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Mr. Karmenu Vella
Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 3 July 2019

Call to leave a legacy for nature and the environment: step up enforcement actions

Dear Commissioner Karmenu Vella,

We address you to express our support for stepping up enforcement, thereby leaving a legacy for nature.

The IPBES report from May has shown that the collapse of biodiversity poses similar threats to humanity as the climate crisis. The Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives concluded that the EU's regulatory framework (the Nature Directives) is fit for purpose, but that huge implementation gaps persist in the EU Member States.

There are currently only few months left during which this Commission can still take action:

Please step up enforcement action of inter alia EU's Nature Directives (but also nature relating legislation such as the Nitrates Directive) in these remaining months.

From our experience, we can confirm that infringement procedures can trigger change for nature, by also helping to unblock political processes.

With reference to the IPBES report, we in particular see the need to enforce EU's Nature Directives against the biggest drivers of biodiversity loss, namely the different types of land-use: agriculture, forestry, fisheries:

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Here we would like to underline the importance of saving certain key species, currently threatened by most importantly the intensification of agriculture, and saving biodiversity-rich grassland and wetland habitats (which are also important for climate protection). Another major concern that the Commission needs to address is illegal hunting and killing of (bird) species.

We have well taken note of some of your recent enforcement actions. Unfortunately we see many Member States still breaching EU environmental legislation. We would like to stress once again the important role the Commission has to play as “guardian of the Treaties”. Your work can help bringing favourable conservation status to our animal and plant species and our habitat types, protected under the Habitats Directive.

Yours sincerely,

Sven Giegold, MEP

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