament:

- stressed the crucial importance of increased **political will** at the highest level to safeguard biodiversity and halt biodiversity loss, particularly through the implementation of existing legislation, enforcement and further integration of biodiversity protection into other policy areas and action by regional and local authorities to provide information about, and raise awareness of, biodiversity;
- urged the Commission to **enhance the role that biodiversity and ecosystems play in economic affairs**, with a view to moving to a green economy and to step up the measures taken in support of the greening of the European Semester;
- suggested that the economic value of biodiversity should be reflected in **indicators** which guide decision-making.

Headline targets: Parliament called on the Commission and Member States, as a matter of urgency, to give higher priority to achieving the 2020 targets and or the EU to reduce its biodiversity footprint worldwide:

Target 1: deploping the slow progress made by Member States in implementing EU environmental legislation, Members stressed that full **implementation and enforcement, and adequate financing, of the nature directives** are a vital prerequisite for ensuring the success of the strategy as a whole and meeting its headline target. They called on the Commission to: (i) improve the guidelines, which should facilitate the full implementation and enforcement of the directives; (ii) identify and compile the **relevant national budget lines** without delay.

They also urged Member States to **complete the designation of terrestrial and marine Natura 2000 sites** and draw up management plans, in consultation with all stakeholders. They reiterated their previous calls for EU co-funding for the management of Natura 2000 sites.

Target 2: Parliament called on the Commission to come forward with a specific proposal for the **development of a trans-European network for green infrastructure (TEN-G)** by 2017. It encouraged

the joint development, in conjunction with the Member States, of a strategy for European wildlife corridors for targeted species.

Member States were called upon to: (i) develop and implement ecosystem restoration prioritisation frameworks immediately; (ii) prioritise the target of restoring 15 % of degraded ecosystems by 2020 and to use the appropriations available within the MFF for this purpose.

Target 3: incorporating nature conservation into other policy areas remains of paramount importance. Parliament stressed the **crucial role of agriculture and forestry** in this connection.

Member States were asked to **make better use of existing CAP and cohesion policy instruments** to assist farmers and forestry operators in achieving biodiversity targets.

Financial resources under the CAP should be redirected from subsidising environmentally harmful activities to financing sustainable agricultural practices.

The Commission was called upon to: (i) promote the **sustainable management of the world's forests** by ensuring ecological processes by respecting the rights of indigenous people to sustain forest resources; (ii) prohibit the destruction of natural forests; (iii) safeguard endangered species and (iv) ban toxic pesticides and the planting of genetically modified trees.

Target 4: Parliament called on the Commission and Member States to implement the reformed **Common Fisheries Policy** correctly and promptly, applying ecosystem-based fisheries management by, inter alia, promoting sustainable and innovative catch methods. It stressed the importance of reducing pollution in order to safeguard marine biodiversity and stocks.

Target 5: the Commission was urged to establish, in accordance with Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014, an **accurate and comprehensive list of invasive alien species** which are of concern to the Union. Such a list should not be limited to a fixed number of species and should include complete and coherent implementation actions – underpinned by appropriate resources – aimed at achieving the targets.

Target 6: the Commission and Member States were urged to fully endorse and facilitate the transition to a **circular economy**, and to phase out **environmentally harmful subsidies** by 2020 ensuring that evaluations of such subsidies are completed by 2016 and that reporting requirements are incorporated into relevant EU sectoral policy areas.

The way ahead: additional measures: Parliament encouraged the Commission and Member States to gather information and to **develop appropriate frameworks to prevent habitat fragmentation** and the net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services by working with local authorities and civil society. Such a framework must comprise a bundle of complementary measures that **address the root causes** of biodiversity loss and improve the integration of biodiversity in sectoral policies, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy and transport.

In order to use the available resources more efficiently and in a more targeted manner, the Commission should draw up specific criteria for the **Natural Capital Financing Facility**, which must guarantee that projects deliver appropriate, positive and scientifically tangible results for biodiversity.

The resolution also stressed the importance of:

- innovation, research and development in order to achieve the objectives of the nature directives;
- expanding the multi-fund approach to biodiversity financing;
- improving coherence across relevant sectoral policies with a view to incorporating biodiversity goals;

- establishing an EU framework for environmental inspections;
- launching a European initiative on pollinators;
- fully applying the precautionary principle when authorising the use and the environmental release of living modified organisms;
- including matters relating to the environment and climate change in international agreements;
- not authorising any new hydraulic fracturing operations in the EU on the basis of the precautionary principle and the principle that preventive action should be taken.

In view of the failure to meet the biodiversity targets for 2020, the Commission was asked to **provide Parliament with two-yearly reports** in which the Council and the Commission elaborate on the state of play, reasons for non-achievement and the strategy for ensuring future compliance.