

**Priority question for written answer P-004480/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Threat to the nesting populations of the northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Eurasian skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) in the EU, especially in France.

Northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) populations have decreased dramatically in central Europe. In Germany the nesting population fell by 88% in the 1990s. Numbers of the Eurasian skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) also declined throughout Europe from the 1980s to the mid-2000s by approximately 40%. The reason for this is thought to be habitat reduction due to intensified land use. Another factor contributing to the rapid reduction in numbers of the species is winter hunting in the Member States. France will be allowing the hunting of 106 500 Eurasian skylark and 1 200 northern lapwing in the winter season 2021-2022.

1. Is the Commission aware of the dramatic decline in the populations of the species referred to?
2. What steps does the Commission intend to take to investigate whether the specific derogation for France for *Vanellus vanellus* and *Alauda arvensis* mentioned in Part A of ANNEX II to the Directive violates the obligations imposed on France under Article 7(1) of the Directive to protect these species in their distribution area? How does it intend to ensure that the population of these species sees a more favourable trend?
3. How does the Commission intend to guarantee compliance with the Birds Directive in the Member States in such a way that hunting in the wintering and distribution areas located there does not endanger the nesting populations of the northern lapwing and the Eurasian skylark in the EU?