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DRAFT REPORT

on our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020
(2011/2307(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (2011/2307(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communication from the Commission on our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (COM(2011)0244),
 - having regard to the Environment Council conclusions of 21 June 2011 on the ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020’
 - having regard to the 2050 vision and the 2020 headline target adopted by the EU Heads of State and Government in March 2010,
 - having regard to the outcome of the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in particular the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi targets, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the benefits arising from their utilisation, and the strategy to mobilise resources for global biodiversity,
 - having regard to the study entitled ‘The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)’ (<http://www.teebweb.org>),
 - whereas the United Nations has declared 2010-2020 the Decade of Biodiversity,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Regional Development, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Fisheries (A7-0000/2011),
- A. whereas the EU failed to achieve its 2010 biodiversity target;
- B. whereas biodiversity is essential to the existence of human life and the well-being of societies, both directly and indirectly through the ecosystem services it provides;
- C. whereas biodiversity loss currently reduces our global GDP by 3% each year;

General remarks

1. Deplores the fact that the EU failed to meet its 2010 biodiversity target;
2. Welcomes and supports the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, including its targets and actions; considers, nevertheless, that some actions should be strengthened;
3. Stresses the urgent need for action, and the need to give higher political priority to biodiversity in order to meet the EU’s 2020 headline target for biodiversity and global

biodiversity commitments; emphasises that, with adequate resources and political will, the tools exist to halt the loss of biodiversity;

Targets — Mainstreaming biodiversity into all EU policies

4. Highlights the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity protection into all EU policies;
5. Stresses that protecting, valuing and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services is essential in order to meet the EU's resource efficiency goals;

Conserving and restoring nature

6. Emphasises the need to halt the deterioration in the status of all species and habitats covered by EU nature conservation legislation and achieve a significant and measurable improvement in their status; stresses that this should take the form of an improvement in at least one of the parameters for conservation status defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, without any deterioration in the other parameters;
7. Urges Member States to ensure that the process of designating Natura 2000 sites is finalised by 2012; deplores greatly the delay in designating marine sites;
8. Calls on the Member States to set 2015 as the deadline for the development of management plans or equivalent instruments for all Natura 2000 sites;
9. Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure adequate funding for the Natura 2000 sites; in particular, calls on Member States to develop binding national instruments through which they define priority conservation measures and the related planned source of financing (both from EU funds and Member States' own budgets);

Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services

10. Notes the requirement under the CBD to restore 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020; considers, however, that this is a minimum and that the EU should have its own, more ambitious target and long-term vision; calls, therefore, on the EU to set the restoration of 30% of degraded ecosystems as its target for 2020, and urges the Commission to define clearly what is meant by 'degraded ecosystems' and to set a baseline against which progress can be measured;
11. Urges the Commission to adopt a specific Green Infrastructure Strategy by 2012 at the latest, with biodiversity protection as a primary objective;
12. Urges the Commission to develop as a matter of high priority the 'No Net Loss' initiative, drawing also on the standards which form part of the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme;

Agriculture

13. Recalling that over half of Europe's territory is managed by farmers and that funding for the common agricultural policy (CAP) represents the largest single part of the EU budget, stresses that the CAP is an absolutely crucial tool for biodiversity; calls, therefore, for a

strong reorientation of the CAP towards the delivery of public goods;

14. Calls for the greening of Pillar I in order to make income support for farmers legitimate by ensuring the conservation of biodiversity in the wider farmed landscape, improving connectivity and adapting to the effects of climate change ; welcomes the Commission's CAP reform proposal that provides for a 'greening' of the CAP through the allocation of 30% of Pillar I payments to a package of worthwhile, basic good practices applied at farm level, which should include crop rotation and diversification, permanent pasture and a minimum 'ecological focus area'; takes the view, however, that the minimum 'ecological focus area' should be 10% of farmland, not the 7% proposed by the Commission;
15. Calls for all CAP payments to be underpinned by robust cross-compliance rules, covering the Water Framework Directive, pesticides legislation and the Birds and Habitats Directives;
16. Calls for a strengthening of Pillar II and for drastic improvements to the environmental focus of that pillar and the effectiveness of its agro-environmental measures, including through minimum mandatory spending on environmental measures;
17. Requests the Commission and Member States to take advantage of the phenomenon of land abandonment in various parts of Europe to rewild large parts of the landscape as major wilderness areas, providing new socio-economic opportunities for rural development whilst preserving Europe's biodiversity;

