

Tuesday 22 May 2007

P6_TA(2007)0195

Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010

European Parliament resolution of 22 May 2007 on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 (2006/2233(INI))

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 its resolution of 20 October 1998 on the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on a European Community biodiversity strategy ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2002 on the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the biodiversity action plans in the areas of conservation of natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, and development and economic cooperation ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its opinion of 25 June 1993 on the Commission proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds ⁽⁴⁾ (Birds Directive) and to European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2001 ⁽⁵⁾ on implementation of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ⁽⁶⁾ (Habitats Directive),
 - having regard to its position of 31 May 2001 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (2001-2010) ⁽⁷⁾,
 - having regard to the Review of the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy (EUSDS) — Renewed Strategy ⁽⁸⁾,
 - having regard to the outcome of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the Convention on Biological Diversity and of the third meeting of the Parties (MOP 3) to its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety,
 - having regard to Rule 45 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 Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Fisheries (A6-0089/2007),
- A. whereas the worrying current rate of biodiversity loss is likely to gather pace and continue in the absence of large-scale measures,
- B. whereas there are few adequate indicators available for effectively measuring the extent to which the imperatives of biological diversity are being complied with in the implementation of the various policies, one of the most notable being the Common Farmland Bird Index,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 341, 9.11.1998, p. 41.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 47 E, 27.2.2003, p. 575.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 194, 19.7.1993, p. 401.

⁽⁴⁾ 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).

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 132.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7. Directive as last amended by Directive 2006/105/EC.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 47 E, 21.2.2002, p. 113.

⁽⁸⁾ Council Document 10117/06, 9.6.2006.

Tuesday 22 May 2007

- C. whereas biodiversity plays an essential role in sustaining life and livelihoods, economic and social development and human well-being, as well as in achieving the 2015 Millennium Development Goals,
 - D. whereas, according to the UN 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, there has been a decline in two thirds of all ecosystems since the beginning of the 1960s,
 - E. whereas the main factors behind the loss of biological diversity are climate change, environmental degradation, the use of intensive farming methods and inappropriate forest and water resource management,
 - F. whereas, as a user of biodiversity, agriculture has a key role to play in managing and maintaining that biodiversity; and whereas the common agricultural policy (CAP) must henceforth promote sustainable production models which, while being economically viable, enable action to be taken on the environment and on regenerating and rehabilitating the biodiversity of as many animal, plant and microbial species as possible,
 - G. whereas there is an urgent need for intensified and coordinated efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 at the latest;
1. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission communication (COM(2006)0216) for its conceptual approach, its priority objectives for 2007-2008 and its key supporting measures, and sees it as a good starting point for a more focused approach to achieving the 2010 biodiversity target; endorses also the decision to place the emphasis on strengthening the implementation of existing policy and existing measures;
 2. Welcomes the Potsdam Initiative agreed on 17 March 2007 by the G8+5 (China, India, Mexico, South Africa and Brazil) that aims at contributing to curb the massive loss of biodiversity by 2010; encourages the G8+5 to urgently implement the adopted initiative and to provide funding to protect the oceans, to support research and to improve monitoring of species threatened by extinction;
 3. Stresses the intrinsic value of biodiversity and the urgency of protecting it from further degradation due to human influence and interference, including but not limited to exploitation, climate change and habitat loss;
 4. Expresses profound concern at the continuing loss of biodiversity and the related decline of ecosystem services;
 5. Recognises the vital importance of healthy ecosystems for prosperity and well-being in EU and worldwide;
 6. Stresses that climate change and biodiversity loss are closely linked and are equally important;
 7. Reaffirms the urgent need for an effort to meet commitments to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2010, made by the European Council in Gothenburg 2001 in the context of the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Sixth Environment Action Programme; underlines the urgent need for intensified and coordinated efforts to halt this trend, in particular in the light of the short time remaining to meet the 2010 commitments; supports the integrated approach proposed in the Commission's communication, according to which halting the reduction in natural diversity should form part of all relevant EU policies;
 8. Recognises the potential importance of the emerging concept of ecosystem services promoted by the Commission communication as a tool for incorporating the economic value of biodiversity into other policy areas, and suggests that the maintenance of ecosystem services should become a fundamental goal of all EU horizontal and sectoral policies; warns, however, against reducing the value of biodiversity to the benefits humans can derive from it, or viewing the loss of biodiversity as only an economic concern;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

