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REPORT

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/2273(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives (2020/2273(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640), and the Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the same topic¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 February 2016 on an EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (COM(2016)0087),
- having regard to the Commission report of 2 October 2015 on the Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (COM(2015)0478),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2019 on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests (COM(2019)0352) and the Parliament resolution of 16 September 2020 on the EU’s role in protecting and restoring the world’s forests²;
- having regard to Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’³ and the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 October 2020 on a new General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030 (COM(2020)0652),
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)⁴,
- having regard to the Global Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) of 31 May 2019 on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,
- having regard to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the upcoming

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0212.

³ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 171.

⁴ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

- 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties thereto (COP15),
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
 - having regard to Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 of the Secretariat of the CBD of 15 September 2020,
 - having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, particularly the Special Report of 24 September 2019 on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, the Special Report of 8 August 2019 on Climate Change and Land, and the Special Report of 8 October 2018 on Global Warming of 1.5 °C,
 - having regard to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES),
 - having regard to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,
 - having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic,
 - having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur of 24 January 2018 and of 15 July 2020 on human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment,
 - having regard to the UN Leaders’ Pledge for Nature of 28 September 2020 entitled ‘United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development’,
 - having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report of 4 December 2019 entitled ‘The European environment – state and outlook 2020: Knowledge for a transition to a sustainable Europe’,
 - having regard to the EEA report of 19 October 2020 entitled ‘State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018’,
 - having regard to the Global Resources Outlook 2019 report by the International Resource Panel of the UN Environment Programme,
 - having regard to the IPBES Workshop Report of 29 October 2020 on Biodiversity and Pandemics,
 - having regard to the 2020 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture,
 - having regard to the Commission Joint Research Centre Science for Policy report of

13 October 2020 entitled ‘Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services: An EU ecosystem assessment’,

- having regard to the Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) of 5 February 2020 entitled ‘Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks’, of 5 June 2020 entitled ‘Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline’, of 9 July 2020 entitled ‘Protection of wild pollinators in the EU – Commission initiatives have not borne fruit’, and of 26 November 2020 entitled ‘Marine environment: EU protection is wide but not deep’,
- having regard to the EEA briefing of 6 October 2020 entitled ‘Management effectiveness in the EU’s Natura 2000 network of protected areas’,
- having regard to the EEA briefing of 11 January 2021 entitled ‘Growth without economic growth’,
- having regard to the outcome of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group of the CBD on risk assessment of 15 April 2020,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2019 on the annual strategic report on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 October 2020 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2017 on an Action Plan for nature, people and the economy⁹,
- having regard to its resolutions of 6 July 2016 on Japan’s decision to resume whaling in the 2015-2016 season¹⁰ and of 12 September 2017 on whale hunting in Norway¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 July 2020 on the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability¹²,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2020 on the European Year of Greener

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0015.

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078.

⁷ OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 130.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0285.

⁹ OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 38.

¹⁰ OJ C 101, 16.3.2018, p. 123.

¹¹ OJ C 337, 20.9.2018, p. 30.

¹² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0201.

Cities 2022¹³,

- having regard to Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter),
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Fisheries,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A9-0179/2021),
- A. whereas the European Parliament has declared a climate and environmental emergency and has committed to urgently take the concrete action needed to fight and contain this threat before it is too late¹⁴; whereas biodiversity loss and climate change are interlinked and exacerbate each other¹⁵, representing equal threats to life on our planet, and as such, should be urgently tackled together;
- B. whereas nature is deteriorating at a rate and scale unprecedented in human history; whereas globally one million species are estimated to be at risk of extinction¹⁶; whereas only 23 % of species and 16 % of habitats under the EU nature directives have a favourable status¹⁷;
- C. whereas the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the upcoming international agreement under the CBD aim to establish EU and global frameworks on biodiversity up to 2030;
- D. whereas 2021 will be a decisive year for biodiversity and whereas the COP15 should be a Paris Agreement moment for biodiversity; whereas the COP15 and the COP26 of the UNFCCC provide a unique opportunity to switch from a reactive model to a proactive, precautionary model and to bring about the transformative changes needed;
- E. whereas the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is one of the key initiatives of the European Green Deal; whereas the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Farm to Fork Strategy, together with other policies, will shape change to protect nature and conserve habitats and species;
- F. whereas the evidence available suggests that it is not too late to halt and reverse current

¹³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0241.

¹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency (texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078).

¹⁵ Karlsruhe Institut für Technologie, 'Climate change exacerbates biodiversity loss: Post-2020 biodiversity targets will have to consider global warming', ScienceDaily, Rockville, 2020.

¹⁶ Summary for policymakers of the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

¹⁷ State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018.

trends in the decline of biodiversity¹⁸; whereas this will require substantial changes;

- G. whereas humans are part of nature and whereas nature has intrinsic value; whereas biodiversity is an integral part of the world's heritage;
- H. whereas extinction of species is permanent, threatening ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services, and posing a threat to human well-being and survival; whereas the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has declared 160 species to be extinct over the last decade alone;
- I. whereas according to the IPBES, 90 % of land is projected to be significantly altered by 2050 and 75 % of land has already been significantly altered; whereas 85 % of wetland areas have already been lost;
- J. whereas biodiversity is crucial for food security, human well-being and development worldwide;
- K. whereas the EU must seize the opportunities to incorporate the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic into its policies and objectives;
- L. whereas 70 % of emerging diseases and pandemics have an animal origin¹⁹; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that practices that place biodiversity under pressure can lead to increased risks to human and animal health;
- M. whereas the destruction of natural habitats and wildlife trade increases contact between humans and wildlife and will be an important factor in the future emergence and spread of viral diseases²⁰;
- N. whereas biodiversity makes a positive contribution to human health; whereas up to 80 % of the medicines used by humans are of natural origin²¹;
- O. whereas the EU has more protected areas than any other region of the world²²; whereas the current network of legally protected areas, including those under strict protection, is not sufficient to safeguard biodiversity²³;
- P. whereas the EU still faces large implementation gaps when it comes to effectively managing the Natura 2000 network;
- Q. whereas Natura 2000 contributes to the conservation of species, but many threatened species are not protected by this network²⁴;
- R. whereas Natura 2000 has been estimated to support 52 000 direct and indirect jobs in

¹⁸ Global Biodiversity Outlook 5.

