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REPORT

on Financing Natura 2000
(2004/2164(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Margrete Auken

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Financing Natura 2000 (2004/2164(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Financing Natura 2000 (COM(2004)0431),
 - having regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity,
 - having regard to Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 20 October 1998 on the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on a European Community biodiversity strategy²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2001 on implementation of Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats³,
 - having regard to the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2002 on the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the biodiversity action plans in the areas of conservation of natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, and development and economic cooperation⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 45 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 Agriculture and the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0049/2005),
- A. whereas at the European Council meeting in Gothenburg in June 2001⁶, European Heads of State and Government made a commitment to reverse the decline of biodiversity in the European Union by the year 2010,
- B. whereas the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme specifies the objective to 'protect and where necessary restore the structure and funding of natural systems and halt

¹ OJ L 103, 25.04.1979, p.1.

² OJ C 341, 9.11.1998, p.41.

³ OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 132..

⁴ OJ L 242, 10.9.2002, p.1.

⁵ OJ C 47 E, 27.2.2003, p. 575.

⁶ Presidency Conclusions of the Gothenburg European Council 15 and 16 June 2001.

the loss of biodiversity, both in the European Union and on a global scale by 2010¹,

- C. whereas the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 recognised that biodiversity plays a critical role in overall sustainable development and poverty eradication, and is essential to our planet, human well-being and the livelihood and cultural integrity of people; and whereas the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation confirmed the global objective of achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010,
- D. whereas the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, made up of sites designated under the Community Birds and Habitats directives, is a key pillar of Community action for the conservation of biodiversity,
- E. whereas in the past most Member States have made limited use of the opportunities under the current rural development regulation to implement Natura 2000; whereas rural development and regional development programmes have often worked against EU nature conservation priorities,
- F. whereas farmers and forest owners can make a significant contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on farmland through their management practices, and in many cases this results in additional spending which must be adequately compensated,
- G. whereas in 2004, out of a total EU budget of EUR 111.3 billion, EU funding for agricultural market expenditure and direct aid amounts to EUR 40.2 billion, compared to EUR 6.5 billion for rural development policy; whereas the present rural development policy is still geared towards structural policy objectives, rather than ensuring nature protection and supporting environmentally friendly and sustainable farming practices,
- H. whereas the Commission proposals for the financial perspective covering the period 2007-2013 respects the decision taken by the Council in 2002 in Brussels to freeze agricultural expenditure at the 2006 level, allowing for a yearly adaptation for inflation of 1%; whereas these proposals thus foresee an amount of EUR 301 billion for agricultural spending on market expenditure and direct payments (on average EUR 43 billion per year) and an amount of EUR 88.75 billion for rural development measures (on average EUR 12.6 billion); whereas the amounts for rural development include EAGGF measures formerly financed under Structural Funds,
- I. whereas, despite the fact that in 2002 the European Council had not set any ceilings on rural development measures, the budget for such measures has also been frozen at the level of 2006, only adding appropriations for Bulgaria and Romania, which will not allow for the addition of a new major task such as co-financing the managing of the Natura 2000 network without a corresponding increase in the budget,
- J. whereas the Commission estimates the annual costs of managing the Natura 2000 network at EUR 6.1 billion per year, without taking into account marine protected areas,

¹ Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (OJ L 242, 10.9.2002, p. 1).

