26. Notes that Turkey and the EU face similar challenges in energy supply; underlines the importance of the Nabucco project for the security of energy supply in the EU and therefore calls on Turkey to take the initiative to swiftly implement the Nabucco Intergovernmental Agreement; stresses the need to define a common external energy strategy and the opening of the energy chapter that would further increase cooperation in the field of energy; urges Turkey to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty Trade Amendment and encourages Turkey to invest in the enormous potential of its renewable energy sources;

27. Notes that the recurrent visa problems under GATS 4 substantially limit the movement of Turkish businessmen and lorry drivers into the EU; underlines the successive ECJ rulings on this matter and calls on the Commission to ensure that Member States respect these rulings; calls on the Commission and the Council to re-examine visa procedures with a view to eliminating obstacles to trade;

28. Finds it regrettable that the legislation ensuring full respect for trade union rights in line with EU standards and the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions has not yet been completed, particularly with regard to the rights of trade union organisation and collective bargaining and the right to strike;

29. Urges Turkey to avoid discriminatory practices against foreign enterprises by giving a 15 % price advantage to Turkish bidders in the field of public procurement; invites Turkey to become a party to the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) within the WTO;

30. Stresses that counterfeit products, including pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, represent a problem in EU-Turkey trade relations and reduce the attractiveness of Turkey for FDI; encourages Turkey to enforce the new IPR legislation effectively in order to foster trade relations with the EU; underlines the need to strike a better balance between international requirements in intellectual property law and domestic economic development needs when developing an intellectual property regime;

31. Notes that SMEs make up 99 % of Turkish enterprises and provide 70 % of employment opportunities in Turkey; encourages Turkey to improve SMEs' access to finance; welcomes Turkey's Ninth Development Plan, which focuses on the R&D spending that is crucial to increasing SME competitiveness;

32. Welcomes the outcome of the referendum in support of constitutional reform;

33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Government of Turkey.

EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity

P7_TA(2010)0325

European Parliament resolution of 21 September 2010 on the implementation of EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity (2009/2108(INI))

(2012/C 50 E/03)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the communication from the Commission on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond: sustaining ecosystem services for human well–being (COM(2006)0216),

— having regard to the Commission communication on the mid-term assessment of implementing the EC biodiversity action plan (COM(2008)0864),

Tuesday 21 September 2010

— having regard to the Commission communication on options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010 (COM(2010)0004),

— having regard to the report from the Commission on the conservation status of habitat types and species as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (COM(2009)0358),

— having regard to Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds [1] (Birds Directive) and to the European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2001 [2] on implementation of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [3] (Habitats Directive),

— having regard to the Environment Council conclusions of 25 June 2009 on the 'Mid-term assessment of implementing the EU biodiversity action plan' and 'Towards an EU Strategy on invasive alien species',

— having regard to the informal Council held on 26-27 January 2010 in Madrid, which adopted the so-called 'Cibeles' priorities, and the Environment Council conclusions of 15 March 2010 on biodiversity post-2010 – EU and global vision and targets and international access and burden sharing regime,

— having regard to the European Council conclusions of 25-26 March 2010, in particular paragraph 14,

— having regard to its resolution of 22 May 2007 on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 [4],

— having regard to the European Summit in Gothenburg in 2001, where it was agreed to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 as part of a Sustainable Development Strategy,

— having regard to the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) (http://www.teeb-web.org),

— having regard to the Commission communication towards an EU strategy on invasive species (COM(2008)0789),

— having regard to the EU's Blue Paper on an Integrated Maritime policy (COM(2007)0575 and SEC(2007)1278) and the ongoing preparations for the reform of the common fisheries policy,

— having regard to the measures aiming at enhancing nature conservation and biodiversity forming part of the 'Health check of the CAP' and the opportunities offered by the reform of the CAP currently being discussed,

— having regard to the findings of independent experts in 'National implementation of Council Directive Habitats' - Study PE 410.698 - Policy Department C, 2009, on the application of the Habitats Directive, notably as regards a lack of assessment of alternative options to and the cumulative effects of projects, inadequate site management and, when compensatory measures are decided upon, the failure to verify such measures and the fact that they are often carried out too late, if at all,

— having regard to the fact that the United Nations has declared 2010 the Year of Biodiversity,

— having regard to the outcome of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which took place in Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010,

— having regard to the upcoming fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 5) and the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD),

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[1] OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1. Directive as last amended by Directive 2006/105/EC (OJ L 363, 20.12.2006, p. 368).
[2] OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 132.
[3] OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7. Directive as last amended by Directive 2006/105/EC.
[4] OJ C 102 E, 24.4.2008, p. 117.