¹⁹ Daszak, P. et al., *Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics*, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, 2020.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Durant, O., *Natural Medicine: Past to Present*, University College of London, London, 2018.

²² EEA report of 23 November 2020 entitled 'An introduction to Europe's Protected Areas'.

²³ Management effectiveness in the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

²⁴ ten Brink, P. et al., *Natura 2000 – Jobs Scoping Study (Executive summary)*, Institute for European Environmental Policy, Brussels, 2017.

conservation management, and whereas 3.1 million (a quarter) of tourism jobs have links to protected areas²⁵; whereas the expansion of protected areas is intended to safeguard biodiversity, but also contributes to climate mitigation and adaptation and generates substantial returns through investment and the creation of jobs;

- S. whereas the European Court of Auditors has highlighted serious shortcomings in EU policies on the protection or restoration of biodiversity, including but not limited to inadequate measures to protect or restore biodiversity, a lack of implementation and funding, and inappropriate indicators to measure progress²⁶; whereas future EU policies should remedy and address these shortcomings;
- T. whereas approximately 75 % of the world's food crops are dependent on insect pollinators²⁷ and whereas pollinator numbers have dramatically declined in recent decades; whereas biodiversity conservation and the conservation of insects are inextricably linked;
- U. whereas the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) bee guidance document has not been formally adopted and its review has not been successfully finalised;
- V. whereas the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU Pollinators Initiative on 18 December 2019²⁸, which confirms its strong position on the importance of protecting pollinators;
- W. whereas the framework and actions of the current EU Pollinators Initiative require reinforcement and integration in all EU sectoral policies;
- X. whereas monitoring, research and other activities related to insect protection are fragmented, are often inadequate and are underfunded or non-existent at national level;
- Y. whereas loss of biodiversity is connected to economic activities; whereas economic activities should respect planetary boundaries;
- Z. whereas conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems has direct and indirect economic benefits for most sectors of the economy and underpins the functioning of our economies and societies; whereas all businesses depend on ecosystem services either directly or indirectly; whereas an improved biodiversity policy with effective measures has the potential to strengthen the economy and provide employment opportunities;
- AA. whereas the major direct drivers of biodiversity loss are changes in land and sea use, natural resource extraction, climate change, pollution and the invasion of alien species²⁹; whereas in addition to nature conservation and restoration, action on drivers of biodiversity loss, especially in the land use and food system transformation sectors,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ ECA special report of 21 February 2017 entitled 'More efforts needed to implement the Natura 2000 network to its full potential'.

²⁷ FAO report of 20 May 2018 entitled 'Why Bees Matter'.

²⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0104.

²⁹ IPBES Global Assessment Report of 31 May 2019 on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

is essential for an effective post-2020 biodiversity strategy³⁰;

- AB. whereas soil is a common resource³¹ and soil biodiversity is under increasing pressure; whereas EU-wide monitoring of soil biodiversity, including trends in its range and volume, should complement regular Land Use and Coverage Area Frame Surveys of physico-chemical parameters in the long term;
- AC. whereas agricultural biodiversity covers all components of biological diversity that are relevant to food and agriculture and all components of biological diversity that constitute agricultural ecosystems, also referred to as agro-ecosystems, including the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels, which are necessary to sustain key functions of the agro-ecosystem, its structure and processes;
- AD. whereas the long-term trends in farmland, forest and common bird and grassland butterfly populations demonstrate that the EU has experienced a major decline in farmland biodiversity³²; whereas this is primarily due to loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural ecosystems, mainly caused by agricultural intensification, intensive forest management, land abandonment and urban sprawl³³;
- AE. whereas the sustainable management of agricultural lands can contribute to wider ecosystem functions, such as protecting biodiversity, sequestering carbon, maintaining water and air quality, retaining soil moisture through a reduction in run-off, allowing water to infiltrate the soil and controlling erosion;
- AF. whereas of all mammals on earth, it is estimated, on the basis of biomass, that the majority are livestock and a low percentage are wild; whereas there is also a worryingly low level of genetic diversity of birds³⁴;
- AG. whereas the fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors can contribute to the UN SDGs;
- AH. whereas scientific studies have raised concerns about the significant long-term adverse impacts that the use of certain fishing techniques can have on ocean biodiversity and the marine environment;
- AI. whereas fishers can contribute to preventing environmental degradation and preserving the marine environment by using sustainable methods and techniques;
- AJ. whereas the degradation of habitats and the disruption of migration corridors, and overexploitation due to fishing, among other factors, have brought some fish species

³⁰ Leclère, D. et al., 'Bending the curve of terrestrial biodiversity needs an integrated strategy', *Nature*, Vol. 585, Nature Research, London, 2020, pp. 551–556.

³¹ European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2021 on soil protection (texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0143).

³² ECA special report of entitled 'Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline'.

³³ EEA report entitled 'The European environment – state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe'.