9. Welcomes the 'EU Action Plan to 2010 and Beyond', annexed to the Commission communication, and recognises that this is a vital tool and last opportunity to bring together actors at Community and Member State levels on key actions to meet the 2010 commitments; but given the limited time remaining for implementation, urges the Commission to ensure the necessary structures are in place for its immediate and effective implementation at Community and Member State levels;

10. Recognises that the Action Plan will be insufficient to conserve biodiversity and sustain ecosystem services in the longer term; welcomes all proposals to launch an EU debate on a longer-term vision as a framework for a longer-term policy; invites the Commission to start a process for the development of a long-term EU vision for biodiversity, as a framework for further policy development;

11. In this contexts calls on the Commission to study and make proposals for practical measures to internalise the cost of biodiversity loss in activities that have a significant negative impact on biodiversity;

12. Takes the view that the whole of EU society, including the business and education sectors, needs to be actively involved in the biodiversity protection process;

Policy area 1 — biodiversity and the EU

Most important habitats and species (Objective 1)

13. Stresses the vital role played by the Birds and Habitats Directives in protecting the EU's biodiversity; recognises the importance of completing the Natura 2000 network (established under the Habitats Directive) on land and at sea, of effective management and adequate financing of the network, of land use planning that takes it into account, and of strengthening coherence, resilience and connectivity of the network, in particular in the light of climate change;

14. Emphasises the importance of including in the Natura 2000 network areas in the overseas countries and territories which are under the sovereignty of EU Member States;

15. Stresses the importance of additional measures focused on threatened species and recognises the value of extending the use of species action plans in this regard; stresses that the conservation status of habitats and species whose protection is required by the Habitats Directive should be reviewed on a scientific basis at regular intervals;

16. Points out the need to produce tailored measures to promote biodiversity in the new EU Member States, and the fact that ecosystem services such as maintaining landscapes and economic activities such as tourism are mutually dependent;

17. Notes that the promotion of selective fishing methods constitutes a priority because it will contribute towards the sustainability of fisheries and the maintenance of biodiversity by reducing by-catches;

18. Emphasises the importance of the high biodiversity of the outermost regions and calls for legislative measures to be taken for its conservation and sustainable use;

19. Recognises that, while the capture of and trade in live animals continues to present threats to biodiversity, Europe also has a number of zoological institutions and other organisations that are demonstrating through breeding programmes and 'in situ' conservation measures that they have a role to play in maintaining the survival of certain endangered species;

20. Welcomes the Commission's intention to implement a common maritime policy based on a holistic approach to the oceans, and draws attention to the need for environmental and ecological preservation of the oceans as a guarantee for the economic development of sectors such as fisheries, tourism and others;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

Wider countryside and wide marine environment (Objectives 2 and 3)