— having regard to EEA Report No 4/2009 'Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target', in particular the annex 'SEBI 2010 Biodiversity indicator',

— having regard to the Commission Guidance document 'Guidelines for the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment – Application of the Habitats and Birds Directives' (May 2007),

— having regard to the EU 2020 strategy,

— having regard to the third United Nations Global Biodiversity Outlook,

— having regard to Rule 48 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 Fisheries and the Committee on Petitions (A7-0241/2010),

A. whereas EU law-making should have an impact on biodiversity, as was the case with the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC),

B. whereas it has become clear from the Commission's communications that the EU has not met its 2010 biodiversity target,

C. whereas the health check of species and habitat types protected under the Habitats Directive shows that a majority of species and habitat types have an unfavourable conservation status, that the extinction rate is disturbingly high – according to certain estimates the biodiversity rate has fallen by 30 % in the last 40 years – and that the drivers of excessive biodiversity loss show no evidence of declining; whereas habitats and species of EU interest are potentially threatened by anthropogenic climate change; whereas scientists estimate there are many unrecorded species, making it impossible to gauge the full extent of biodiversity loss,

D. whereas several factors have prevented the EU from achieving its 2010 target, such as the failure to recognise and deal with the driving forces behind the reduction in biological diversity, incomplete implementation of legislation, incomplete and poor integration into sectoral policies, insufficient scientific knowledge and data gaps, lack of political will, insufficient funding, lack of additional efficiently-targeted instruments to tackle specific problems such as invasive alien species,

E. whereas biodiversity, as the world's natural capital, is essential to the existence of human life on Earth and societies' well-being, both directly and indirectly through the ecosystem services it provides; whereas biodiversity plays a central role in the global fight against hunger and in favour of food security; whereas conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is one prerequisite for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change,

F. whereas biological biodiversity is the irreplaceable pillar on which mankind has evolved and its loss and that of the natural heritage it brings with it creates disequilibrium and gives rise to substantial economic and welfare losses, of the same order of magnitude as the cost of inaction on climate change,

G. whereas the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) also confirms that the loss of biodiversity gives rise to substantial economic and welfare losses,

H. whereas a recent study by Eurobarometer shows that EU citizens are largely unfamiliar with the term biodiversity and the consequences of the loss of biodiversity,

I. whereas the disappearance of species may break the food chain that is key to the survival of other animal and plant species of vital importance for food production, adaptation to climatic conditions, resistance to external agents and the preservation of genetic values,

Tuesday 21 September 2010

General remarks

1. Is deeply concerned about the very fast pace of human-induced biodiversity loss which, if it continues as in the last decades, will leave us with a greatly impoverished and irreversibly damaged nature by 2050 and underlines that functioning ecosystems are a prerequisite for our subsistence;

2. Highlights the fact that biodiversity is the most important indicator of good environmental status;

3. Is aware that failure to stop biodiversity loss is unacceptable, not only from an ethical but also from an ecological and economic perspective, as it deprives future generations of the ecosystem services and welfare aspects of a rich, natural biodiversity; calls therefore on the Commission and the Member States to improve biodiversity governance and compliance in internal as well as in external relations;

4. Is aware, moreover, that a successful tackling of the threefold crises of food security, biodiversity loss and climate change requires a coherent approach and a future EU biodiversity strategy that is fully integrated with the strategies for combating poverty and hunger and for the mitigation and adaption of climate change;

5. Recognises that NGOs have an important role to play in biodiversity protection, as regards contributing to the decision-making process, as actors on the ground and in raising the public awareness;

6. Underlines that ongoing studies, such as the TEEB study, estimate that the welfare loss from biodiversity loss is currently around EUR 50 billion per year (just under 1 % of GDP), rising to EUR 14 trillion or 7 % of estimated GDP per year in 2050;

7. Agrees, nevertheless, with the TEEB study report that there are methodological limitations to measurement of the economic value of biodiversity and this should not overshadow the ethical and inter-generational aspects of biodiversity conservation;

8. Is deeply concerned about the absence of any sense of urgency in halting the loss of biodiversity in the international political agenda;