- K. whereas the Member States agreed in Malahide (27 May 2004) that arrangements need to be established which ensure adequate and guaranteed Community co-financing for the Natura 2000 network, and whereas the Message from Malahide also states that "this should include *inter alia* the enhancement of Life-Nature funding in the new Financial Instrument for the Environment alongside enhanced funding from the structural and rural development funds",
- L. whereas the Commission, in its communication on the Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013 (COM(2004)0487), states that "the Commission will require Member States to show how they have taken the financing needs of the environment, including relevant aspects of Natura 2000, into account in developing their national programmes under the structural funds...",
- M. whereas the European Commission analyses three different scenarios for the future financing of the Natura 2000 network in its communication
- N. Recalls that the Commission and the Council, in adopting the Habitats Directive in 1992, made a clear commitment to ensure that landowners and landusers would not bear the financial burden of the measures in the directive; strongly urges that this promise be kept;
1. Notes that the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across the EU is one of the main pillars of EU action on biodiversity and that much of Europe's biodiversity has already been lost;
 2. Notes that healthy ecosystems provide important social and economic resources as well as recreation opportunities and support for farming and fisheries;
 3. Welcomes the initiative of the Commission to propose a strategic approach to co-finance Natura 2000 and the statement made by Commissioner Dimas at the International Conference on "Biodiversity, Science and Governance" on 24 January 2005 in Paris;
 4. Points out that structural fund funding for Natura 2000 is in accordance with the Cardiff Process of integrating environmental considerations in all key policy areas, and that it should in any case guarantee adequate funding within the Structural Fund objectives;
 5. Welcomes the Commission statement that the EU rural development and structural funds should make a substantial contribution towards co-financing the Natura 2000 network; further welcomes the enabling of financing for Natura 2000 from rural development and structural funds; nevertheless, having examined the relevant proposals (structural, rural and Life+), considers them insufficient for the adequate co-funding of the Natura 2000 network and therefore also insists that a dedicated fund be set up for this purpose. Failing that, calls on the Commission to create a specific item dedicated to Natura 2000 financing in the new Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+) in order to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in the network and calls on the Commission to secure the objectives of Natura 2000 in the negotiations on the financial perspectives for the period 2007-2013 and to guarantee that the proposed minimum of €21.35 billion is provided for the management of Natura 2000 as the main pillar of the EU biodiversity strategy.

6. Insists that if Natura 2000 expenditure is to be included in the Rural Development Fund, the endowment of the fund needs to be increased accordingly;
7. Believes that the Rural Development Funds can be used to compensate the extra farming costs in Natura 2000 sites, provided that this does not reduce the required funding for other measures within rural development, animal welfare, agri-environmental measures and other objectives included in the proposed Rural Development Funds regulation;
8. Recognises that, while the integration approach might be effective if it is implemented in a robust manner, past experience shows success has been limited; considers that the proposed rural development and structural fund regulations fail to reflect adequate Natura 2000 provisions, failing to deliver upon the Communication's ambition and putting the EU 2010 biodiversity target at risk, inter alia due to the following:
 - the specific criteria for geographic areas eligible for structural fund support would exclude some of the most endangered habitat types and species;
 - biodiversity conservation has, until now, not been a major objective of rural development and structural funds, and may in a local and regional context even conflict with other socio-economic development objectives;
 - co-financing of Natura 2000 sites would compete directly with other economic and social projects, such as the Trans-European Networks or structural adjustment in farming;
 - the programming and management of rural development and structural funds is geared towards fostering regional socio-economic development, and the administrations responsible for managing them have, at the moment, still limited nature conservation competencies, lacking the expertise and skills required to manage projects with nature conservation objectives;
 - no guarantees such as making the release of structural funding conditional upon adequate national Natura 2000 financing plans are foreseen although stipulated in the Communication on the Financial Perspectives;
 - structural, rural or LIFE+ proposals in their present form do not guarantee minimum funding for Natura 2000 nor additional funding to those instruments reflecting this priority;
 - no financial support is foreseen for marine Natura 2000 sites;
9. Stresses that Natura 2000 sites and nature resources deliver key public benefits, often to economically isolated areas, including significant direct local spending, increasing tourism potential, significant health benefits, a growing employment sector at present estimated at 125,000 jobs in the EU-15 and comparable advantages in the new Member States, educational resources and high value ecological life-support systems;
10. The distribution of the funds in question should be proportionate among all the Member States (old and new ones) and should reflect the size of the territories and the degree of

biodiversity of those sites;