21. Recognises that land use planning and exploitation of wild species (through unsustainable hunting and fishing) are key factors affecting biodiversity and ecosystem services; stresses in particular threats to high-nature-value farmland and forests posed by both intensification and abandonment; recognises the threats posed to fish stocks, non-target species and marine habitats caused by ecologically unsustainable fishing practices including illegal fishing and fishing using destructive and non-selective technologies;
22. Points out that maintaining the diversity of European rural landscapes is essential not just to enable the services provided by sustainable farming to keep going, but also to maintain the gene flow between wild fauna and flora populations;
23. Stresses the importance of implementing the reformed common fisheries policy (CFP), since it provides for the sustainable development of fishery resources and discourages overfishing, which constitutes a threat to marine life;
24. Calls on the Commission to draw up a specific action programme to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), which constitutes a fundamental threat to the replenishment of fish stocks;
25. Welcomes the proposal put forward by the EU and the Member States to incorporate marine and river ecosystems into the Natura 2000 network of protected sites, and calls for emphasis also to be placed on areas for the reproduction of fish stocks;
26. Calls on the Commission to consolidate the Natura 2000 network further by extending it to the ten Member States which acceded to the EU in 2004 and to Bulgaria and Romania since, following the accession of those two last-mentioned countries, the Black Sea now forms part of Community waters;
27. Urges Member States to exploit all available opportunities under the CAP and CFP to support the biodiversity targets in the wider countryside and the wide marine environment (i.e. outside Natura 2000 sites); calls for the further integration of biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations into the CAP and CFP and the identification in particular of the opportunity provided in this regard by the 2008-09 budget review;
28. Expresses its concern at the repercussions the introduction of exotic species and the likely escape of genetically modified fish into marine ecosystems may have on biodiversity, and calls on the Commission to study the dangers further;
29. Urges the Commission to encourage and support studies linked to the rearing of new species in captivity, particularly species affected by overfishing, thereby responding to market needs that are potentially threatened by the reduction in catches;
30. Is concerned at the diminishing diversity in farmed animals and plant varieties; calls therefore for immediate transposition of Council Directive 98/95/EC ⁽¹⁾, which provides a legal basis to permit, within the framework of legislation on the seed trade, the conservation, by use in situ and on farms, of varieties threatened by genetic erosion;
31. Points out that the CAP and the associated developmental dynamic leading, on the one hand, to specialisation and intensification and, on the other, to marginalisation and under-utilisation of land, have contributed to a significant biodiversity loss in recent decades;
32. Points to the wide richness of species and genetic diversity of agricultural crops and animals, and argues in favour of preserving and strengthening that diversity;

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 98/95/EC of 14 December 1998 amending, in respect of the consolidation of the internal market, genetically modified plant varieties and plant genetic resources, Directives 66/400/EEC, 66/401/EEC, 66/402/EEC, 66/403/EEC, 69/208/EEC, 70/457/EEC and 70/458/EEC on the marketing of beet seed, fodder plant seed, cereal seed, seed potatoes, seed of oil and fibre plants and vegetable seed and on the common catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species (OJ L 25, 1.2.1999, p. 1).

Tuesday 22 May 2007

33. Urges the Commission to revise the management and recovery plans for certain fish species, which are frequently out of tune with the correct monitoring of those species; urges the Commission to apply more specific measures that are compatible with the fishing gear and methods used in the biogeographical areas in question;

34. Stresses the importance of timely and effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive⁽¹⁾ to attain 'good ecological status' and 'no deterioration' of freshwaters and the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Recommendation; urges Member States to make use of the economic instruments provided by Article 5 and Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive in order to give an incentive for the careful use of this scarce resource and provide a sound financial basis for the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans; stresses the importance of putting in place an ambitious Marine Framework Directive geared towards attaining 'good environmental condition' of the marine environment; considers it particularly important that the forthcoming Marine Strategy places maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services as a key over-riding objective;

35. Urges the Commission to verify more closely compliance with Community laws linked to the fight against the pollution and degradation of marine ecosystems;

36. Recognises the immense damage being done to EU ecosystems by pollutants, most notably diffuse acidifying and eutrophication pollutants, including ammonium from farm sources; stresses the importance of reducing these pollutant pressures, especially in and around Natura 2000 sites and other high-nature-value areas; highlights the opportunity to address these concerns in the forthcoming review of the National Emissions Ceiling Directive as well as through timely implementation of the Thematic Strategy on Air Quality;

37. Recognises the threat to ecosystems from certain pesticides, flame retardants and other persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic chemicals; stresses the importance in this regard of effective implementation of REACH; stresses the need to monitor bio-accumulation of such pollutants through the use of top predators in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments; considers furthermore that special attention should be given to the hazards of pesticide use as they are designed to be toxic and are used in the environment; points out that European pesticide legislation — proposal for a regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the market (COM(2006)0388); proposal for a framework directive on the sustainable use of pesticides (COM(2006)0372); Thematic strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides (COM(2006)0373) — should ensure that the European biodiversity loss does not grow due to pesticide use;

38. Points out that the promotion of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications has a key role to play in safeguarding regional specialities, the entire rural culture associated with them and the related ancestral farming practices that enable the countryside and rural farming systems to be preserved as habitats for many wild species;