³⁴ Bar-On, Y.M., Phillips, R. and Milo, R., 'The biomass distribution on Earth', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 115, No. 25, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., 2018.

such as sturgeon to the brink of extinction;

- AK. whereas in spite of some verified improvements in sustainability in the exploitation of marine resources in some sea basins, there are still areas that present worrying situations, in particular the Mediterranean Sea;
- AL. whereas the EU has set targets under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; whereas measures are still needed to achieve the objective of good environmental status for bodies of water;
- AM. whereas the European Court of Auditors has stated³⁵ that although a framework is in place to protect the marine environment, EU actions have not led to sufficient protection of ecosystems and habitats, and that current marine protected areas (MPAs) provide only limited protection;
- AN. whereas forests account for 43 % of the EU's land area and contain 80 % of its terrestrial biodiversity³⁶; whereas forestry activities are the second largest reported pressure category for species³⁷, affecting in particular arthropods, mammals and non-vascular plants; whereas many forest-dependent species are negatively affected by the removal of dead, dying and old trees³⁸, reduction of old-growth forests and certain forest management methods such as clear-cutting;
- AO. whereas forests harbour more than 75 % of the world's terrestrial biodiversity³⁹; whereas Parliament has made recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation and forest and ecosystem degradation⁴⁰;
- AP. whereas the good status of the environment and healthy ecosystems are vital in fighting climate change, with ecosystems playing a fundamental role in climate mitigation and adaptation; whereas climate change affects biodiversity as climate variables largely determine the geographical distribution ranges of species; whereas in areas where the climate is no longer suitable, some species shift their geographical ranges and others go extinct locally;
- AQ. whereas nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches have the potential to provide a strong policy connection between the three Rio conventions, addressing climate change and biodiversity loss in an integrated manner;
- AR. whereas according to IPBES, pollution is one of the five drivers of biodiversity loss;

³⁵ ECA special report entitled 'Marine environment: EU protection is wide but not deep'.

³⁶ European Parliament article of 9 December 2020 entitled 'Sustainable forestry: Parliament's work to fight deforestation'.

³⁷ Commission report of 15 October 2020 entitled 'The state of nature in the European Union – Report on the status and trends in 2013 - 2018 of species and habitat types protected by the Birds and Habitats Directives' (COM(2020)0635).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme report of 22 May 2020 entitled 'The State of the World's Forests – Forests, biodiversity and people'.

⁴⁰ European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation.

whereas it is estimated that robust information exists for about 500 chemicals and whereas by April 2019, the European Chemicals Agency considered 450 substances as being sufficiently regulated; whereas another 10 000 substances are considered to have their risks fairly well characterised, while limited risk information is available for around 20 000 substances; whereas for the majority, around 70 000 substances, there is hardly any information on their hazards or exposure risks; whereas significant knowledge gaps regarding all impacts of chemicals on biodiversity and the environment need to be urgently closed;

- AS. whereas light pollution alters the natural night light levels for humans, animals and plants, thus negatively affecting biodiversity by, for example, unbalancing the migratory, nocturnal and reproductive activity of animals, leading also to the loss of insects and pollinators who are fatally drawn to artificial light;
- AT. whereas according to the Joint Research Centre 2020 report⁴¹, invasive alien species (IAS) are now present in all ecosystems and are threatening urban ecosystems and grasslands in particular;
- AU. whereas current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards not only the SDG environmental targets, but also those related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities and climate; whereas loss and degradation of biodiversity must therefore be considered not only as an environmental issue but also as developmental, economic, social and moral one;
- AV. whereas close to 80 % of the biodiversity of the EU currently is found in its outermost regions and overseas countries and territories⁴²;
- AW. whereas the EU and its Member States must comply with their international obligations relating to biodiversity and human rights, in addition to their obligations relating to policy coherence in external action, in line with their obligation under the Charter to integrate into the policies of the EU a high level of environmental protection and the improvement of the quality of the environment, and in accordance with the principle of sustainable development;
- AX. whereas the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment can pave the way to shape a legal framework of human rights obligations relating to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity; whereas the number of environmental and land human rights defenders that have been attacked has increased considerably around the world in recent years;
- AY. whereas at least a quarter of the global land area is estimated to be owned, managed, used or occupied by indigenous peoples and local communities; whereas the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognises indigenous peoples' collective and individual rights; whereas indigenous peoples and local communities

⁴¹ Commission Joint Research Centre Science for Policy report of 13 October 2020 entitled 'Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem and their Services: An EU ecosystem assessment' (supplement) and Commission Directorate-General for Environment BEST initiative (voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories).

⁴² BEST initiative.

play an essential role in preserving the world's biodiversity and whereas global biodiversity targets cannot be achieved without the recognition of their rights;

- AZ. whereas both the illegal and legal trade in and use of wildlife significantly contributes to biodiversity decline, and whereas the destruction of natural habitats and the exploitation of wildlife contribute to the emergence and spread of infectious diseases⁴³;
- BA. whereas according to IPBES and the IPCC, marine biodiversity is seriously endangered⁴⁴; whereas the EEA has issued warnings about the current state of degradation of the European marine environment and the need to rapidly restore our marine ecosystems by addressing the impact of human activities on the marine environment⁴⁵; whereas marine hotspots such as coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds are strongly degraded and threatened by climate change and pollution;
- BB. whereas the ocean is one, and its good environmental status is vital to ensuring its resilience and its continued provision of ecosystem services such as CO₂ absorption and oxygen production; whereas climate mechanisms depend on the health of the ocean and marine ecosystems currently affected by global warming, pollution, overexploitation of marine biodiversity, acidification, deoxygenation and coastal erosion; whereas the IPCC recalls that the ocean is part of the solution to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change⁴⁶;
- BC. whereas 80 % of marine litter is land-based and 150 tonnes of plastics have accumulated in our oceans⁴⁷; whereas 80 % of urban sewage is discharged into the sea; whereas at the surface, the cumulative mass of floating waste represents only 1 % of the plastics dumped in the ocean⁴⁸;
- BD. whereas the blue economy represents an opportunity for the sustainable development of maritime and coastal activities;
- BE. whereas joint initiatives between people, municipalities, associations, businesses, educational institutions and any other societal stakeholders on biodiversity protection and restoration should be encouraged;
- BF. whereas the successful implementation of the strategy requires effective cooperation at the EU and Member State levels including all stakeholders;

Current biodiversity status

1. Welcomes the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and its level of ambition;
2. Welcomes, furthermore, the headline ambition to ensure that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected; stresses that all efforts

⁴³ Summary for policymakers of the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

⁴⁴ IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Global Biodiversity Outlook 5.