The EU and biodiversity

9. Deeply regrets that the EU's objective, as agreed to at the European Summit in Gothenburg in 2001, to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 has not been met and shares the concern expressed by many petitioners to the European Parliament;

10. Welcomes the Commission's communication on options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010;

11. Welcomes furthermore the conclusions on biodiversity of the Environment Council of 15 March 2010, including the new headline target of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restoring them in so far as feasible, without prejudice to natural changes in biodiversity, as well as the European Council Conclusions of 25-26 March 2010 confirming the urgent need to reverse continuing trends of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation;

12. Believes that halting biodiversity loss constitutes the absolute minimum level of ambition to be realised by 2020;

13. Points to the valuable initiatives aimed at restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services already taking place and believes that such restoration activities must also be part of the 2020 headline target;

14. Considers that a thorough environmental, economical and social impact assessment is needed in cases where data are lacking;

15. Given the global character of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their crucial role for the global objectives of sustainable development, reducing poverty and hunger and improving health and human well-being, is convinced that the future EU strategy must also step up EU international efforts to avert biodiversity loss, as studies such as TEEB have delivered sufficient evidence that doing this is cost effective and feasible, and thereby contribute more effectively to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015;

16. Underlines furthermore that, as a part of a policy aimed at protecting and improving biodiversity, a common EU policy to tackle the problem of invasive alien species is necessary, and points out the particularly close link between transport corridors and the large-scale introduction of alien species;

Natura 2000

17. Recognises that a full and correct implementation of Natura 2000 legislation plays a major role in achieving the EU's biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development objectives; in this regard, considers it vital that future cooperation with land users in implementing Natura 2000 be thoroughly reinforced and cooperative; emphasises that the Natura 2000-approach has already shown some remarkable successes;

18. Calls on the Commission and Member States, to fully implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive;

19. Remains concerned, despite the positive and tangible results achieved by some Member States in the conservation status of several species, about the full and thorough implementation of Natura 2000 legislation; urges the Member States to give higher priority to the implementation of Natura 2000;

20. Welcomes the fact that the Natura 2000 network represents 18 % of EU territory (on land) and the early progress made in the formulation of conservation measures or management plans; is dismayed at the failure of Member States to respect the deadlines laid down in the Directives; and therefore urges Member States to take prompt action to achieve full implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives;

21. Expresses its concern about the lack of progress in the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment and asks the Commission and Member States to speed up the necessary procedures;

22. Calls on the Commission to adopt a model network of marine protected areas (MPAs) making it possible to reconcile preserving the environment and practising sustainable fishing; asks it to report regularly on the progress made by Member States in implementing the Habitats and Birds Directives, in particular the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment, since currently less than 10 % of protected areas are marine sites, as well as on the reporting and monitoring obligations of the Member States;

23. Notes that marine species and habitats enjoy less protection than terrestrial species and habitats in EU biodiversity legislation, and therefore calls on the Commission to assess the weaknesses in the legislation and its implementation, and to develop MPAs in which economic activities, including fishing, are the subject of strengthened ecosystem-based management;

24. Further notes that the various conventions for the regional seas around the EU, such as OSPAR, HELCOM and Barcelona, provide an important framework for protecting marine ecosystems;

25. Considers that Member States must be allowed to take initiatives to protect marine biodiversity going beyond the action required under EU legislation;

26. Recalls that the establishment of a coherent NATURA 2000, requires the maintenance of those features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna; calls therefore on the Commission and Member States to actively engage in maintaining and developing the connectivity of protected areas, whether terrestrial or marine, as well as agricultural areas of high nature value;

27. Supports the findings of the European Environment Agency when it states that the conservation status of species and habitats protected under the EU Habitats Directive is a cause for concern and that we should not 'focus all our efforts on preserving islands of biodiversity, while losing nature everywhere else', as this reflects the views very often expressed by European citizens in their petitions to the European Parliament;

28. Reminds the Commission and Member States that the Marine Strategy Directive does not limit the use of marine protected areas to Natura 2000, and therefore requests that Member States and the Commission take account of and create linkages between all marine protected areas, including those designated under regional seas conventions, with the aim of creating a coherent and comprehensive network;

29. Takes note of a certain unavoidable degree of subsidiarity in EU environmental legislation, but is concerned that this degree of flexibility can lead to abuses by Member States when implementing it; regrets the striking differences between Member States regarding, for example, the 'external effect' of Natura 2000 sites, block exemptions for certain 'existing activities' or the application of the precautionary principle; calls, in the event of such striking differences, for inquiries into whether the Member States in question are not applying the rules in such a way as to hamper the effective achievement of the intended biodiversity goals;