11. Calls for the Commission to adjust its proposal for the Financial Instrument for the Environment, LIFE+, to include a dedicated biodiversity objective within that fund to provide funding for the management of Natura 2000 sites complementary to the rural development, structural and the fisheries funds, and complementary to funds made available by the Member States; including for special nature conservation investments, projects and emergencies; nature conservation research, education and awareness-raising; and for cross-border cooperation with third countries on nature conservation projects;
12. Calls for changes to the Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund to refer to Natura 2000 in order to ensure the eligibility of Natura 2000 activities for financing from the structural funds;
13. Stresses that the Commission's calculation of the annual cost of the Natura 2000 network of EUR 6.1 billion is likely to be a significant under-estimate of the full cost of managing the network, and therefore should only be considered as the minimum necessary; further stresses that the calculation does not take into account the accession of the new Member States (Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia), and that the financial needs must be recalculated in order to cover the Natura 2000 network in the whole EU;
14. Invites the Commission to report to the European Parliament on the implementation of the integrated approach when the outcome of the structural, fisheries and rural development regulations is known, and in the event that no earmarked funds for Natura 2000 management are included, to make a proposal for a dedicated fund for this purpose, which should include a policy to provide information on and raise public awareness of nature-conservation issues, with the aim of highlighting the development-related, economic and social benefits resulting from the application of the proposed measures;
15. Welcomes the Commission's intention to incorporate nature-conservation policy in the broader framework of sustainable economic, social and regional development in the European Union; considers, however, that its final proposal does not demonstrate its firm resolve to provide sufficient funding for this policy and ensure its successful implementation;
16. Supports the Commission's intention to publish detailed guidance on how to use the structural funds to support the Natura 2000 network and calls on the Commission to make good its assurances that Natura 2000 financing will be listed as a priority in the forthcoming Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy;
17. Calls for the recognition, by means of encouraging and spreading best-practice, of those territorial units which demonstrate their ability to manage their respective Natura 2000 areas cost-efficiently in both environmental and financial terms;

18. Stresses the importance of involving the national parliaments, the social partners, civil society and regional and local authorities in implementing these objectives, by encouraging promoting proper public consultation;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

At the June 2001 Gothenburg Summit, Heads of State committed to the target of halting biodiversity loss in the EU by 2010. This commitment was reaffirmed at the June Summit in 2004 and forms part of EU's commitment to stem losses of global biodiversity. Wild birds have been adopted as an EU structural indicator of EU biodiversity. Farmland bird populations are currently endangered, reinforcing evidence that other groups of flora and fauna are in similar deep decline.

Significant progress has been made in the establishment of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas through the designation of more than 18,000 sites across the EU. When finalised, the network is expected to cover more than 15 % of the EU's territory with a significant marine component (currently 7.7 million hectares).

Delivering a well designed and adequately financed Natura 2000 network is a key opportunity to help deliver the 2010 target. Without adequate financial security, this target will be put at risk.

Socio-economic benefits

In addition to biodiversity benefits, a well-managed Natura 2000 network should play an important role in the solution to two current public policy challenges: rural economic decline and improvement in citizens' quality of life.

Properly managed Natura 2000 sites are mostly multi-functional in nature, helping to promote diversity in often economically remote areas through direct and indirect spending. It is estimated that 125,000 jobs are supported in the EU-15 in nature protection related activities. Nature conservation is a growth sector, unlike agriculture and forestry. Certain 'honey pot' sites also show significant potential for the tourism industry, adding to rural economic diversification potential.

Public benefits include high value ecological life support systems such as water purification and flood prevention. Evidence suggests that conservation efforts will help to preserve billions of Euros of such assets. Natura 2000 sites also offer an extensive educational resource. Promotion and investment in these sites is desirable to maximise this potential. Physical inactivity is a major preventable health risk leading to increasing health problems and burdens on health structures. Accessible protected areas with appropriate facilities provide a public facility that can play a role in reducing public health burdens through encouragement of physical activity.

Estimated costs

The Commission's Communication estimates that the Natura 2000 Network will cost € 6.1 billion annually. Preliminary calculations by NGOs suggest that this is likely to be a

significant underestimate. According to your 'rapporteur', the Commission's € 6.1 billion estimate should be considered as an absolute minimum 'advisory cost'.

Strategy – or ‘Policy response’?