39. Points out that in 1992 an initial impetus was given to integrating the protection of biodiversity into the CAP, and that subsequently the 2003 reform introduced measures such as cross-compliance, the single farm payment (decoupling) and rural development which have benefits for biodiversity;

40. Proposes that biodiversity should be one of the main principles of the 'health check' on the CAP due to be carried out in 2008, and considers it necessary to use the 2008 'health check' to assess the effectiveness of the various measures on biodiversity, especially measures in the forestry sector, and to deal appropriately with shortcomings in this area;

41. Draws attention to the new rural development regulation (programming period 2007-2013), which provides *inter alia* for financing Natura 2000, contains agri-environmental measures and measures to preserve genetic resources in agriculture and support sustainable forest management, and maintains payments for areas with natural handicaps;

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1). Directive as amended by Decision No 2455/2001/EC (OJ L 331, 15.12.2001, p. 1).

Tuesday 22 May 2007

42. Advocates promoting (local/regional) partnerships between landowners and users, nature conservation organisations, government and centres of expertise so that they can work together to find local solutions to biodiversity problems, adopting a bottom-up approach;

43. Calls for the cultivation and use of biomass for the production of energy and as a fuel to be seized as an opportunity to increase biodiversity in agriculture; considers that this should also be reflected in the funding of research under the Seventh Framework Programme for research and that the cultivation of biomass should not be allowed to lead to a decline in biodiversity, either within or outside the European Union;

Regional and territorial development (Objective 4)

44. Recognises the increasing fragmentation of ecosystems resulting from the expansion of infrastructure, industry and housing; asserts that with careful planning, damage to ecosystems can be greatly reduced and opportunities to benefit ecosystems identified; urges Member States to ensure that projects funded by cohesion and structural funds do not harm biodiversity and ecosystem services but optimise benefits to biodiversity; urges Member States to prioritise maintenance and recovery of biodiversity and ecosystem services in spatial planning at national, regional and local levels and ensure adequate consideration of biodiversity in strategic environmental assessments (SEA) and environmental impact assessments (EIA);

Invasive alien species and Alien Genotypes (Objective 5)

45. Recognises that invasive alien species (IAS) are a key threat to biodiversity, and that the spread of IAS is exacerbated by the increasing movement of people and goods; urges the development of a comprehensive Community response to the problem, including an early warning system, and filling gaps in the legislative framework, including the development of an EU Strategy on IAS;

46. Highlights the fact that immunocontraception could play a decisive role in the control of mammalian IAS and notes the important research currently underway in this field; urges the Commission to allocate financing for European research into immunocontraception and to issue a call for project proposals; notes that the LIFE+ Programme is one existing framework that could be utilised to better effect to encourage action on IAS;

47. Calls on the Commission to take steps towards proposing legislation to limit the introduction of alien species in the European Union and monitoring the fulfilment of the CITES Convention (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora);

48. Draws attention to the sometimes disastrous impact of exotic organisms in the marine ecosystem; calls for urgent measures to prevent the transfer of organisms in ballast water and urges Member States to implement the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments under the IMO;

49. Calls on the EC to introduce effective controls on the discharge of ballast water within EU waters;

50. Emphasises the importance of fully implementing the EU legislative framework on Genetically Modified Organisms; highlights the potential risks to biodiversity of industrial-scale production of GM crops and asks the Commission to evaluate the impact on European ecosystems;

51. Expresses its concern at the possibility of genetically modified fish escaping into marine ecosystems and the likelihood of their reproducing with local fish, which may disrupt the biodiversity of those ecosystems; calls on the EC to prohibit genetically modified fish intended for the EU food chain from entering the EU;

52. Welcomes the Commission's declared intention to introduce specific legislation for the eco-certification of fish and urges it to come forward with a legislative proposal as rapidly as possible;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

Policy area 2 — EU and global biodiversity*International governance (Objective 6)*

53. Strongly supports the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and urges EU leadership in this respect; stresses the importance of implementing CBD programmes of work including on protected areas; stresses the need to conclude work on an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; considers that reference material relating to species and varieties should be stored only in states which are parties to the CBD; stresses that the mutual support and synergy between international environmental agreements should be increased and proposes that third countries receiving EU subsidies should respect EU biodiversity policies;

