Resolution on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity

2019/2824(RSP) - 16/01/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Kunming, China, in 2020.

The resolution was tabled by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

Parliament expressed its deep concern following the publication of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report on climate change, oceans and the cryosphere, which ranks climate change as one of the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss and stresses that its negative effects on nature and biodiversity, ecosystem services, oceans and food security are expected to increase in the coming decades.

The IPCC also warns that the health of the ocean and marine ecosystems is being undermined by global warming, pollution, overexploitation of marine biodiversity, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and sea ice, coastal erosion and more frequent natural disasters.

Faced with this environmental emergency, which requires significant action at EU level and globally, the Commission is called upon to make nature protection and restoration a top priority of the European Green Deal, alongside climate change.

A binding post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Parliament stressed the need to adopt a legally binding international framework to halt and reverse the global loss of biodiversity in all its aspects: such a framework should be based on specific, measurable, quantifiable, ambitious, realistic, sectoral and time-bound targets and firm commitments, comprising a strengthened national biodiversity strategy and action plans, financial commitments and a five-year monitoring and review mechanism.

The Commission and the Member States were invited to advocate the post-2020 global framework for biodiversity and to promote the setting of a new global target to reverse global biodiversity loss curve by 2030.

Parliament called on the EU to push for an increased level of ambition during the negotiations and, potentially, call for half the planet to be protected by 2050. It is of the opinion that a clear global conservation objective for 2030 of at least 30 % of natural areas and the objective of restoring at least 30 % of degraded ecosystems that can be restored should be enshrined in the post-2020 framework, and that the EU should set similar objectives domestically.

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

Parliament welcomed Ursula von der Leyen's commitment to develop a biodiversity strategy for 2030 as part of the European Green Deal and to ensure that the EU plays a leading role at the 2020 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as it did in 2015 for the Paris Climate Conference.

The Commission is invited to include the reduction of the EU's global footprint as an important focus of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 in order to avoid inconsistency between its domestic and international actions.

Parliament called for an EU-wide legally binding target to restore degraded habitats by 2030, through the restoration of natural forests, peatlands, floodplains, wetlands, biodiversity-rich grasslands, coastal and marine areas. It also encouraged the Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to include biodiversity proofing in its external action, particularly in its external financial instrument, in order to ensure that no EU funds or financing scheme contribute to net biodiversity loss.

Economic considerations and financing

Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to set a clear spending target of at least 10% for the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in addition to the target for spending on climate action. It also proposed a more rigorous approach to monitoring spending on biodiversity and climate. It reiterated its call to at least double the current level of funding for the LIFE programme and called for the phasing-out of harmful subsidies.

Forestry, agriculture, fisheries and soil

Parliament called for strong commitments towards sustainable food systems, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, including:

- a reduction in the use of pesticides and the protection of soils, habitats and species that provide essential ecosystem services, such as pollination,

- increased selectivity to reduce cumulative impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems and contribute to the recovery of fish stocks in sensitive and overfished areas.

Parliament called on the Commission to include EU-wide binding reduction targets in the upcoming revision of the EU Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides (2009/128/EC).

The Commission and Member States are also asked to:

- promote the further integration of biodiversity into urban architecture, urban policy and urban planning while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing adaptation to climate change;

- carry out an in-depth analysis of all EU protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites, and consider whether they should be improved, better connected and extended;

- increase the budget allocation for Horizon Europe to EUR 120 billion in the next MFF, mainly for the natural resources cluster, and to launch a mission for the protection and restoration of biodiversity within Horizon Europe;

- increase public awareness and participation of all stakeholders by providing comprehensive information and seeking the closer involvement of civil society and members of the public from different age groups to achieve the EU and global targets.