The principal strategy proposed by the Commission is to mainstream Natura 2000 financing into the EU spatial management policies: the Rural Development and Cohesion policies. In order to be successful, this political choice must be adequately reflected in the Rural Development, Structural and Cohesion fund regulations. This represents a key test for the EU's commitment to the principal of environmental integration under the Cardiff Process and the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Expert Group Report (Working Group on Article 8 of the Habitats Directive) proposed three options for co-financing: 1) use of existing EU funds; 2) increasing and upgrading the LIFE-Nature fund; 3) creation of a new funding instrument dedicated to Natura 2000. The Commission's approach is to pursue Option 1) and integrate financing into Rural Development and Structural Funds. Such mainstreaming should be welcomed, but it must be noted that currently this strategy has some conspicuous limitations and obstacles. In particular:

- Management of many endangered habitat types, such as wetlands, and species such as the Imperial Eagle, would not be covered by the scope of Rural Development or Cohesion Policy.
- Biodiversity is still not the main objective of Rural and Structural Funds. These funds are at present driven by other, largely socio-economic priorities. Even with the recent changes in the CAP agreed with the 2003 Reform, the principle of environmental integration, the main objective of the Rural Development and Structural Funds is not nature conservation. Financing of Natura 2000 sites will compete directly with other, high-priority economic and social projects, such as the Trans-European Networks or structural adjustment in farming.
- Administrations responsible for managing and disbursing Rural and Structural Funds, often have limited nature conservation expertise and skills. It is therefore important that a dedicated fund, managed by institutions responsible for nature conservation, continues to play a significant role in Natura 2000 financing.
- It is a reality in most Member States that limited government funding is available for activities linked to the Natura 2000 network.

Criticisms have been voiced by stakeholders that the present system is unfocused, leading to fears that an integrated approach will be complex and difficult to implement correctly in order to deliver targeted on-the-ground biodiversity gains.

The Working Group on Article 8 of the Habitats Directive thus concludes: "It is evident that the existing range of EU co-financing arrangements is unsuited to the challenge of implementing Natura 2000. Arrangements are complex, potentially involving a large number of funds, each with separate criteria and application processes and designed to deliver against

its own objectives, rather than those of Natura 2000. None of the funds is available on a long-term basis for the full range of activities associated with Natura 2000 management."

The European Environment Agency (EEA) views nature protection in a much broader perspective than the Commission's approach. The EEA writes: "Achieving these targets will require monitoring, information, assessments and understanding of: the causal relationships between human activities, the pressures they produce and the impacts of these pressures on the environment in general and biodiversity in particular; the options for actions to reduce and prevent biodiversity loss; and the effects and effectiveness of agreed actions on biodiversity."

"There are many inter-related activities that have an impact on biodiversity. Assessments need to be integrated and involve a wide range of expertise and concerned citizens. In addition, information is limited and inconsistent across Europe on the state and trends in biodiversity. This situation is unlikely to change quickly since biodiversity monitoring is quite time consuming, costly and difficult to prioritise and hence has received relatively little attention for funding."

At present certain Natura 2000 management activities can be financed under rural development and cohesion policies. To-date, funds from these instruments have been used successfully in Natura 2000 sites in a number of instances. However, coverage has been limited, demonstrating that if not given a priority under the relevant regulations, the status quo, will be maintained and a strategically financed network will not be achieved.

The Commission does not propose to make the implementation of the Natura 2000 network obligatory in any of the concerned Funds. Without further adjustment to the relevant regulations, this approach may be seen as putting biodiversity at risk, with what could be termed as an 'optimistic' approach. It is significant that the Commission states that: "it remains to be seen how the Member States will integrate the available opportunities in their programmes and plans for the next financial period." Further the Commission states: "It is however, not possible to fix a target for the level of this funding since the final expenditure will depend on the priority given to Natura within individual member states programmes".

With less than six years to go before 2010, it is considered unrealistic to expect administrative structures to evolve and deliver large-scale biodiversity gains without maintaining a biodiversity fund to facilitate the mainstreaming process. It would be politically and practically regrettable if the EU were to abandon its only dedicated biodiversity fund at this time. LIFE-Nature has proved successful and good value for money in terms of delivering biodiversity benefits, and has been a success story for the EU's biodiversity policies. Maintaining an adapted biodiversity fund after 2006 would deliver what can be called 'enhanced integration' option.

Even though the Commission in principle, may be correct, that the integration approach is the most effective in the long term, serious doubts exist as to whether this approach will work in practise. A fully integrated approach and the end of a dedicated biodiversity fund should therefore only apply from the day when the Commission can assure the European Parliament that the integration approach is working properly. The Commission is invited to rapidly adopt a number of adjustments to existing funds. Together with proposals on limiting the pressures that human activities cause in other sectors, there would be a sound basis for not prolonging

specific diversity funds, when the process of achieving the Gothenburg goal is evident. At present your rapporteur has serious doubts about the Commission recommendation, if no strong commitments are made at the same time.

