

To: Commission President Ursula von der Leyen  
Cc: Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans  
College of Commissioners

Brussels, 24th of March 2022

## **Call for a strong and ambitious EU Regulation on Nature Restoration**

Dear Commission President Von der Leyen,

Given the recent developments, we, the undersigned, deeply condemn the further delay of the EU Regulation on nature restoration and we reiterate our call for a strong, timely and ambitious EU Regulation on nature restoration!

Our biodiversity is deeply endangered and failure to actively restore our ecosystems will have devastating effects on our agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors, which rely on healthy ecosystems. The production of food and fibre depend upon a variety of genetic resources and ecosystems and the services they provide, such as soil and water conservation, maintenance of soil fertility, pollination and resistance to pests and diseases.

Any further delay or weakening of the Nature Restoration Law will result in medium and long-term problems. Already now, populations of endangered species have become so small in some regions that their genetic diversity is insufficient to ensure their survival. Postponement of nature restoration and interconnection of habitats in a situation where the window for action is closing fast would be detrimental.

We want to also use this opportunity to remind you of the upcoming COP 15 in Kunming, which will happen this Summer/Autumn and underline the fact that if we don't have an ambitious proposal before going there, we would risk the position of the European Union in the driving seat of nature restoration on a global level. This would not only be very embarrassing for the image of the whole European Union, but also deeply endanger any developments on the international level.

Therefore, we are asking you to deal with the various pressures coming from certain industries and political groups and to present the EU Regulation on nature restoration without further delay

Furthermore, if the Commission is concerned about the effects of the Russian aggression in Ukraine on our food security, it should:

- speed up the “Proposal for a revision of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste – part on food waste reduction target” instead, as laid down in the F2F strategy. At least 20 % of the food we produce is never eaten or exported but goes to waste, equating to 88 million tonnes of food being lost on a yearly basis. This means 92 kilograms of food is wasted per inhabitant every year, half of the amount being discarded in the pre-consumption chain.
- look into what we actually produce and how we use it. Over 70% of agricultural land is used for feed and fuel.
- apply temporary suspension measures for the production and blending of crop-based biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels together with a phase out of crop-based biofuels

(not including advanced biofuels) which could secure additional food supplies in the medium term.

- limit industrial intensive farming and moving towards pasture-based grazing for ruminants (e.g putting cows out to graze) which would also ease some pressure.

All these measures could be implemented along an ambitious nature restoration plan and would even have highly synergetic effects.

Dear Commission President, Executive Vice-President, Commissioners,

We, the undersigned, will stand along with you, together with the civil society and the scientific community, to safeguard an ambitious nature restoration proposal. We therefore urge you to withstand the pressure of the lobbyists of the agro-chemical industry and not to cave in to their demands. The conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem health is fundamental to the preservation of livelihoods and should not fall victim to short-term commercial interests.

Yours,

Jutta Paulus and co-signatories

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