30. Given these differences between Member States, invites the Commission to provide further clarification of the Directives or guidance where necessary, with such clarification or guidance ideally being based on and/or illustrated by best practices;

31. Emphasises the importance of implementing the precautionary principle on nature related to biodiversity in line with the decisions of the Court of Justice;

32. Encourages Member States to ensure that environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments are of sufficient quality in relation to biodiversity, in order to guarantee a sound implementation of Natura 2000 legislation;

33. Calls for a strengthening of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and a much more rigorous interpretation of its objectives, in order to achieve no net loss, and, where possible, gains in biodiversity, and to introduce specific requirements for the ongoing monitoring of the biodiversity impacts of projects and the effectiveness of mitigation measures, with appropriate provisions for access to this information and for enforcement;

34. Believes that better cross-border cooperation could have significant benefits for meeting the Natura 2000 objectives;

35. Furthermore expresses its concern about the lack of cross-border cooperation, which can lead to identical areas being approached differently, and stresses the usefulness of harnessing existing instruments, such as the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), a judicial tool;

36. Urges the Commission to focus more on ecosystem services in its future biodiversity strategy and within the context of Natura 2000 while at the same time building on and strengthening efforts to achieve favourable conservation status for species and their habitats;

Integration into other policy areas

37. Is convinced that the Natura 2000 land and marine network is not the only EU instrument for biodiversity conservation, but that a more integral approach is needed for the EU biodiversity policy to be successful;

38. Therefore, calls on the Commission to ensure a further mainstreaming of biodiversity into other EU policy areas – such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, regional policy and cohesion, energy, industry, transport tourism, development cooperation, research and innovation – in a mutually reinforcing way and to make the European Union's sectoral and budgetary policies more consistent; stresses the great opportunities that exist, particularly in the common agricultural policy, regional policy and the common fisheries policy, to give biodiversity a higher priority;

39. Highlights the link between water management and biodiversity as a key factor in supporting life and in sustainable development;

40. Takes the view that farmers play a vital role in achieving the EU's biodiversity objective; points out that in 1992 an initial impetus was given to integrating protection of biodiversity into the common agricultural policy (CAP), and that subsequently the 2003 reform has introduced measures such as cross compliance, the single farm payment (decoupling) and rural development which have benefits for biodiversity;

41. Expresses, however, its concerns about the EU farmers' ability to continue to produce high-quality food competitively; believes that the CAP reform should properly reward EU farmers for their efforts in achieving the EU's biodiversity objective;

42. Points out that agricultural and forestry-related activity in Europe has contributed substantially to a diversity of species and biotopes and a varied agricultural landscape now considered in need of protection; underlines, therefore, that in the long term it is only through agricultural and forestry-related activity that the agricultural landscape can be retained and biological diversity conserved in Europe;

43. Welcomes the previous attempts to integrate environmental considerations as an integral part of the common agricultural policy (CAP), such as the introduction of agri-environment measures and good agricultural and environmental conditions; calls on the Commission to use the reform of the CAP as an opportunity to further enhance this trend, working towards fully sustainable farming in the EU, whereby the benefits to nature constitute a guiding principle, for example through the introduction of remuneration for eco-services or the delivery of well defined public goods, including sustainable farming in ecologically sensitive areas, such as Natura 2000 sites, so as to ensure that sustainable ways of farming are funded in the future, that where good practice exists it is properly rewarded and encouraged and that farmers are not financially or otherwise disadvantaged, thus creating the conditions for farms to be able to continue contributing to biodiversity in the future;

44. Calls on the Commission to pay greater attention to ensuring compliance with all European regulations and directives dealing in particular with maintaining biodiversity;

45. Finds that the EU has, in the Union's agricultural policy, laid down regulations under cross compliance which conserve biodiversity, but regrets that they are often not implemented and monitored throughout the EU;

46. Is aware that land use policy is another key element in the conservation of nature and urges the Commission and Member States to continue to improve the integration of biodiversity criteria in decision-making processes at local and regional level in matters concerning land use and territorial policy, including in regional and cohesion policy;

47. Emphasises that land management and the conservation of biodiversity are not opposites and that integrated management creates habitats for biodiversity;