54. Recognises the threat to biodiversity in the high seas; urges the putting in place of an agreement on the protection of biodiversity in the high seas under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; urges the EU to continue taking a lead role in this;

55. Considers it vital to promote agreements and concerted action plans between the EU and third countries aimed at the preservation of common marine areas;

56. Highlights the threat to biodiversity posed by deep sea bottom-trawling and other unsustainable fishing practices; takes note of the recent decision in the UN General Assembly in this regard; urges the Commission to come forward as soon as possible with legislative proposals on bottom fisheries in the high seas; urges the Commission to work with the UN and the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, where they exist, to adopt and implement measures to manage all fisheries that are conducted on the high seas, including those using trawls; further urges the Commission to work towards the urgent implementation of measures to protect important deep sea habitats in the high seas from destructive fishing practices, including bottom-trawling;

57. Fully endorses the 'Message from Paris' conclusions of the Paris Conference (19-21 September 2006) on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation; urges the Commission and the relevant Member States to ensure adequate funding for environmental and biodiversity issues in the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories and improved access to European programmes for local bodies and NGOs, in coordination with local authorities;

58. Regrets the limited attention paid to biodiversity aspects in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements; advocates integration of the biodiversity dimension into international trade and into global efforts to change unsustainable production and consumption patterns; therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to give first priority to recognition of the Non-Trade Concerns in the ongoing WTO negotiations;

External assistance (Objective 7)

59. Shares the strong concern of the Court of Auditors' Report on environmental integration in development cooperation and the conclusions of the EU biodiversity policy review (2004) on the poor level of implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Economic and Development Cooperation; welcomes the call in the EU Development Consensus for greater 'earmarking' of funds for biodiversity and stronger 'mainstreaming' of biodiversity in development cooperation;

60. Points out that, despite these aspirations, there is very limited 'earmarked' funding for biodiversity in the Community's and Member States' external assistance programmes; welcomes the recent fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility but regrets that this does not represent any increase in funding for biodiversity in real terms; stresses the vital importance of committing limited earmarked funds to biodiversity priorities in third countries;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

61. Emphasises the vital importance of effective 'mainstreaming' of biodiversity concerns in Community and Member State external assistance programmes (including budgetary support measures) to ensure that they do not result in harm to biodiversity and ecosystem services; stresses the importance in this regard of building capacity in recipient countries to integrate biodiversity concerns into national development strategies (including poverty reduction strategies);

62. Expresses strong concern that, despite the policy aspirations, in reality there is a high risk that the new generation of Country and Regional Strategy Papers will continue to disregard biodiversity needs without a much more proactive engagement of the Commission with recipient countries in this regard;

Trade (Objective 8)

63. Recognises the 'ecological footprint' arising from EU trade on biodiversity and ecosystem services in third countries; urges the Commission and Member States to identify major impacts of trade on biodiversity and ecosystem services, in particular through sustainability impact assessments; stresses the importance of putting in place measures to reduce the ecological impact of globalisation within the context of multilateral, regional and bilateral free trade agreements; stresses that European policies should not lead to a decline of biodiversity in third countries;

64. Expresses deep concern at the EU imports of commodities, including wood, palm oil and soybean, which drive tropical deforestation; expresses concern that the emerging drive for biofuels may exacerbate pressure on tropical forests; calls for urgent action by the Commission and Member States to adopt measures to prevent or minimise negative impacts from such trade on tropical forests, including bilateral agreements under the forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) programme; urges the Commission to come forward the soonest possible with an analysis of options for further legislation to curb imports of illegally harvested timber;

65. Calls upon the Member States to reinforce efforts to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species and calls upon Member States and the Commission to devise a coordinated response and actions for the enforcement of CITES;

66. Expresses concern that fisheries partnership agreements have in the past exacerbated pressures on fish stocks, non-target species and marine habitats in the waters of third countries; stresses the critical importance of ensuring that fisheries partnership agreements ensure that fish stocks are sustained at levels that support maximum sustainable yield and minimise impacts on non-target species and marine habitats; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that EU fishing fleets operate in line with these agreements;

Policy area 3 — biodiversity and climate change

Climate change (Objective 9)