⁴⁵ EEA report of 25 June 2020 entitled 'Marine messages II: Navigating the course towards clean, healthy and productive seas through implementation of an ecosystem-based approach'.

⁴⁶ IPCC Special Report of 24 September 2019 on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate.

⁴⁷ Commission Directorate-General for Environment, *Descriptor 10: Marine Litter*.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

should be made to achieve this goal as soon possible;

3. Considers that in the implementation of the strategy, consistency should be ensured with other strategies of the European Green Deal, such as the Farm to Fork Strategy; recognises the importance of the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, economic, and social; recalls that the environmental dimension, including biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, underpins the two other dimensions and is the fundamental basis for sustainable development and for the achievement of the SDGs;
4. Recalls that there is an urgent need to strengthen the maritime vision in the new strategies of the European Union, in particular in the follow-up of the Green Deal for Europe, the Biodiversity Strategy and the Farm-to-Fork strategy;
5. Calls on the Commission to base each legislative proposal on a comprehensive impact assessment considering individual and cumulative effects and both the costs of action and inaction in terms of immediate and long-term impacts;
6. Calls on the Commission, for the purposes of carrying out impact assessments, to complement the sole tool currently used to assess environmental aspects with tools examining impacts relating to biodiversity, resource use and pollution;
7. Recalls the conclusions of the IPBES report of 2019, according to which nature is declining globally at a rate unprecedented in human history and around one million species are threatened with extinction out of an estimated total of over eight million;
8. Notes that this is the third strategy on biodiversity seeking to halt the loss of the EU's biodiversity; deplores, however, the fact that biodiversity in the EU is still continuing to decline; strongly regrets that the EU has neither achieved the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 objectives nor the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
9. Stresses that the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 needs to fully deliver on its targets; urges the Commission and the Member States to commit to substantial and additional measures on biodiversity conservation and restoration to fully meet the new objectives, which should be clearly defined and measurable;
10. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has once again demonstrated the importance of holistically applying the 'One Health' principle in policymaking, which reflects the fact that human health, animals and the environment are interconnected and that transformative changes are urgently needed across society; underlines the important role of the Commission in coordinating and supporting the One Health approach in the EU and advocating it at all international fora; calls for a rethinking and urgent full alignment of the EU's current policies with the changes needed;
11. Notes that the underlying causes of pandemics include the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change⁴⁹, such as land use change and legal and illegal wildlife trade and consumption; points out that the risk of pandemics

⁴⁹ EEA report entitled 'State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018'.

can be significantly lowered by reducing human activities that drive biodiversity loss and that the estimated cost of reducing the risk of pandemics is 100 times lower than the cost of responding to them⁵⁰;

12. Urges the Member States and the Commission to fully take into account the scientific evidence, reports and recommendations on zoonosis and pandemics, including the IPBES workshop report on biodiversity loss and pandemics⁵¹, the United Nations Environment Programme report of 6 July 2020 entitled ‘Preventing the next pandemic – Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission’⁵², and the tripartite concept note of the World Health Organization (WHO), the FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of April 2010 on sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces partnership, to combat human-animal-environment health risks⁵³;
13. Welcomes the envisaged reinforcement of EU action against pandemics and other health threats as part of the European Health Union⁵⁴, including the establishment of an EU health crisis and pandemic plan as provided for in the new Commission proposal on serious cross-border threats to health⁵⁵, which should include pandemics with zoonotic origins;

Protection and restoration

14. Expresses strong support for the EU targets of protecting at least 30 % of the EU’s marine and terrestrial areas, covering a diverse range of ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, peatlands, grasslands and coastal ecosystems, and of strictly protecting at least 10 % of the EU’s marine and terrestrial areas, including all remaining primary and old-growth forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems; stresses that these targets should be binding and should be implemented by Member States at national level, in cooperation with regional and local authorities, and in accordance with science-based criteria and biodiversity needs, taking into account differences in the size and share of natural areas in each Member State and regional and local circumstances;
15. Stresses that these protected areas should create an ecologically coherent and representative network, building on existing protected areas; underlines that in addition to increasing protected areas, the quality of protected areas must be ensured, including through sufficient funding and the implementation of clear and effective conservation plans, proper management, adequate monitoring and evaluation, and effective enforcement of relevant legislation;
16. Recalls that according to international recommendations by the IUCN, environmentally

⁵⁰ IPBES Workshop Report of 29 October 2020 on Biodiversity and Pandemics.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² United Nations Environment Programme report of 6 July 2020 entitled ‘Preventing the next pandemic – Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission’.

⁵³ The FAO-OIE-WHO tripartite concept note of April 2010 on sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces’.

⁵⁴ Commission communication of 11 November 2020 entitled ‘Building a European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU’s resilience for cross-border health threats’ (COM(2020)0724).