48. Stresses the importance of halting and reversing the decline in the diversity of cultivated plant species and varieties, which leads to the erosion of the genetic basis on which human and animal nutrition depends; underlines the need to promote the use of traditional agricultural varieties specific to certain regions;

49. Taking into account the economic, social and environmental value of agricultural and livestock genetic diversity, urges the Commission to define specific priority targets to halt the loss of genetic diversity and halt the loss of native species; calls further for the adoption of a definition of 'native' / 'non-native' breeds and measures for their conservation;

50. Considers that the CAP should reward farmers who provide additional ecosystem services which help conserve biodiversity via an EU-funded top-up direct area payment; reiterates its request for 'bonus' cross-compliance that awards farmers bonus points for actions fostering biodiversity and implemented in addition to the obligations arising from good agro-environmental cross-compliance;

51. Notes that much progress has been made in environmental legislation, such as the introduction of integrated pest management and the new EU pesticide legislation, which makes it possible for pest management to target harmful organisms, thereby protecting beneficial organisms;

52. Welcomes the reform of the common fisheries policy currently being prepared and calls on the Commission to mainstream biodiversity criteria in its future legislative proposals; furthermore, insists that, as a possible alternative to fishing, sustainable aquaculture models should be developed along the lines proposed by the Commission in its communication on building a sustainable future for aquaculture (COM(2009)0162), taking into account the European Parliament's position in its resolution of 17 July 2010;

53. States that the major tools for achieving biodiversity objectives in the marine environment, in addition to the Habitats and Birds Directives, are the Water Framework Directive for coastal waters and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for all marine waters;

54. Considers that a reduction in discards must be a major objective of the CFP and calls on the Commission to identify the causes of discards and to work out solutions specific to each fishery, in particular through the introduction of multi-species or biomass quotas, through the selectivity of gear, such as the general use of square-meshed nets, and through spatial management of stocks;

55. Considers that regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) are responsible for the management of fisheries and guarantors of responsible fishing on the high seas; considers that it is therefore essential to strengthen their powers, in particular with regard to controls and deterrent penalties, and that it is first and foremost up to RFMOs to manage the stocks of certain marine species of commercial importance and to require the use of catch certificates;

56. Stresses the need for further action in the field of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and maritime spatial planning as these could be important elements of a participatory ecosystem approach, ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources, respecting natural processes and ecosystem carrying capacity;

57. Given the significant decline in aquatic biodiversity and degradation of freshwater ecosystems, emphasises the importance of ensuring the full implementation of the Water Framework Directive and stresses the need to address biodiversity decline in river basin management planning;

58. Urges Member States to design their forestry policy in a way that takes fully into account the role of forests as a reserve for biodiversity, soil retention and formation, carbon sequestration and air purification characteristics and for purposes of recreation for our citizens;

59. Welcomes the Commission's communication on addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss (COM(2008)0645 final), which calls for halting the global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest;

60. Points out that growing demand for agri-fuels and the consequent intensification of pressure for their production are threatening biodiversity, notably in developing countries, owing to the degradation and conversion of habitats and ecosystems such as wetlands and forests, among others;

61. Stresses the need to increase the budget for research dedicated to the environment and biodiversity under the Eighth Framework Programme, proportionate to the huge needs and challenges of tackling both biodiversity loss and climate change;

62. Notes that paragraph 8 of the Council conclusions of 21 October 2009 invites the Commission to undertake an urgent sector-by-sector review of subsidies which have an adverse environmental impact; calls on the Commission to act on those conclusions immediately in order to avoid subsidies to policies which have a negative impact on European biodiversity;

63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use the preparatory phase of the development of the Seventh Environment Action Programme to advance and promote the debate as well as specific actions on biodiversity in the EU;

Biodiversity and climate change

64. Underlines the vital importance of biodiversity and resilient ecosystems for climate change mitigation and adaptation, given the fact that terrestrial and marine ecosystems currently absorb around half of anthropogenic CO_2 emissions;

65. Welcomes the increasing support for measures to reduce the impact of climate change from which biodiversity can also benefit, but which should not have a negative impact on the funding for biodiversity as such;

66. Calls on the Commission to ensure that actions taken in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation do not have adverse effects on marine and terrestrial biodiversity;

67. Underlines that soil plays a vital role in achieving the EU's biodiversity objective; recognises that soil degradation has primarily local and regional causes and impact, and that the principle of subsidiarity should consequently be respected; calls on all Member States to fulfil their obligations in terms of guaranteeing soil quality and keep the soil in good condition and urges those Member States without soil protection legislation to shoulder their responsibilities;

