

**Question for written answer E-002042/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Change in Sweden's reference value for golden eagles

A Swedish Government proposal¹ on predators recently adopted by the Swedish Parliament states that favourable conservation status for the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) has been achieved in Sweden. The reference value for favourable conservation status has also been changed.

As a result of this change, the reference value has been reduced significantly: it is now set at 150 successful breeding pairs per year, compared with the previous figure of 600 per year. The Swedish Parliament has laid down that the customary distribution area of the golden eagle in Sweden is the entire country. The government also claims that the golden eagle can be found throughout the country, but there is no scientific evidence to support this (they can actually be found across some 40% of Sweden's surface area). Expert organisations including *Kungsörns Sverige* (the body that monitors golden eagles in Sweden) and WWF have been very critical and take the view that Sweden's new legislation will, in the long term, pave the way for golden eagles to be hunted² and prevent favourable conservation status being attained for the species.

Does the Commission take the view, bearing in mind for example Article 2 of the Birds Directive, that the Swedish Government's radical change to the favourable conservation status reference value for the golden eagle is in line with the EU's rules and ambitions in this area?

Does the Commission take the view that Sweden's designation of the golden eagle's distribution area, which is not backed up by scientific evidence, is in line with the EU's rules and ambitions in this area?

Is the Commission intending to take action in response to the fact that Sweden has so drastically cut the favourable conservation status reference value for the golden eagle? And is the Commission intending to address the issue of how the distribution area is established?

¹ <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/16553/a/223451>

² <http://www.wwf.se/press/pressrum/pressmeddelanden/1546162-rovdjurspropositionen-kan-rasera-skyddet-fr-hotade-arter-inom-eu>