67. Recognises that a period of unavoidable climate change has begun which will have significant impacts on EU and global ecosystems; stresses that many impacts of climate change on human societies and economies will be felt through ecosystem change; recognises that changes to ecosystems and impacts on species are already observable; stresses the vital importance therefore of an ecosystem approach for adaptation to climate change, in particular in relation to policies which affect land, water and marine use; calls on the EU to continue taking a strong lead internationally in working to decrease global greenhouse emissions;

68. Stresses the importance of ensuring that climate change mitigation measures, such as the development of renewable sources of energy, should be assessed to ensure they take due account of potential negative impacts on biodiversity and that such impacts should be prevented or minimised — notably in relation to windfarms, hydropower and biofuels;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

69. Recognises that climate change will put strong additional pressures on EU ecosystems; stresses the vital importance of a large, coherent protected areas network (especially Natura 2000 sites) and of a healthy wider environment in order to strengthen the resilience of ecosystems to climate change; stresses the need therefore to reduce 'conventional' pressures on ecosystems (fragmentation, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species), the need to devise additional measures tailored to address the additional pressure of climate change, as well as the need for an urgent assessment of habitats and species most at risk from climate change;

Policy area 4 — the knowledge base

Knowledge (Objective 10)

70. Recognises the immense challenge posed by the need to understand biodiversity; expresses strong concern that the level of resources dedicated to research on biodiversity and ecosystems is far too low given the critical importance of the issue to our prosperity and wellbeing; urges that higher priority be given to funding for biodiversity research in Community (FP7) and national research programmes;

71. Recognises the need for more effective mechanisms to bring the evidence base relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services to bear on policy at Community, Member State and international levels; supports the proposal to put in place a new EU mechanism for independent, authoritative advice for this purpose, taking due account of existing provisions; calls on the Commission to prepare studies and assessments on the impacts of renewable energy production on biodiversity and on the change in biodiversity in urban areas, including both the positive and the negative impacts of new species appearing in urban areas;

72. Is concerned about the decline in many fish species and about the fact that the scientific reports of ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) are only partially adhered to, if at all, when setting the annual TACs (total allowable catches); recognises that the scientific reports are not political diktats, but considers that there must be strong reasons and good arguments for not complying with the scientific recommendations; considers that, in that case, the Commission and Council must also produce arguments to show that the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) principle is genuinely being complied with in the EU;

73. Calls on the Commission to finance studies into marine ecosystems, particularly in areas with rich biodiversity and intensive fishing activity;

Supporting measures

Financing

74. Expresses strong concern at financial constraints for support to Natura 2000 and other biodiversity actions in the EU Action Plan to 2010 and Beyond, resulting from Financial Framework decisions;

75. Stresses the responsibility of Member States to take up all available opportunities under the CAP, CFP, Cohesion and Structural Funds and Life+ and Seventh Framework Programme and to allocate national resources; urges that greater consideration be given to financial needs in the 2008-09 budget review, during which there should be an assessment of the sufficiency and availability of EU financing for biodiversity, especially for Natura 2000;

76. Regrets, however, that the Commission proposal, supported by Parliament, to provide EUR 20 billion more for rural development policy under the financial framework 2007-2013 has not been accepted by the Council, all the more so as the money could have been used specifically to further broaden and deepen measures on biodiversity;

77. Deplores the fact that the available European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funding falls woefully short of what would be necessary to produce the desired effect on management of the Natura 2000 network, as determined by farming and forestry, the support proposed for improving knowledge and monitoring being particularly meagre;

Tuesday 22 May 2007

78. Draws attention to the need to provide financial compensation for local communities whose incomes have been adversely affected by means of specific actions aimed at the preservation of the marine environment;

79. Draws attention to the possibilities that exist under the Environmental Liability Directive⁽¹⁾ to apply the polluter pays principle and urges Member States to use these possibilities to finance measures to help achieve environmental objectives, including those of the Habitats and Birds Directives;

Strengthening decision-making

80. Welcomes the proposal for an EU debate on a longer-term vision on biodiversity and ecosystem services as a framework for policy; stresses that this debate should be explicitly linked to the debate on the Future of Europe; urges that this debate be made as inclusive as possible and, in particular, should be taken into the regions; urges that European values relating to nature (both within the EU and worldwide) should be an explicit part of the proposed Declaration of European Values under the German Presidency;