⁵⁵ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 November 2020 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU (COM(2020)0727).

damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development should be prohibited in all categories of protected areas⁵⁶;

17. Stresses that a clear definition of strict protection needs to be produced; calls on the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to clarify what kind of human activities might potentially be considered as allowed under strict protection status when they leave natural processes essentially undisturbed and are compatible with the ecological requirements of the areas, on the basis of a case-by-case assessment based on the best available science;
18. Underlines that in order to achieve the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the degradation of the remaining EU marine and terrestrial area will also need to be prevented; calls for measures to address biodiversity loss outside protected areas; notes that restoring nature and ecosystems in protected areas does not make up for continued loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems in other areas;
19. Underlines the importance of including overseas countries and territories in conservation and restoration efforts;
20. Considers it important to take into account biogeographical regions and to adopt a whole-of-government approach to protected areas which involves Member States evaluating the need for financial support and compensation measures in the context of the designation of protected areas; stresses the need to involve all relevant stakeholders, including landowners;
21. Recalls that the EU has the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world;
22. Notes the commitment to ensure no deterioration in conservation trends and the favourable status of all protected habitats and species by 2030 and to ensure that at Member State level at least 30 % of species and habitats that do not currently have a favourable status are in that category or show a strong positive trend; believes, however, that favourable conservation status should be achieved for all protected species and habitats under the Birds⁵⁷ and Habitats⁵⁸ Directives as soon as possible; stresses that there are existing obligations to ensure no deterioration of species; calls on the Commission, together with the EEA, to set a clear baseline, to ensure harmonised and regular reporting, and to address shortcomings in the current methodology for trend estimates;
23. Calls on the Member States to improve the quality and completeness of their monitoring systems for the Natura 2000 network, including monitoring of the effectiveness of management; stresses the importance of specialised management bodies and site management plans; recalls that according to the EEA briefing⁵⁹, existing management effectiveness standards are insufficiently known and understood among practitioners;

⁵⁶IUCN recommendation of 10 September 2016 entitled ‘Protected areas and other areas important for biodiversity in relation to environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development’.

⁵⁷ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7).

⁵⁸ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

⁵⁹ EEA briefing entitled ‘Management effectiveness in the EU’s Natura 2020 network of protected areas’.

calls on the Commission and the Member States to conduct more targeted capacity building and provide better guidance on management effectiveness for the assessment and improvement of Natura 2000 management, including through the use of global standards for protected area management effectiveness (PAME) evaluations, such as the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas; also calls on the Commission to update the adaptive management guidance on Natura 2000, which involves considering the potential impacts of climate change on species and ecosystems;

24. Calls on the Member States to safeguard the genetic diversity of wild species through adequate conservation measures;
25. Regrets that the Member States have not met the 2020 objective of good environmental status for marine waters specified in the Marine Strategic Framework Directive; calls on the Commission to strengthen the network of MPAs through improved connectivity, enhanced management, stronger spatial planning, and systematic evaluations and enforcement;
26. Expresses concern over the state of freshwater ecosystems and species; notes that between 1970 and 2016, the decline in Europe has been the most serious in the world at 93 %⁶⁰;
27. Underlines that the majority of terrestrial biodiversity is in forested areas; notes that there have been small improvements in conservation status for a few forest types⁶¹, but that the conservation status of forest habitats and species covered by EU nature legislation shows no significant signs of improvement⁶²; stresses that between 2011 and 2020, close to one third of EU forests were assessed as having a bad conservation status (31 %) and over half of were assessed as having a poor conservation status (54 %)⁶³;
28. Highlights the poor status of European Forests; stresses that in some biogeographical regions as little as 5% of Annex I forest habitats are in favourable conservation status⁶⁴; underlines that the Biodiversity Strategy requires Member States to ensure no deterioration in conservation trends and status of all protected habitats and species; notes significant levels of further deterioration of forest ecosystems in unfavourable conservation status across the most of biogeographical regions⁶⁵;
29. Notes with concern the substantial losses of forests species and habitats reported; recalls that five forest tree species are extinct in the wild, 42 forest tree species are critically endangered and 107 forest tree species are endangered in Europe;
30. Considers it important and urgent to ensure strict protection of all remaining primary and old-growth forests; stresses that proforestation that allows natural forests to grow

⁶⁰ World Fish Migration Foundation press release of 28 July 2020 entitled ‘Massive decline in migratory freshwater fish populations could threaten livelihoods of millions, warns new report’.

⁶¹ State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018.

⁶² Commission report of 2 October 2015 on the Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (COM(2015)0478).

⁶³ State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018.

⁶⁴ Boreal biogeographical region with 4,84% and Atlantic with 4,94% in favourable status, in accordance with data (2019) reported pursuant to the Art. 17 of Habitats Directive for the period 2013-2018

⁶⁵ data(2019) reported pursuant to the Art. 17 of Habitats Directive for the period 2013-2018

older is key to increasing the surface area of old-growth forest; welcomes the ongoing participatory processes of defining, mapping and monitoring primary and old-growth forests;

31. Calls on the Member States to improve national legislation strengthening protection against illegal logging; calls on the Commission and the Member States to harmonise existing data, to fill in the gaps regarding the location of primary and old-growth forests, to create a database of all potential sites fulfilling the criteria for old-growth and primary forests retroactively in the year 2020, and to introduce a temporary moratorium on logging of all the respective sites to prevent their purposeful destruction and to legally ensure the non-intervention status of confirmed sites without delay;
32. Strongly welcomes the commitment to draw up a legislative proposal on the EU nature restoration plan, including on binding restoration targets, and reiterates its call for a restoration target of at least 30 % of the EU's land and seas⁶⁶, which should be fully implemented by each Member State throughout their territory, within and outside protected areas, on the basis of biodiversity and ecosystem needs reflecting the country's specific characteristics; stresses that restoration targets should build on the EU's existing legislation and that restoration efforts should support natural regeneration to the extent possible;
33. Considers that in addition to an overall restoration target, the legislative proposal on the EU nature restoration plan should include ecosystem-, habitat- and species-specific targets at the EU and Member State levels on the basis of their ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on ecosystems for the dual purposes of biodiversity restoration and climate change mitigation and adaptation; emphasises that the instrument should include forests, grasslands, wetlands, peatland pollinators, free-flowing rivers, coastal areas and marine ecosystems; stresses that after restoration, no ecosystem degradation should be allowed; believes that progress on the restoration goals must be regularly assessed at both the Member State and EU levels, including through the use of intermediate goals towards the 2030 targets;
34. Underlines that positive incentives and participatory processes should be developed to increase commitment to biodiversity restoration;
35. Strongly highlights the importance of fully integrating the EU's nature restoration objectives into other related policies and strategies; reiterates its call for binding targets on the restoration of forests⁶⁷, including to increase and restore connectivity between forests; requests the inclusion in the nature restoration plan of the restoration of at least 25 000 km of free-flowing rivers in the EU through the removal of barriers and the restoration of floodplains;
36. Strongly regrets the decline of pollinators, which are a key indicator of the health of the environment; stresses that this decline means not only a loss of biodiversity but also a threat to food security; reiterates the position expressed in its resolution on the EU Pollinators Initiative and calls for an urgent revision of the initiative; underlines that the