In agreement with the Commission's own expert Working Group, your Rapporteur believes that as nature does not respect political boundaries, the Natura 2000 network is a joint responsibility between the Community and Member States, and therefore EU funds should cover sites and their management activities.

23.2.2005

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

on Financing Natura 2000
(2004/2164(INI))

Draftsman: Kyösti Tapio Virrankoski

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture 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:

- A. whereas the Natura 2000 network is intended to lead to a genuinely European nature conservation network, based on the measures adopted in the Birds Directive¹ and Habitats Directive²,
- B. whereas the Natura 2000 network is expected to cover an area of 63,7 m hectares and the costs have been estimated at EUR 6,1 billion annually, and whereas, given that the network benefits the whole of the Union and is geared to objectives on a Community scale, it must not involve greater costs for those states containing greater biological diversity and a larger protected area,
- C. whereas the burden of financing nature conservation and the Natura 2000 network should be shared fairly by all EU citizens,
- D. whereas the 2003 reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will significantly increase the costs incurred by Europe's farmers due to the provisions on cross-compliance,
- E. whereas farmers and forest owners can make a significant contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on farmland through their management

¹ Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1).

² Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

practices, and in many cases this results in additional spending which must be adequately compensated,

- F. whereas the European Commission analyses three different scenarios for the future financing of the Natura 2000 network in its communication,
- G. whereas in 2002 the Council set the farm budget without taking account of the extra costs to farmers and forest owners arising from the application of the commitments entered into by the Community with the Habitats Directive,
1. Welcomes the Commission's communication as a basis for analysing and determining financing methods for the Natura 2000 network;
 2. Considers, however, that the Commission's communication fails to clarify a number of gaps in the financing of Natura 2000 and that, in particular, it fails to resolve the question of how to finance the costs of the specific measures to conserve habitats and species which have hitherto been covered by Life Nature;
 3. Is concerned, however, at the long delay recorded in the completion of the Natura 2000 network and the negative consequences this entails for both the more precise estimate of its funding requirements and the more effective planning and coordination of the actions it comprises; regrets that the Commission's communication does not provide a more precise estimate of the costs of the Natura 2000 network, and that insufficient account has been taken of the fact that the forthcoming enlargements of the Union will indeed entail a reduction in resources for the network, given that a larger protected area will have to be subsidised from the same amounts; calls on the Commission, in this context, to draw up a new and more precise estimate which includes the real costs of the Natura 2000 network;
 4. Recalls that the Commission and the Council, in adopting the Habitats Directive in 1992, made a clear commitment to ensure that landowners and landusers would not bear the financial burden of the measures in the directive; strongly urges that this promise be kept;
 5. Calls, therefore, on the Commission to ensure that the process of completing the Natura 2000 network is speeded up and that a detailed study is made of the overall cost involved, including the following factors:
 - the spending needed in order to compensate specific sections of the population affected in areas included in the network;
 - the real needs of the Member States of the enlarged Union;
 - the debate on the 2007-2013 financial perspective, which may have a catalytic effect on the future course of funding for the network, as well as Union policies in more general terms;
 6. Insists that if Natura 2000 expenditure is to be included in the Rural Development Fund,

the endowment of the fund needs to be increased accordingly;

7. Calls on the Commission to take account of the differences in the area protected in the Member States in connection with co-financing proposals;
8. Believes that the Rural Development Funds can be used to compensate the extra farming costs in Natura 2000 sites, provided that this does not reduce the required funding for other measures within rural development, animal welfare, agri-environmental measures and other objectives included in the proposed Rural Development Funds regulation;
9. Considers that Natura 2000 funding used for nature management measures should be targeted at farmers or other private land-users, in order to provide them with opportunities to diversify their income basis;
10. Calls on the Commission, consequently, to draw up a new proposal for the financing of the Natura 2000 network on the basis of the scenarios already put forward, which should include a policy to provide information on and raise public awareness of nature-conservation issues, with the aim of highlighting the development-related, economic and social benefits resulting from the application of the proposed measures;
11. Welcomes the Commission's intention to incorporate nature-conservation policy in the broader framework of sustainable economic, social and regional development in the European Union; considers, however, that its final proposal does not demonstrate its firm resolve to provide sufficient funding for this policy and ensure its successful implementation;
12. Stresses that further development and maintenance of the Natura 2000 network should be achieved preferably not through land acquisition but through long-term management contracts with farmers and other private land-users.

