



Protecting Nature



Posted by: BirdLife




Manifesto: An environmental call to action for the 2014-2019 European Parliament


Europe has been a global leader in environmental ambition. Members of the European Parliament –MEPs– play a crucial role in protected nature, by scrutinizing the implementation of nature legislation and ensure that the EU’s policy framework is coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals. But the EU risks losing this leadership role by sacrificing long-term environmental sustainability for unsustainable short-term economic gain. MEPs are uniquely placed to lay out a European vision for a green, low carbon economy that safeguards and restores its natural heritage and a fair and sustainable food and land use policy. This will provide society with the services we depend upon and the protection we need in times of climate change.

Report on the mid-term review of the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy

Vote Breakdown

 592
For

 52
Against


 45
Abstain



Absent


The vote on this own initiative report on the mid-term review of EU's biodiversity, drafted by rapporteur Mr. Demesmaeker, strategy took place on 2 February 2016.

Objection to a delegated act: greening payment

Vote Breakdown

 363
For

 267
Against

 43
Abstain

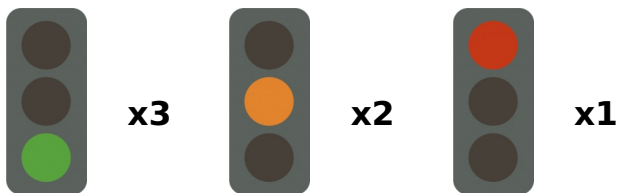

Absent

376 votes required

to pass.

The plenary rejected the resolution that would have objected the ban of pesticides on Ecological Focus Areas which had been proposed by the Commission.

Protect and restore our ecosystems



MEPs should

- Ensure that the mid-term review of the EU's 2020 Biodiversity Strategy leads to a step change for its implementation, to put the EU on track to meet its 2020 biodiversity target.



Even though with the support of MEPs several measures have been undertaken and still should be undertaken until the next EP election,



according to the analysis of BirdLife Europe the EU is not on track to meet the 2020 biodiversity targets!

- Oversee correct implementation and enforcement of EU's Birds and Habitats Directives in all Member States, and ensure the adoption of a rescue package for threatened Natura 2000 sites.



Even though there are still several issues with the implementation and enforcement of EU's Nature Directives, especially for marine Natura 2000 sites, MEPs during the Fitness Check process backed up EU's Birds and Habitat Directive which is well appreciated by BirdLife Europe!

- Champion, through flexibility mechanisms in the EU budget, a significant increase of funding for the highly successful and efficient LIFE Programme, in order to improve financing of Natura 2000.



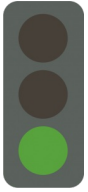
The European Parliament supported the European Commission's proposal to strengthen the annual LIFE budget in 2017, adding 35 million EUR to the budget. There are however still huge funding gaps for Natura 2000 measures overall.

- Ensure that the adoption and implementation of new EU environmental initiatives will strengthen and complement Natura 2000, while strengthening the resilience of ecosystems in the wider landscape.



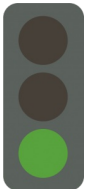
There has been insufficient response of the European Parliament to the cancellation several key initiatives for new environmental legislation, such as the legislative instrument on Access to Environmental Justice and the legislative instrument on Environmental Inspections. The Parliament has however called for a Trans-European Network on Green Infrastructure to strengthen nature in the wider landscape.

- Oversee the implementation of new EU legislation to tackle the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and people across the EU.



Even though the Commission's proposal didn't contain all species that BirdLife Europe would have liked to see on the lists, BirdLife Europe appreciates the support from the MEPs to adopt the legislation on Invasive Alien Species!

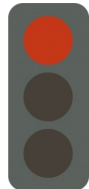
Productive and healthy seas



x2



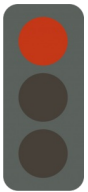
x1



x3

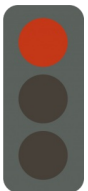
MEPs should

- Demand urgent completion of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas in the marine environment in order to protect key areas for marine wildlife.