81. Recognises the high quality of policy impact assessments relating to Community environmental policy initiatives; regrets that the environmental dimension in policy impact assessments relating to policy initiatives in other sectors is frequently weak; urges the Commission and Member States to screen all new policy initiatives for potential significant negative impacts on biodiversity and to ensure that where such potential impacts are identified, there is adequate treatment of biodiversity considerations, including impacts on ecosystem services, in the impact assessment process;

82. Stresses the importance of complementarity between actions at Community and Member State levels; recognises the unique value of the 'EU Action Plan to 2010 and Beyond' as a tool to enhance complementarity; urges Member States therefore to align their actions with those of the Action Plan; urges Member States to extend this alignment down to regional and local levels;

83. Emphasises the significance of full and consistent implementation and enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives; insists that the Commission and Member States dedicate sufficient resources and attention to this task;

84. Stresses the importance of spatial planning in relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services; urges Member States to strengthen approaches and methods at regional and local levels to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services, including through the complementary application of Natura 2000, river basin management planning and rural development measures, and at sea through implementation of the ecosystems approach as laid out in the Marine Strategy Directive;

85. Urges the Commission to exert pressure on those responsible for the successive delays in setting up regional advisory councils for fisheries, which are vital for improved monitoring and preservation of fish resources;

Partnerships

86. Welcomes the call to strengthen partnerships between biodiversity interests and key stakeholder groups; stresses the importance of partnerships with key owners and users of land, water and marine resources; supports in particular partnerships with hunters, the fishing community, farmers and foresters, and with the business and finance sectors; recognises the important role being played by the Countdown 2010 initiative in this regard;

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2004/35/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage (OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56). Directive as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC (OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 15).

Tuesday 22 May 2007

Education, awareness and participation

87. Stresses the importance of raising public understanding of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems for prosperity and well-being; urges the Commission and Member States to significantly strengthen programmes and campaigns to educate and inform the general public, to build political demand for action, and to strengthen the active participation of the general public in conservation measures; stresses the importance of access to information and justice in this regard;

88. Notes that many people feel emotionally attached to landscapes and their historical manmade features, and appreciate their beauty; regrets that large-scale agriculture has eroded the biodiversity and beauty of landscapes; considers that restoring landscapes, for example hedgerows between meadows, would be widely applauded and would help to restore biodiversity;

89. Notes that Europe's zoos and aquaria are visited annually by more than 100 million people, and recognises that these institutions have a significant role to play in raising public environmental awareness;

90. Urges the Commission to launch campaigns to raise public awareness of the problems linked to the preservation of fishery resources and associated ecosystems;

Monitoring, evaluation and review

91. Stresses the importance of indicators to inform the public and decision-makers on progress; welcomes the proposed set of headline biodiversity indicators; urges the adoption and retention of a biodiversity indicator as a Structural Indicator and as a Sustainable Development Indicator;

92. Highlights the vital importance of strengthening long-term monitoring capacities and methods in support of the set of indicators and to provide broader sources of information on the state of biodiversity, pressures on biodiversity and the effectiveness of policy response; stresses the need to make this information widely available through a shared information system;

93. Supports existing projects under which objective indicators for monitoring and evaluating biodiversity are being developed and calls on the Commission to ensure compliance with the obligations entered into by the European Union under the Biodiversity Convention, that is to say the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from it, to make it an objective that reference material relating to species and varieties should, in any event, be stored only in states party to the Biodiversity Convention, and to harmonise the available information and make use of existing networks;

94. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for submission to Council and Parliament of mid-term (to end 2008) and final (to end 2010 and to end 2013) evaluations of progress towards the targets of the 'EU Action Plan to 2010 and Beyond'; stresses that the findings of these evaluations should inform broader policy and budgetary review processes including the 2008-09 budget review and policy and budgetary reviews for the post-2013 period; urges the Commission to put forward a comprehensive long-term strategy on biodiversity after 2010;

95. Considers that the existing reporting requirements should be streamlined and simplified and future reporting should not lead to an increased administrative burden;

*

* *

96. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