⁶⁶ Resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

⁶⁷ European Parliament resolution on the EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests.

revised initiative should include a new EU-wide pollinator monitoring framework with robust measures, clear time-bound objectives and indicators, including impact indicators, and necessary capacity building;

37. Recalls its objection of 23 October 2019 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees⁶⁸ and regrets that the EFSA bee guidance document has not been formally adopted by the Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the revision of the EFSA bee guidance document and the future implementing acts ensures as a minimum an equal level of protection as that laid down in 2013, addressing both acute and chronic toxicity and larvae toxicity, and also covering wild pollinators; emphasises the need for increased transparency in the review process; notes that EFSA is designing its own modelling system, ApisRAM, which is expected to be more in line with the biology of honeybees than BeeHAVE and less open to conflicts of interest;
38. Highlights the importance of high-diversity landscape features in agricultural areas in contributing to biodiversity and pollinator protection and restoration, as well as the role of beekeepers; stresses that increasing green spaces in urban areas can also contribute to these goals; calls on the Member States to include measures targeting various groups of pollinators in their draft strategic plans;

Drivers of biodiversity loss

39. Underlines that the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030's actions must adequately tackle all five main direct drivers of change in nature: changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and IAS; stresses that underlying causes of change, or indirect drivers, should also be tackled, such as unsustainable production and consumption patterns, population dynamics, trade, technological innovations and governance models;

Changes in land and sea use

40. Highlights that soil biodiversity provides vital ecosystem services and mitigates climate change, making it one of the most important elements of terrestrial carbon sinks; notes with concern the increase in soil degradation and the lack of specific EU legislation on this topic; acknowledges that there are some provisions in different laws that indirectly contribute to soil protection, but considers that this has resulted in partial protection and highly fragmented governance in the EU; calls, therefore, on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal for the establishment of a common framework, with full respect for the subsidiarity principle, for the protection and sustainable use of soil and for the effective integration of that protection in all relevant EU policies;
41. Stresses that this common framework on soil should address all the main soil threats, including loss of soil biodiversity, loss of soil organic matter, contamination, salinisation, acidification, desertification, erosion and soil sealing; emphasises the need to include therein common definitions, clear targets and a monitoring framework; also

⁶⁸ European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2019 on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 546/2011 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees (texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0041).

supports the establishment of a specific decontamination target;

42. Underlines that healthy soil, including fertility and structure, is crucial for the agricultural sector; points out the negative impact that unsustainable farming and forestry practices, land use change, construction activities, sealing and industrial emissions, among others, have on soils; stresses that forest harvesting and agricultural methods that are less damaging for soils should be implemented;
43. Invites the Commission to review Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions and Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries in order to better address soil degradation caused by industrial and mining activities; recalls its call for a material recovery target for excavated soils⁶⁹;
44. Urges the Member States – on the basis of the precautionary principle and the principle that preventive action should be taken, and taking into account the risks and the negative climate, environmental and biodiversity impacts involved in hydraulic fracturing for the extraction of unconventional hydrocarbons – not to authorise any new hydraulic fracturing operations in the EU and to halt all existing operations;
45. Recalls that the EU has committed to achieving land degradation neutrality⁷⁰ by 2030 under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), but that this target is unlikely to be achieved, as concluded by the ECA special report⁷¹; regrets that despite the threat that desertification poses to biodiversity, soil fertility, the land's natural resilience, food production and water quality, and despite the fact that 13 Member States have declared themselves to be affected by desertification under the UNCCD, the Commission is not effectively addressing it; calls on the Commission, therefore, to be more ambitious and present without delay an EU-level strategy on desertification and land degradation;
46. Notes that in the EU, urbanisation and leisure activities account for 13 % of all reported pressures on nature and 48 % of all marine pressures⁷²; highlights that green urban areas and green infrastructure can provide ecosystem services to support biodiversity and contribute to the physical and mental well-being of the population;
47. Supports the intention of the Commission to set up an EU platform for urban greening; calls on the Commission to set specific ambitious binding targets on urban biodiversity, nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, and green infrastructure, benefiting both humans and wildlife and contributing to the overall biodiversity targets; stresses the need to include measures such as a minimum share of green roofs on new buildings, supporting urban farming, including the use of fruit trees, where appropriate, ensuring no chemical pesticides are used and reducing fertiliser use in EU urban green areas, and increasing the number of green spaces according to the number of

⁶⁹ European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2021 on the New Circular Economy Action Plan (texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0040).

⁷⁰ Land degradation neutrality has been defined by the Parties to the UNCCD as: A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.

⁷¹ ECA special report of 18 December 2018 entitled 'Combating desertification in the EU: a growing threat in need of more action'.