PROCEDURE

Title	Financing Natura 2000
References	(2004/2164(INI))
Committee responsible	ENVI
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	AGRI 28.10.2004
Enhanced cooperation	--
Draftsman Date appointed	Kyösti Tapio Virrankoski 23.11.2004
Discussed in committee	20.1.2005 21.2.2005
Date amendments adopted	21.2.2005
Result of final vote	for: 35 against: -- abstentions: --
Members present for the final vote	Joseph Daul, Jean-Claude Fruteau, Janusz Wojciechowski, Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, Kyösti Tapio Virrankoski, Katerina Batzeli, Sergio Berlato, Niels Busk, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Albert Deß, Carmen Fraga Estévez, Duarte Freitas, Ioannis Gklavakis, Lutz Goepel, Bogdan Golik, María Esther Herranz García, Elisabeth Jeggle, Heinz Kindermann, Stéphane Le Foll, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Albert Jan Maat, Diamanto Manolakou, Mairead McGuinness, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, Neil Parish, María Isabel Salinas García, Agnes Schierhuber, Willem Schuth, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Marc Tarabella
Substitutes present for the final vote	María del Pilar Ayuso González, Armando Dionisi, Ilda Figueiredo, Béatrice Patrie, Bernadette Vergnaud
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	--

7.3.2005

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

on Financing Natura 2000
(2004/2164(INI))

Draftswoman: Jillian Evans

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. Notes that the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across the EU is one of the main pillars of EU action on biodiversity and that much of Europe's biodiversity has already been lost;
2. Notes that healthy ecosystems provide important social and economic resources as well as recreation opportunities and support for farming and fisheries;
3. Welcomes the Commission proposal for a strategic approach to the funding of Natura 2000, while voicing its concern that the funding is almost exclusively supplied by the structural and rural development funds, which means that nature conservation activities are having to compete at both national and regional level with other sectoral activities of a socio-economic nature for the self-same funds, which could jeopardise the financing in question;
4. Is concerned that implementation of Natura 2000 has been delayed ;
 - 4 a. Believes that it is essential that there be a study made of the social and economic impact of restrictive spatial planning measures arising from the Natura 2000 network on the land concerned, those who live there and their economic activities; and likewise to demarcate the areas acquired for the conservation of habitats and biodiversity on a strictly technical and scientific basis, establish conditions for the development of job-creating and wealth-generating economic activities, and produce information which can easily be consulted by local people and local authorities;

5. Notes that inadequate funding undermines the network and puts at risk the targets for 2010 and asks for this to be considered in the debate on financial perspectives after 2006;
6. Points out that structural fund funding for Natura 2000 is in accordance with the Cardiff Process of integrating environmental considerations in all key policy areas, and that it should in any case guarantee adequate funding within the Structural Fund objectives;
- 10a. Emphasises that structural funds cannot be the only source of EU funding for the Natura 2000 networks and that funding should be coordinated with the rural development fund, LIFE+ and a dedicated fund.
- 6a. Calls on the Commission to guarantee adequate financing of Natura 2000, whether by means of a specific instrument, or by increasing the funding for LIFE + by including an item earmarked for biodiversity conservation, which will allow the objectives to be met;
7. Supports the Commission's intention to publish detailed guidance on how to use the structural funds to support the Natura 2000 network and calls on the Commission to make good its assurances that Natura 2000 financing will be listed as a priority in the forthcoming Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy;
- 7a. Calls for all the planning instruments to be integrated into a single Operational Plan, which will take a strategic development approach;
- 7b. Calls for objective supports to be established to develop alternative productive, job-creating and wealth-generating economic activities with the objective of strengthening the local economic fabric, and likewise the establishment of effective measures to protect and enhance local economic resources and products, with due attention to their specific characteristics and their importance in the local economies;
18. Emphasises that financing from the structural funds for Natura 2000 must be allocated to specific, authorised objectives, and be adequately resourced, and that their release should be made conditional on national Natura 2000 finance plans;
- 8a. Points out that since the Natura 2000 network benefits the entire Union and responds to Community-level objectives, it should not represent additional costs to those Member States where biological diversity is greater and the protected areas more extensive, as laid down in Directive 92/43/EEC; calls on the Commission, for this reason, to take due account, when dealing with proposals for co-funding, of the proportionality criterion in respect of the protected area within the various Member States;
- 8a. Calls for the recognition, by means of encouraging and spreading best-practice, of those territorial units which demonstrate their ability to manage their respective Natura 2000 areas cost-efficiently in both environmental and financial terms;
9. Calls on the Commission to require the Member States to give due consideration to the needs of Natura 2000 management when establishing their programmes for the structural funds, so they can incorporate their Natura 2000 network protection schemes into their operational plans;

