Implementation of directive 92/43/EEC on habitats

2000/2111(INI) - 17/01/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Jonas SJOSTEDT (EUL/NGL, S) which calls on the Commission to ensure the proper enforcement of the Habitats directive. The aim of the directive is to promote biodiversity by protecting natural habitats. The directive provides for the creation of a network of protected areas called Natura 2000, with each Member State being required to list areas for protection within its territory. Member States have so far listed a total of 384,500 square kilometres. The percentage of each country's total surface area varies from 3.1% (Belgium) to 17.6% (Greece). Parliament points out that the Commission has begun infringement proceedings in six cases against four countries: France (2), Ireland (2), Germany (1) and Greece (1). The resolution underlines the importance of the legally binding timetable laid down in the directive and calls on the Commission to continue using all means within its powers to enforce the directive. Member States are called upon to ensure immediate protection of all proposed Sites of Community Interest from damaging developments. It should be noted that the Parliament welcomes the effort of the Commission to deny access to EU funds to Member States that have not ensured that the requirements of environmental protection are respected in measures supported by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. The resolution stresses that the suspension of payments by the Community is justified only when there are serious indications that the payments in question result in adverse effects on an important habitat. With regard to the applicant countries, the European Investment Bank is called upon to prepare environmental impact assessment reports on projects in these countries prior to their approval and to make these available to the public.