

Question for written answer E-006041/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Albert Deß (PPE)

Subject: Spread of protected species (the 'beaver problem')

After being widely hunted in the 19th century, the beaver (*castor fiber*) is spreading fast in Germany due to reintroduction and strict conservation measures. It is now present again in numbers over large areas of Bavaria. This gives rise to a number of problems. The animals eat crops, such as maize and sugar beet, or use them to build their dams with. They undermine banks or cause waterlogging of agricultural land. They cause significant damage by undermining embankments and dykes. Sometimes the result is falling trees or damage to roads, power lines or buildings.

The beaver is subject to strict protection under Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive. Since implementing the existing derogations requires considerable expense and effort, there is a permanent risk of conflict.

1. How will the Commission help in resolving this problem, given that in many areas of Europe the beaver no longer needs the very high level of protection it has enjoyed?
2. Does the Commission intend to amend the relevant nature conservation laws at EU level?
3. How does it propose to reduce the level of protection once stable populations have established themselves, in order to allow this and similar species to be handled appropriately to their circumstances?