



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Regional Development*

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**2011/2307(INI)**

2.3.2012

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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

Rapporteur: Catherine Bearder

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission communication on Biodiversity 2020, and notes that climate change, biodiversity loss, threats from invasive species and overconsumption of natural resources are transnational and transregional challenges which affect every EU citizen, whether living in an urban or a rural area, and that urgent action is needed at every level of government, local, regional and national, to mitigate these effects;
2. Emphasises that the Strategy is part of the Resource Efficient flagship initiative, and recalls that regional policy plays an essential role in ensuring sustainable growth through the actions it supports to tackle climate, energy and environmental issues;
3. Welcomes the Commission's acceptance that it needs to cooperate with the Member States to ensure the effective protection of biodiversity in the EU's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories, which host more endemic species than the entire European continent; wishes to see the strengthening of the specific instruments for safeguarding and protecting biodiversity there, particularly the BEST (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas) preparatory action supported by Parliament since 2011 and providing proper financing for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories;
4. Recognises that infrastructure-building, urbanisation, industrialisation and physical intervention in the landscape in general are amongst the most significant drivers of the fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats; calls on local, regional and national governments, in the context of their planning regulations and implementation measures and within the framework of their competences, to consider these factors, which pose a threat to ecosystems and habitats in their planning and development projects on both a large and a small scale; recognises the pressures and needs that exist at local and regional levels to provide substantial economic development, and recommends that local and regional authorities be mindful to strike a balance between development and the need to protect biodiversity and natural habitats; supports further reform and use of regional and local development policies in order to deliver biodiversity benefits and halt further loss of habitats, especially in times of economic and financial crisis;
5. Recognises that the 'green economy' is a means of generating skills and employment, and calls for it to be supported with funding which will help build capacity at a local level and build on local and traditional knowledge in the fight to protect biodiversity; highlights the fact that approximately 30 % of the total allocations for cohesion policy for 2007-2013 are available for activities with a particular impact on sustainable growth; encourages Member States, and especially local and regional authorities, in the context of halting biodiversity loss, to be more active and step up efforts to invest in natural capital, and to use regional policy funding for natural risk prevention as an element in the preservation of natural resources and in adaptation to climate change, particularly with a view to the

2014-2020 programming period;

6. Encourages Member States to make full use of the possibility of realigning the current operational programmes to the Europe 2020 sustainable growth objectives, by reconsidering the investment priorities for projects, and urges them to deploy available researches more effectively;
7. Recognises the need to promote green infrastructure, eco-innovation and the adoption of innovative technologies in order to create a greener economy, and calls on the Commission to draw up good practice guides in this connection; urges the Commission, the Member States, and local and regional authorities to take the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study recommendations into account, as this study is intended as a useful advisory tool for local and regional policymakers, administrators and managers; underlines the need to expand and intensify training for beneficiaries of the Structural and Cohesion Funds and local, regional and national governments in dealing with the complex European and national legislation that seeks to protect nature and increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity loss; invites the Commission to put in place technical assistance mechanisms to promote knowledge at regional and local level on implementation-related problems;
8. Recognises the importance of green public procurement, and believes that more attention should be focused on its use, especially by public authorities in receipt of EU funding; recommends that the authorities responsible for the management and control systems created in the Member States to manage structural and cohesion funding should support projects which provide for such procedures;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide support and guidance on biodiversity partnerships in order to increase awareness and determine more possible partners to engage on biodiversity issues through positive action; considers it essential to run biodiversity awareness and information campaigns aimed at all ages and social categories, together with local and regional authorities; takes the view that educational and professional training programmes, and those intended for related sectors, should focus more closely on protecting biodiversity;
10. Calls for better policy coherence and climate and environmental proofing in the EU's funding instruments, particularly the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, in order to deliver the Biodiversity 2020 and EU 2020 objectives; calls for better allocation of all funds available and for more effective and coordinated use of the funding provided from the cohesion policy instruments, the R&D framework programme, the LIFE+ programme and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for environmental protection, biodiversity and climate-related projects, where necessary through the provision of additional technical support; with a view to the next programming period, calls for effective coordination between the five CSF funds, in order to ensure optimal delivery of the Union's sustainable growth target;
11. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to invest in the protection and restoration of biodiversity under the Cohesion Fund in the funding period 2014-2020; recommends also considering the potential of Natura 2000 for local economies and labour markets;

12. Supports strengthening the use of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIAs), Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and other instruments in order to take account of biodiversity loss and the effects of climate change in regional and local decision-making; points out that all regions will benefit from projects that recognise climate change mitigation and the protection of biodiversity loss, including less developed regions;
13. Recognises the value and knowledge of, and the work done by, the voluntary and community sector in the protection of biodiversity, and asks regional and local governments to involve such groups in planning and consulting for projects, by establishing partnerships between authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organisations;
14. Highlights the need for closer cooperation between European, national, regional and local authorities with regard to protecting biodiversity and natural resources; underlines in this respect the opportunities of tackling biodiversity loss offered by cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation, and considers that better use of the potential of territorial cooperation and exchanges of information, experience and good practice would contribute significantly to achieving that aim; points out that the inclusion of biodiversity-related priorities in regional macrostrategies is an important step towards restoring and preserving biodiversity;

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.2.2012
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 38 -: 1 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Luís Paulo Alves, Catherine Bearder, Jean-Paul Besset, Victor Boştinaru, John Bufton, Salvatore Caronna, Nikos Chrysogelos, Ryszard Czarnecki, Francesco De Angelis, Tamás Deutsch, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, María Irigoyen Pérez, Seán Kelly, Mojca Kleva, Constanze Angela Krehl, Petru Constantin Luhan, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Ana Miranda, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Younous Omarjee, Monika Smolková, Ewald Stadler, Csanád Szegedi, Nuno Teixeira, Oldřich Vlasák, Hermann Winkler, Joachim Zeller
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, Ivars Godmanis, James Nicholson, Elisabeth Schroedter, László Surján, Michael Theurer, Patrice Tirolien