Economic value of biodiversity

68. Stresses the essential role played by fisheries from an economic and social point of view in coastal development and from an environmental point of view in marine ecosystems; considers that the CFP must not hinder but facilitate Member States' compliance with biodiversity legislation, in particular the establishment of adequate protection measures in marine Natura 2000 sites;

69. Recognises the considerable job potential that is linked to the development of a sustainable economy and green infrastructure, which by their nature would imply local jobs (which cannot be relocated to third countries), thus contributing considerably to the EU's 2020 Strategy;

70. Furthermore, strongly believes that resource efficiency, sustainable economic development and nature conservation can and should go hand in hand; draws particular attention to the development of eco- and agri-tourism, whereby recreation and conservation are mutually reinforcing;

71. Emphasises the importance of biodiversity conservation in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, owing not only to the employment potential it can generate, but also to the contribution it makes to the efficient and sustainable use of resources; recognises that rising levels of materials production, trade, and consumption are an important driving force behind biodiversity loss, and therefore calls on the Commission and Member States to adopt measures to promote and develop resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) policies;

Tuesday 21 September 2010

Financing

72. Takes note of the Commission's estimates in 2004 for the annual cost of managing the Natura 2000 network at EUR 6.1 billion; points out however, that according to the TEEB report, the return on biodiversity conservation investment is up to a hundred times more;

73. Deplores, however, the fact that no additional sources of funding for the implementation of the NATURA 2000 directives have been made available by the Commission, and that a clear breakdown of the actual amounts being spent per annum on biodiversity conservation in the EU is lacking, and insists that Member States and the Commission cooperate to provide a clearer picture;

74. Believes that the Community should take greater responsibility for safeguarding natural values in the Natura 2000 network, particularly in the context of funding;

75. Welcomes the increase in spending for LIFE+ (+ 8 % in the 2011 draft budget), but underlines that this instrument continues to represent only a very small part of the EU budget (0,2 %); notes, moreover, that EU-funded conservation measures are not always continued once Community financing stops; calls on the Commission to give fuller consideration to the various factors relevant to the sustainability of projects and to introduce systematic monitoring of projects after the final payment;

76. Is aware that additional funding for biodiversity conservation is available through other instruments, such as the Structural Funds and the Rural Development Fund, but deplores the limited use most Member States make of this possibility; recalls that the biggest contribution for financing biodiversity is currently available through the EAFRD;

77. Without pre-empting future discussions and decisions about the new multiannual financial framework (from 2014 onwards) and the mid-term review of the current budgetary framework (2007-2013), expects that budgetary constraints will make it more necessary than ever to achieve high added value and increased effectiveness of European spending, including biodiversity spending;

78. Therefore, underlines the need to gain greater insight into the effectiveness of biodiversity spending and calls on the Commission to provide examples of good practice in terms of effectiveness and added value;

79. Welcomes the recommendation made by IUCN for 0,3 % of GDP to be spent on national biodiversity conservation measures;

80. Notes with concern that the number of projects financed under the LIFE+ programme each year is below the indicative allocation in various Member States; invites the Commission to assess the reasons for this under-implementation and where necessary to propose changes to the rules governing the programme, particularly as regards co-financing levels;

81. Is convinced that public spending alone will not suffice to reach the EU headline target and underlines the importance of corporate responsibility to also take into account biodiversity; calls on the Commission to look into means of implementing policies that encourage positive investments in conserving biodiversity and discourage investment which impacts on biodiversity, in both the public and private sectors; welcomes in this regard the launch of the Business and Biodiversity Platform by the Commission to engage the private sector in the biodiversity agenda;

82. Recommends that greater flexibility be injected into the rules on eligibility for financing biodiversity-related projects and to encourage all the relevant players to apply for it;

83. Underlines the need to incorporate external costs, risks and effects, such as the preservation of agricultural land, the damage done to biodiversity or the costs incurred to support biodiversity, into the final price of products on the market; points out that this is in the long-term interest of companies if they wish to continue to have access to natural resources; urges the European Commission to publish the communication that it has announced on the future financing of Natura 2000 as soon as possible and in any event during 2010 so that this aspect can be examined together with the new biodiversity strategy for the period up to 2020;