⁷² State of Nature in the EU – Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018.

inhabitants, while also addressing inequalities in access to green spaces; calls further on the Commission and the Member States to extend terrestrial and marine ecological corridors in urban areas, including by developing a Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure (TEN-G) linked to a Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N);

Direct exploitation of organisms

48. Expresses its support for the 2030 targets of bringing at least 25 % of agricultural land under organic farm management, which should increase in the medium to long term; strongly welcomes, furthermore, the target of ensuring that at least 10 % of agricultural land consists of high-diversity landscape features, which should be implemented at an appropriate level to provide ecological connectivity for habitats across and in between farmed landscapes; stresses that both targets should be incorporated into EU legislation and be implemented by each Member State, also within the common agricultural policy (CAP) strategic plans;
49. Notes with great concern that according to the ECA report on biodiversity on farmland, the number and variety of species on farmland in the EU has been continuously declining; regrets the fact that the EU's Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 did not set measurable targets and actions for agriculture, making it difficult to assess progress; recalls that the tracking of CAP spending for biodiversity has been unreliable and that there has been a lack of coordination between EU policies and strategies, one result of which is that they do not address the decline in genetic diversity⁷³; calls on the Commission to follow the recommendations of the ECA on biodiversity on farmland and to build on the lessons learned in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030⁷⁴;
50. Considers it imperative that EU agriculture be transformed to make it sustainable and ensure high animal welfare standards, in line with the ecological and climate transitions, with minimised use of fossil and chemical inputs and antibiotic treatments; stresses that agriculture should contribute to protecting and restoring biodiversity;
51. Considers it imperative, in view of potential socio-economic impacts, that farmers receive support, including economic support, and training in relation to the transition towards sustainable agricultural systems to promote agro-ecological and other innovative sustainable practices; highlights, therefore, the importance of ensuring well-defined and sufficient financial support, including under the multiannual financial framework, to help reach these objectives, and calls in this regard on the Member States to use the CAP strategic plans and its green components for these purposes while developing win-win solutions for biodiversity protection;
52. Calls on the Commission to develop a strategy to support local value chains in reaching the proposed targets and stresses that small-scale agricultural businesses require specific support in contributing to the strategy;
53. Welcomes the recognition of organic farming as one of the strong components on the EU's path towards more sustainable food systems, namely as regards biodiversity

⁷³ ECA Special Report of 5 June 2020 entitled 'Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline'.

⁷⁴ Idem.

concerns, and in achieving the public policy objectives of economic development, rural employment, environmental protection and climate action; stresses the importance of the European action plan for organic farming in increasing the uptake of organic farming;

54. Underlines that the development of organic food production must be accompanied by market-driven and supply chain developments and measures that stimulate demand for organic food, including through public procurement and a broad variety of promotion measures, research, innovation, training and scientific knowledge transfer, aiming to support the stability of the organic products market and the fair remuneration of farmers and promoting measures that support young organic farmers; highlights the need for the development of the entire organic food chain in order to allow for local processing and the distribution of the EU's organic produce;
55. Notes that Member States will contribute differently to these Union-wide targets depending on the level of development of their organic sector and therefore calls for the definition of national targets; highlights that these targets will not be met without strong financial support, solid training programmes and advisory services; calls on Member States to shape their CAP Strategic Plans accordingly and on the Commission to make sure that these Strategic Plans are up to the task;
56. Recalls the importance of encouraging a collective approach and taking advantage of its multiplier effect in order to promote the actions of the Biodiversity Strategy, and calls on the Commission to promote and support associative enterprises, such as agri-food cooperatives, in the implementation of measures to protect biodiversity in a collective manner;
57. Stresses the key role that the CAP should play in the protection and promotion of farmland biodiversity, together with other policies of the European Green Deal; regrets that the CAP has not been effective in reversing the decades-long decline in biodiversity; recalls that agricultural productivity and resilience depend on biodiversity, which is essential to guarantee the long-term sustainability and resilience of our food systems and food security; considers that the small changes introduced by the various reforms of the CAP have not sent a strong signal to farmers to change their practices and is of the opinion that significant change based on experience of and predictions about climate and biodiversity crises is necessary;
58. Reiterates that the CAP should be fully consistent with the EU's increased climate and biodiversity goals; urges the Commission and the Member States to use the CAP strategic plans to implement the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Farm to Fork Strategy, including on further mainstreaming biodiversity-friendly and agro-ecological approaches, and urges the Member States to set ambitious baselines for sustainability and biodiversity when establishing conditionality standards and to ensure the ambitious and prompt development and uptake of measures, in particular eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate measures; stresses that adequate financial resources should be earmarked for restoration; calls on the Member States to build on the Commission recommendations to these ends;
59. Calls on the Member States to develop the necessary measures with regard to high-

diversity landscape features, in particular under their CAP strategic plans, using for example hedges or buffer strips, which should also aim to promote ecological interconnectivity between habitats and the creation of green corridors;

60. Stresses the need to strengthen the monitoring framework within the CAP, including through the development of more reliable indicators to measure its impacts; calls on the Commission to carry out an independent assessment of their aggregated expected impact once national strategic plans are approved; calls on the Commission, where this analysis considers insufficient the efforts to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal, to take appropriate action such as asking the Member States to amend their strategic plans or reviewing the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation as part of the mid-term review;
61. Underlines the importance of sustainable diets; points out that among other drivers, livestock production can contribute to biodiversity loss and climate change; considers that the Commission and the Member States should facilitate the adoption of healthy and sustainable diets, including plant-based diets, in particular fresh fruits and vegetables, and should also assess subsidies that are harmful to animal welfare by 2022 with a view to phasing them out;
62. Regrets the fact that agricultural production and consumption are being increasingly focused on a limited range of agricultural crops, and within them, limited varieties and genotypes; underlines that enhancing and preserving genetic variability through natural means is crucial to promoting the diversity of agricultural ecosystems and preserving local genetic resources, in particular as a repository of solutions to face environmental and climatic challenges; highlights the importance of using local breeds and varieties best suited to the local ecosystems;
63. Calls on the Commission to assess whether the development of natural capital accounting can limit and rationalise the exploitation and impact on ecosystems and therefore contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss; expresses reservations, however, about the feasibility of accurately measuring the value of nature in quantitative terms and stresses that nature has intrinsic value; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to provide more information on the potential international natural capital accounting initiative;
64. Calls on the Member States to develop the necessary measures under their CAP Strategic Plans to promote biodiversity-rich areas, including landscape features, with the aim of achieving an area of at least 10 % of high-diversity areas beneficial for biodiversity, for example hedgerows, buffer strips, areas in which no chemicals are used and temporary fallow land, as well as extensive farmland dedicated to biodiversity on a long-term basis, and promoting interconnectivity between habitats and the creation of green corridors as much as possible in order to maximise the potential for biodiversity;
65. Notes that fur production, which involves the confinement of thousands of undomesticated animals of a similar genotype in close proximity to one another under chronically stressful conditions, can significantly compromise animal welfare and increases their susceptibility to infectious diseases including zoonoses, as has occurred with COVID-19 in mink;