- 9a. Draws attention to the need to use adequate monitoring to ensure that the institutes responsible for nature conservation are actually equipped with the requisite human and financial resources to perform their nature conservation duties;
- 9b. Stresses the importance of involving the national parliaments, the social partners, civil society and regional and local authorities in implementing these objectives, by encouraging promoting proper public consultation;
- 10. Calls for changes to the Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund to refer to Natura 2000 in order to ensure the eligibility of Natura 2000 activities for financing from the structural funds.

PROCEDURE

Title	Financing Natura 2000
Procedure number	2004/2164(INI)]
Committee responsible	ENVI
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	REGI 28.11.2004
Enhanced cooperation	-
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Jillian Evans 25.11.2004
Discussed in committee	31.1.2005
Date suggestions adopted	7.3.2005
Result of final vote	for: 26 against: 6 abstentions: 7
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Jana Bobošíková, Graham Booth, Bernadette Bourzai, Bairbre de Brún, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Iratxe García Pérez, Ambroise Guellec, Pedro Guerreiro, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Alain Hutchinson, Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Tunne Kelam, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Jamila Madeira, Ioannis Matsis, Miroslav Mikolášik, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Elisabeth Schroedter, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Vladimír Železný
Substitutes present for the final vote	Inés Ayala Sender, Thijs Berman, Philip Bradbourn, Jan Březina, Brigitte Douay, Mojca Drčar Murko, Jillian Evans, Richard Falbr, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Toomas Savi, László Surján, Paavo Väyrynen, Manfred Weber
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

PROCEDURE

Title	Financing Natura 2000		
Procedure number	2004/2164 (INI)		
Basis in Rules of Procedure	Rule 45		
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	ENVI 28.10.2004		
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	AGRI 28.10.2004	REGI 28.10.2004	BUDG 28.10.2004
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	BUDG 15.12.2004		
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary			
Motion(s) for resolution(s) included in report			
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Margrete Auken 27.9.2004		
Previous rapporteur(s)			
Discussed in committee	18.1.2005 7.3.2005		
Date adopted	7.3.2005		
Result of final vote	for: 47 against: 2 abstentions: 2		
Members present for the final vote	Adamos Adamou, Johannes Blokland, John Bowis, Frederika Brepoels, Dorette Corbey, Chris Davies, Mojca Drčar Murko, Jillian Evans, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Norbert Glante, Françoise Grossetête, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Satu Hassi, Gyula Hegyi, Mary Honeyball, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Dan Jørgensen, Christa Klač, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Holger Krahmer, Peter Liese, Linda McAvan, Marios Matsakis, Riitta Myller, Péter Olajos, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Vittorio Prodi, Guido Sacconi, Karin Scheele, Carl Schlyter, Richard Seeber, María Sornosa Martínez, Thomas Ulmer and Åsa Westlund.		
Substitutes present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, María del Pilar Ayuso González, Bairbre de Brún, Christofer Fjellner, Milan Gaľa, Hélène Goudin, Jutta D. Haug, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Urszula Krupa, Alojz Peterle, María Isabel Salinas García, Renate Sommer, Bart Staes, Robert Sturdy, Andres Tarand, Claude Turmes and Phillip Whitehead.		
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Albert Deß and Bernhard Rapkay.		
Date tabled – A6	8.3.2005 A6-0049/2005		
Comments	...		