Data and knowledge base

84. Stresses the importance of integrated environmental accounting in analysing the link between the environment and the economy at European, national and regional level in order to assess the effects of production and consumption patterns on the natural resources and calls on the Member States to regularly provide Eurostat and the European Environment Agency with the necessary data;

85. Points out that research and development are of key importance in order to close current knowledge gaps and ensure regular monitoring of biodiversity trends, as well as for developing policy tools to halt biodiversity loss;

86. Welcomes the Commission's composite report 2001-2006, evaluating the conservation status of protected habitats and species in the EU and the progress made by Member States in implementing Natura 2000 legislation, but regrets the high number of 'unknown' qualifications; calls on Member States to improve their reporting and on the EEA and the Commission to ensure a better reliability and comparability of data in its future reports;

87. Stresses the need to develop a clear baseline, on the basis of which the Commission is to measure progress towards the (sub-)targets; welcomes in this regard the work of the European Environment Agency with regard to the Biodiversity Information System (BISE) and the biodiversity baseline, which will provide useful tools to improve and fine-tune biodiversity policy-making, in particular for the strategic plan being developed by the Commission; underlines that existing data should be used rather than insisting on the collection of new data;

88. Given the current lack of knowledge among the general public about the importance of biodiversity, welcomes the Commission's information campaign and calls on the Member States to substantially increase their awareness-raising efforts and best practice exchanges;

International aspects

89. Expresses its concern about the failure to realise or even approach the global target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, as defined at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and about the implications of the continuous biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2015 objective of reducing poverty and hunger and improving health and human well-being and calls on the Commission and Member States to support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into global processes such as the Millennium Development Goals;

90. Welcomes the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in October 2010 and urges the EU to send a broad delegation, well prepared and coordinated, to this conference; underlines the necessity for the EU to define a strong and coherent position upstream; is concerned, however, about the fact that only environment ministers will attend the conference, whereas securing progress on the global biodiversity agenda requires a cross-sector approach;

91. Urges the Commission to support the creation of an intergovernmental platform for policies in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services science, under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme, and to help create that platform;

92. Supports the idea, discussed at a July 2008 meeting under the French Presidency, to develop 'Natura 2000-like' networks in the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories and Outermost Regions, which host some of the richest biodiversity hot-spots on the planet and underlines the need to support this development through EU policy instruments, such as development policy;

93. Points out that deforestation accounts for more CO_2 emissions than the whole transport sector and that conservation of forests is one of the core elements for the global conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

94. Encourages the Commission and Member States to effectively mainstream environmental sustainability in their relations with third countries alongside respect for social rights and guarantees regarding the protection and participation of local communities and indigenous populations in decision-making processes, with particular regard to soil use and forest protection and to continue the 'Green Diplomacy'; calls on Member States and the European Commission to ensure that the 'twelve-point EU action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals' recognises the imperative for environmental sustainability to be mainstreamed through its development cooperation and external actions and provides for a focused financial intervention in support of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

95. Underlines that innovative financial systems are needed to promote the recognition of the (economic) value of biodiversity; encourages Member States and the Commission to engage in a global discussion on the need for and possible modalities of innovative systems for the payment of ecosystem services;

96. Insists that, in international trade agreements, sustainability of the products being traded is a key element; underlines in this regard the need to incorporate 'non-trade concerns', including production methods and respect for biodiversity, in any future WTO agreement;

97. Strongly regrets the disappointing outcome of the CITES conference, where the main elements of the EU mandate were not realised, such as the protection of marine species of high commercial interest;

98. Strongly urges the Commission and Member States to improve the speed and efficiency of their internal decision-making procedure and to devote more resources and time to their diplomatic efforts vis-à-vis third countries and to strengthen capacities and synergies between Conventions; considers that, since many Natura 2000 protected areas are directly or indirectly affected by pollution and environmental damage also originates outside Europe, the need to include European environmental standards in our partnership agreements with neighbouring countries should be stressed;

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99. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

Commission communication: A community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters

P7_TA(2010)0326

European Parliament resolution of 21 September 2010 on the Commission communication: A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters (2009/2151(INI))

(2012/C 50 E/04)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission Communication of 23 February 2009 entitled 'A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters' [1] and the corresponding impact assessment [2], and to the Commission working document of 14 December 2007 on strengthening early warning systems in Europe [3],

[1] COM(2009)0082.
[2] SEC(2009)0202.
[3] SEC(2007)1721.