Although progress has been made in Spain, Portugal, and Malta, the marine Natura 2000 network is far from being completed – with several countries such as Ireland, Sweden and the UK still missing a large chunk, while some countries still need to designate further, especially offshore. MEPs should be putting more pressure on the European Commission to take Member States to court.

- Demand urgent implementation of the EU Seabird Action Plan across all member states.



MEPs have yet to demand the urgent implementation of the action plan, where no single Member State has yet to adopt a national seabird action plan.

- Ensure that the EU financial mechanisms are accessible and ready to support environmental management measures.

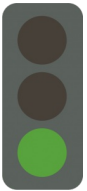


Although MEPs are vocal in their support of the European Maritime



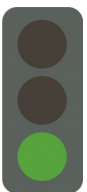
Fisheries Fund, they have not been advocating for supporting environmental management measures. This is particularly worrying as they recently adopted an own initiative report that would allow fishers in the Outermost regions to use the money for building new boats. It is important for this financial mechanism to support social and economic needs, but this should be in the context of delivering public goods (including environmental objectives).

- Ensure that Multiannual plans for fisheries under the reformed CFP adopt an ecosystem-based approach and aim to reach MSY by 2015 (or at the latest by 2020).



Although the final regulation of the the first fisheries Multiannual plan (for the Baltic) was not as strict in its rules, MEPs were very proactive to ensure that it delivered as much for the wider environment as it did to manage harvested fisheries sustainably.

- Ensure the new Data Collection Multi-Annual Programme is amended to require monitoring of the wider marine environment in compliance with the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Seabird Plan of Action in order to have scientific evidence to support decision making and implementation of the legislation.



The positive outcome of the new Fisheries Data Collection Regulation is thanks to MEPs being very proactive in making sure that this regulation would also monitor for fisheries impact on the wider environment.

- Ensure that the revision of the Technical Conservation Measures framework is fully integrated with the objectives of the MSFD, the Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Seabird Plan of Action in order to ensure that fisheries are carried out in an environmentally sustainable way.



The position of the the European Parliament on the new Technical Measures Regulation is not adopted. Several MEPs are supportive that this legislation addresses the environmental objectives including the seabird plan of Action and the Birds Directive. However, the final

position and negotiations are still to come and decide the outcome of this regulation.

Healthy food and healthy rural environment



x5

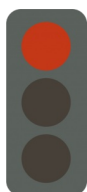
MEPs should

- Oversee implementation of the new CAP and ensure that agriculture delivers public goods for public money.



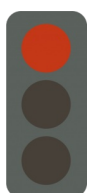
Despite all efforts to make the CAP greener, the analysis of BirdLife Europe is that agriculture doesn't deliver public goods for public money. A lot of money is spent to subsidize a fundamentally unhealthy food and farming systems and both farmers and nature suffer.

- Support “smarter regulation” to ensure protection of the environment and ecosystem services.



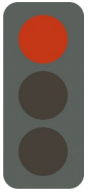
MEPs, specially in the agricultural committee have been trying to make regulations simpler and smarter by taking away often the last bits of environmental safeguards there were. Only in few cases has the rest of the parliament stood up to these MEPs and made up their own more moderate opinion.

- Ensure the EU's local and global footprint stays within sustainable and healthy limits.



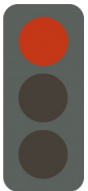
Referring to data of the European Environmental Agency (EEA), EU's demands for ecological goods still exceeds what its own ecosystem supplies.

- Make the price of farm products and farm inputs reflect both environmental harm and environmental benefits.



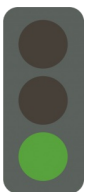
There has been no difference in pricing since the last parliament. So far, there is no differentiation possible based on environmental harm and benefits.

- Make sure that the agriculture sector is part of the new green economy which helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change and contribute to all the environmental goals in society.

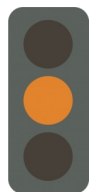


For the moment, Parliament has not been ambitious enough to ensure that the agri sector is contributing to effective climate mitigation and adaptation. The last negotiating position on the Effort Sharing regulation shows it still wants to exempt parts of the agricultural sector, which is not acceptable. Similarly, on biodiversity, there has not been enough done to make sure that the biodiversity strategy will be reached by 2020.

