

**Question for written answer P-004871/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR), Karin Kadenbach (S&D), Catherine Bearder (ALDE), Norbert Lins (PPE), Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL), Marco Affronte (EFDD) and Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Cancellation of conference on future-proof nature policy

The Netherlands Presidency's long-awaited conference on future-proof nature policy has been cancelled because the Commission staff working document on the research report on the 'fitness check' of the Birds and Habitats Directives – which was to have formed the basis of a substantive, constructive and open-minded discussion at the conference – will not be available in time.

This cancellation sends out all the wrong signals to more than 500 000 EU citizens who have supported the Nature Alert campaign, and to at least 15 Member States which are in favour of improving the implementation of the current legislation. Moreover, it creates great uncertainty for all the stakeholders who work on implementing the Nature Directives and Natura 2000 on a daily basis. Finally, it clearly undermines the Commission's green credentials.

1. Can the Commission communicate, in a transparent way, the real reasons for this delay?
2. When will the staff working document be published, and will it be accompanied by the final report of the independent consultancy?
3. Will the Commission officially decide, in line with the staff working document, not to revise the Nature Directives, and instead to focus on better implementation?