

**Question for written answer E-014020/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Loss of forest habitat for the Siberian flying squirrel

The Finnish Forestry Agency, which acts as a state enterprise, manages one third of Finland's forests, a total of 12.6 million hectares. The Forestry Agency has announced that it is launching major logging operations affecting some 24 000 ha in areas including the region of Kainuu, which will have an adverse effect on biodiversity.

Kainuu is home to the Siberian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*). This species is defined in the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as a priority species (Annex II), and is also listed in Annex IV (a) as an animal species for which deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places is prohibited. In Kainuu the Siberian flying squirrel is living at the northern edge of its Finnish – and thus EU – range, which means that it is particularly sensitive to changes in the environment. The species prefers old, spruce-dominant mixed forests, and it nests in holes in old tree wounds, which are pruned by foresters in the name of forest management.

The EU has adopted a strategy to stop the loss of biodiversity by 2020. However, the mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy states that biodiversity is still shrinking.

How does the Commission propose to ensure the preservation of one individual species, the Siberian flying squirrel, in the EU?

How will the Commission ensure that the Member States as landowners are bound to the objectives set out in the EU's Biodiversity Strategy to 2020?

What does the Commission propose to do to ensure that the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives are properly enforced in the Member States?