



EU biodiversity strategy needs a greener CAP, better enforcement of EU law

Committees: Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

As the EU has failed to meet its 2010 biodiversity target, higher political priority should go to preserving and restoring damaged ecosystems, say Environment Committee MEPs in a resolution voted on Wednesday . Other EU policies should take on board biodiversity targets, and environmentally harmful subsidies should be named and phased out, they add.

Environment Committee MEPs point to recent studies showing a constant decline in biodiversity in the EU, a loss that "leads to devastating economic costs to society which until now have not been sufficiently integrated into economic and other policies", in a resolution adopted on Wednesday with 58 votes in favour, none against and 4 abstentions. The text is to be voted in plenary session in April in Strasbourg.

The resolution comes as an input after the European Commission strategy for 2020 was published in May last year.

"The real key to this issue is not this new strategy, but, rather, the forthcoming reforms of the common agricultural and fisheries policies and the multiannual financial framework (MFF)", MEPs say. The next MFF (2014-2020) should dedicate at least 1% of the resources to environment protection, they add.

A greener Common Agricultural Policy

MEPs stress that the CAP is not only a tool for food provision and rural development, but also for biodiversity conservation. They regret that CAP measures directed at environmental protection "have so far failed to halt the overall decline of biodiversity". They say the CAP should be redirected towards compensating farmers for delivering public goods, "since the market currently fails to integrate the economic value of the important public goods which agriculture can deliver".

EU should name subsidies that harm biodiversity, MEPs say

CAP payments, including those made from 2014, should "be underpinned by robust cross-compliance rules which contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services" covering legislation on birds and habitats, water, pesticides and biocides, MEPs say. Inspection of agricultural practices should be strengthened in order to prevent the loss of biodiversity. "All existing environmentally harmful subsidies" should be identified, and phased out by 2020, they add.

European coastguard to boost common monitoring of fisheries

The Common Fisheries Policy should guarantee the implementation of the ecosystem approach. A European coastguard corps should be set up to ensure that the legislation is enforced, says the text.

Press release

Enforcement of EU environmental law in general must also be improved, says the text. The European Commission is asked to "increase its capacity to process and effectively inspect complaints and infringements" of legislation on birds and habitats and also to table a proposal for a directive on environmental inspections.

Towards a more ambitious target for 2020 ?

The target of restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020, set by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, should be considered "a minimum" say MEPs, adding that the EU should "set a considerably higher restoration target reflecting its own more ambitious headline".

Threatened species and pet trade

Restrictions on trade in threatened species must also be stepped up, MEPs say. The European Commission is also asked to assess and make proposals for a ban on wild-caught animals for pet trade. The Commission is also invited to come forward this year with a legislative proposal on the problem of invasive alien plant and animal species.

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