



Lid van het Europees Parlement

To Mr. Karmenu Vella

European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

To Mr. Frans Timmermans

First Vice President of the European Commission

Responsible for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights

Subject: mid-term review of the biodiversity strategy and fitness check of the nature directives

Dear Commissioner Vella,

Dear Vice President Timmermans,

Strasbourg, 27 October 2015

Biodiversity loss is one of the key global challenges which we face today and is inseparably connected with the challenges of climate change and resource scarcity. Biodiversity loss leads to irreversible changes which are detrimental for nature, human health and well-being and for our economy. Apart from its overwhelming intrinsic value, biodiversity incorporates an enormous socio-economic value.

As rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs currently working on the reaction of the European Parliament to the mid-term review of the biodiversity strategy, we are convinced that investing in nature and biodiversity should be at the heart of a smart, sustainable and inclusive European Union. We strongly believe that the nature directives are of paramount importance in this regard.

However, the general trends of the mid-term review remain alarming. The EU is far from halfway in meeting the 2020 targets. While recognising the positive and hopeful signal that targeted efforts do result in success stories, it is clear that more political will is necessary to genuinely change the tide.

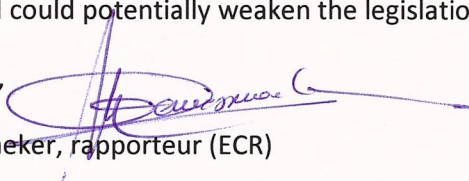
For real progress to be made, we strongly believe that better implementation, stricter enforcement and further integration of biodiversity across other policy fields are now urgently needed.

This leads us to the ongoing "fitness check" of the nature directives. More than 500.000 EU citizens have participated in the "Nature Alert Campaign" to raise their voice for nature conservation. Consequently a large majority of the participants to the Commission's online consultation made it univocally clear that they consider the nature directives as milestones in the EU environmental legislation and do not support any weakening of these laws.

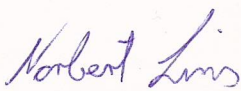
We share this concern and believe that the nature directives can be considered as smart regulation *avant la lettre* by their concise and coherent form. They form the basis of Natura 2000, which is still a relatively young network of which the full potential is far from being reached. We believe that best practices clearly demonstrate the effectiveness and relevance of the nature directives for nature, human well-being and prosperity, when implemented correctly.

We strongly believe that the key problem is not the legislation itself but rather its implementation. We therefore oppose a possible revision of the nature directives. Opening the nature directives would jeopardise achieving the biodiversity strategy altogether, would create a long period of legal uncertainty and could potentially weaken the legislation.

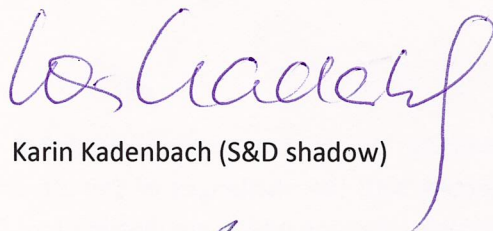
Sincere regards,



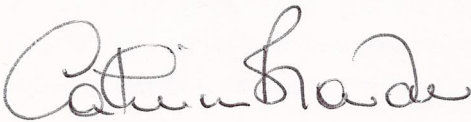
Mark Demesmaeker, rapporteur (ECR)



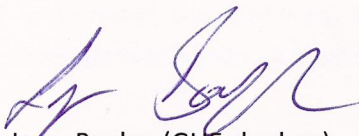
Norbert Lins (EPP shadow)



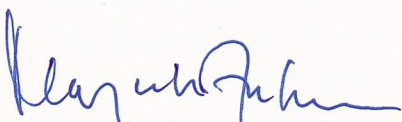
Karin Kadenbach (S&D shadow)




Catherine Bearder (ALDE shadow)



Lynn Boylan (GUE shadow)



Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA shadow)



Marco Affronte (EFDD shadow)