

**Question for written answer E-008015/2015  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Hugues Bayet (S&D)**

Subject: Quality assessment of Natura 2000 by the Commission

Started in 1992, Natura 2000 is a European programme that seeks to ensure biodiversity. It is based on two founding texts: 'Wild birds' and 'Habitats and species'. Both these directives contain key ideas such as conserving biological diversity, appreciating the natural heritage of our lands and the protection of endangered species and their habitat. At the present time, Natura 2000 covers 27 000 sites in Europe and 1 000 plant and animal species afforded special protection.

Recently, the Commission spoke out on this subject and said that it wanted to 'simplify and slim down legislation relating to the environment' by means undertaking a 'quality assessment'. This new measure could result in considerable damage to biodiversity. In addition, some species will find it much more difficult to survive without help or protection from the outside and this could even lead to their extinction.

1. What are the reasons for the Commission wanting to simplify environmental legislation?
2. What measures does the Commission intend implementing on the basis of the results of the 'quality assessment'?
3. Has the Commission evaluated the risks of a 'levelling downwards' that could arise from simplifying the legislation?