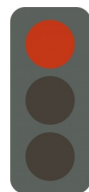
Preventing dangerous climate change



x1



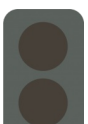
x4



x1

MEPs should

- Press for an ambitious global climate change agreement at the 2015 Paris Climate Summit, and support a target to reduce Europe's greenhouse emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 levels, and an increase in the 2020 target to 40%.



The Parliament has been systematically referring to the objectives of the Paris Agreement in the various pieces of climate legislation



discussed and called for alignment of policies with its objectives.

Crucial point remains on whether proposals on emission reductions in the non-ETS sectors and land sector will remain their integrity and loopholes will be minimized.

- Champion a strong and comprehensive carbon financing regime in the UN Climate Convention to stop the destruction of tropical forests.



The Parliament showed some initiative engagement but no concrete steps backed up by a solid funding have been adopted.

- Adopt an ambitious renewable energy target of at least 45% in terms of final energy demand and an energy efficiency target of at least 40% of primary energy use in 2030.



While the Parliament has been calling for higher ambition on the energy efficiency and renewable energy targets than proposed by the Commission, its final positions on these targets are still to be decided as the Parliament positions itself on the Renewable Energy Directive and Energy Efficiency Directive.

- Ensure EU policies affecting energy supply deliver genuine emissions reductions, taking into account aspects such as indirect land use change and carbon debt, support a transition to a clean, sustainable energy system, and do not drive further biodiversity loss.



Crucial decisions and positioning on whether the EU's energy transition to renewable energy will happen in an environmentally sound way and whether renewables like bioenergy supported will actually deliver greenhouse gas savings are still to be made in the context of the Renewable Energy Directive.

- Ensure that bad biofuels can no longer be subsidized by taxpayers' money or get counted in the renewables target.

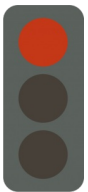


In its own initiative report on palm oil the Parliament has called for a



...the Commission's report on the environment has called for a phase out of biodiesel, the most harmful kind of biofuel used in the EU. Whether this declaration will be translated into the Parliament's position on the Renewable Energy Directive, together with a call to phase out other harmful land based biofuels as well, remains still to be seen.

- Develop a coherent climate change adaptation strategy, for biodiversity and ecosystems as well as for people, using ecosystem based approaches wherever possible and with widespread uptake in other sectors of adaptation measures that benefit, or do not adversely affect, the natural environment.



During the first half of its term the Parliament hasn't been actively discussing or raising the issue of climate change adaptation combined with ecosystem based approach.

Outlook: Most urgent points missing until 2019

BirdLife Europe sees the need for additional actions of the Parliament especially in the field of marine biodiversity protection. In most of the Member States no progress has been made with the completion of the Natura 2000 network. The same holds for the implementation of Action Plans to protect seabirds. BirdLife Europe therefore reiterates the calls on the MEPs already addressed in 2014.

When looking at the different policy fields assessed by BirdLife Europe, you notice that one of the sectors where practically no progress has been made since 2014 is the field of agriculture. BirdLife Europe doesn't see the existing policy framework for agriculture delivering public goods for public money. A lot of money is spent to subsidize a fundamentally unhealthy food and farming system and both farmers and nature suffer. According to BirdLife Europe, this is also due to the given structures of decision making within the Parliament and the other EU institutions. BirdLife Europe thus urges all MEPs to use the remaining period until 2019 to constructively ensure that progress is made in this policy area. Because of the amount of taxpayer's money spent on the agriculture policy BirdLife Europe considers a reform of the agriculture policy also to be fundamental for that EU citizens regain trust in the EU.

Besides, BirdLife Europe sees the need for additional actions of the Parliament especially in the field of marine biodiversity protection. In most of the Member States no progress has been made with the completion of the Natura 2000 network. The same holds for the implementation of Action Plans to protect seabirds. BirdLife Europe therefore reiterates the calls on the MEPs already addressed in 2014.