Fisheries

18. Welcomes the Commission's proposals for the reform of the common fisheries policy (CFP), which should guarantee the implementation of the ecosystem approach and the application of updated scientific information serving as the basis for long-term management plans for all commercially exploited fish species; emphasises that only sustainable fishing offers a future for the fisheries sector;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate with a view to establishing a 'European coastguard' in order to boost common monitoring and inspection capacity and to ensure enforcement;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up efforts to ensure that catches fall below Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) levels by 2015 and to incorporate ecological considerations into the definition of MSYs;
21. Stresses that the aim of eliminating discards and by-catches of protected non-target species should be incorporated into the CFP and implemented as a matter of urgency;

Invasive alien species

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that measures taken prevent both the entry of new invasive alien species into the EU and the spread of currently established invasive alien species to new areas;

23. Urges the Commission to come forward in 2012 with a legislative proposal which takes a holistic approach to the problem of invasive alien species;

International dimension

24. Urges the Commission to propose legislation to implement the Nagoya Protocol so that the Union can ratify the Protocol as soon as possible;

Financing

25. Calls on the Commission and Member States to identify all existing environmentally harmful subsidies, and calls on the Commission to publish by the end of 2012 an action plan to phase such subsidies out by 2020, in line with the Nagoya commitments;
26. Emphasises the importance of mobilising both EU and national financial support from all possible sources and developing innovative financial mechanisms to ensure an adequate level of support for biodiversity;
27. Stresses the imperative need to ensure that the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) supports the achievement of the six targets set out in the Biodiversity Strategy;
28. With a view to ensuring adequate financing of the Natura 2000 network, calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that at least €5.8 billion per year is provided through EU and Member State funding; calls, further, on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that adequate funding is made available through the CAP funds, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the cohesion funds and the LIFE+ fund;
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29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

During the International Year on Biodiversity (2010) we heard the most beautiful declarations from political leaders all over the world on the huge importance of biodiversity; about the crucial role it plays for mankind. But as they were speaking the EU's strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity in 2010 failed completely. As they were speaking, species were being lost 100 to 1000 times faster than the natural rate. As they were speaking they failed in all attempts to agree on measures to fight against climate change.

Somehow, the warm words on the importance of biodiversity have not translated into strong policy measures. But the statistics speak for themselves. 60% of the world's ecosystems are degraded or used unsustainably (FAO, 2010); 90% of our fish stocks are over-exploited; and 25% of all European species are threatened with extinction. According to the UN study, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB, 2010), we lose 3% of worldwide GDP each year due to biodiversity loss. The costs of inaction are many times higher than the investments needed now. The need for urgent measures seems to be clear.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 gives us the opportunity to take the necessary measures to secure nature and ecosystem services for the next generations. All we need is political conviction, courage and commitment to avoid another failure.

The main challenge is to integrate biodiversity in all other policy fields. The timing is right. All major European policies are currently being reviewed. The Common Agricultural Policy, Cohesion policy, Common Fisheries Policy, and the European Roadmaps on energy, transport, resource efficiency are going to be translated into legislation. It is now time to show that the warm words on biodiversity are more than just warm words and are reflected in concrete policy measures.

Financing biodiversity

Future financing will be crucial. It is clear that public money will never be the only solution to stop biodiversity loss. Nevertheless, sufficient funding should be made available in the next multiannual financial framework. The value of biodiversity and ecosystem services has to be integrated in our economies. Only then will their costs and benefits be reflected in product prices. Therefore, member states have to integrate natural capital in their national accounts. But we should also develop, together with the business community, innovative financing instruments, e.g. the Green Development Mechanism.

Additionally, we need a change in the way we think. We should not limit nature to some designated areas, but try to introduce nature everywhere, alongside highways, railroads, in cities, at industrial sites, etc.

Implementation

A strict and rapid implementation of all environmental policy is also crucial for biodiversity. Climate change, quality of air, soil, and water all have a huge influence on biodiversity. The same accounts for the Natura 2000 network and the Birds and Habitats Directives. For marine life, a CFP based on achieving at least maximum sustainable yield, accompanied by tougher enforcement measures, is a minimum requirement.

International dimension

Europe also largely influences biodiversity in other parts of the world. Our footprint is enormous. As a result of the timber we use, the oils we consume, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, we are responsible for a large part of the loss of biodiversity around the world. This footprint has to be cut down and we should therefore further develop instruments to measure our footprint.

At the international level, the EU should continue to play its influential role by speaking with one voice.

Conclusion

Reaching the targets set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 is possible. All we need is a translation of the political support for biodiversity expressed by many world leaders into concrete policy measures.

‘There is a sufficiency in the world for man’s need but not for man’s greed.’ ~Mohandas K. Gandhi