66. Regrets that the EU's commitment to fully respect maximum sustainable yields (MSY) by 2020, a key objective of the common fisheries policy (CFP), has not been achieved; stresses that all fish populations should be restored to levels above those that are able to produce MSY while respecting the precautionary principle, ensuring they exhibit a population age and size distribution indicative of a healthy stock; calls on the Commission and the Member States to commit to the full recovery of marine habitats and fish stocks with respect for MSY using an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management without delay, to improve selectivity and the survival of non-target species, and to reduce the impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems when implementing this approach, including by limiting practices or uses that have detrimental impacts;
67. Recalls also that, according to the new Technical Measures Regulation⁷⁵, the Commission must submit a report to Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2020, and that in cases where there is evidence that the objectives and targets have not been met, the Commission may propose measures;
68. Calls on the Commission to address ocean degradation, eutrophication and acidification by presenting an ambitious action plan to protect marine ecosystems and conserve fisheries resources; considers that all measures, including legislation, should be adopted to reduce potential negative impacts of economic and other activities on marine habitats;
69. Stresses the importance of establishing fish stock recovery areas or no-take zones to allow fish populations to recover, including in nursery and spawning areas; emphasises the importance of prohibiting all fishing and other extractive activities in no-take zones;
70. Strongly supports the objective of zero tolerance of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; points out that IUU fishing has an extremely negative impact on the state of stocks, marine ecosystems, biodiversity and the competitiveness of EU fishers; calls for greater consistency between EU trade and fisheries policies in order to ensure that IUU fishing is tackled effectively;
71. Calls on the Commission to establish an ecosystem approach to all drivers of marine biodiversity loss, which takes account of the pressure of fishing on stocks, biodiversity and marine ecosystems, but also of other factors such as pollution, climate change, shipping and coastal and near-shore uses, including through ecosystem impact assessments of all fishing and other marine activities, taking into account the capacity of ecosystems to contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and prey-predator interactions;
72. Invites the Commission and the Member States to take measures to promote the development and implementation of higher welfare methods of fish capture, landing and slaughter on the basis of the best available science;
73. Considers it important to ensure that fish farming practices are sustainable and based on high fish welfare; believes that aquaculture production should be based on sustainable production methods, such as extensive methods and the use of algae, bivalves, pond farming systems and lagoon aquaculture, which can provide important ecosystem

⁷⁵ OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105.

functions and services, including maintenance of wetland habitats, and reduce pressure on resources and biodiversity, in addition to having lower carbon emissions and providing nutrition; expresses concern about the capture of fish with the sole purpose of feeding carnivorous farmed fish and considers that this fish capture practice should be phased out and replaced with sustainable alternatives; highlights the need to ensure administrative procedures related to aquaculture are clear and can be fully implemented; asks the Commission to update its guidance on aquaculture and Natura 2000 areas if necessary;

74. Notes with concern that widespread physical disturbance of the seafloor continues in coastal EU waters in particular as a result of bottom trawling⁷⁶, which has been identified by the FAO as the gear type that contributes most to annual levels of discard and that has a highly detrimental impact on the seabed depending on the fishery and the particularities of the fished areas⁷⁷; recalls that bottom trawling is one of the most common types of fishing gear in the EU⁷⁸; recalls the existing requirement to cease fishing with bottom-contacting gear below 400 m in areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known or likely to exist; calls on the Commission and Member States, therefore, to ensure full and effective implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/2336⁷⁹, including in relation to seamounts; calls further on the Commission, following limitations in the Mediterranean⁸⁰, to limit, where necessary in order to protect coastal ecosystems, the use of bottom trawling in other coastal areas, including in its upcoming action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems, to ensure the most sustainable and least damaging practices;
75. Stresses that fisheries management plans should take into account the results of scientific studies on the impact of fishing practices on species, habitats, ocean biodiversity and marine environments, and contribute with solutions to resolve the negative impacts identified, including limiting their use or introducing new technical mitigation solutions; stresses further that by-catches of sensitive species should be eliminated or reduced to a level that allows full recovery and that damage to seabed habitats should be minimised;
76. Calls on the Commission to produce a definition of super trawlers and to consider measures restricting their activities in EU waters, in particular prohibiting their activities in protected areas;
77. Considers it essential to establish good cooperation with non-EU countries, in particular neighbouring countries, including promoting monitoring of fisheries resources in non-EU waters in an equivalent manner in order to ensure a healthy ecosystem in marine habitats across borders;

⁷⁶ EEA report entitled 'Marine Messages II', page 34.

⁷⁷ FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper of 19 February 2019 entitled 'A third assessment of global marine fisheries discards'.

⁷⁸ ECA Special Report entitled 'Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline'.

⁷⁹ Regulation (EU) 2016/2336 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the north-east Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the north-east Atlantic (OJ L 354, 23.12.2016 p.1).

⁸⁰ Council Regulation No 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea (OJ L 409, 30.12.2006, p. 11).

78. Recalls that the CFP and the Fisheries Control Regulation⁸¹ provide the EU with a regulatory framework with specific tools for fisheries; expresses the need to ensure socio-economic sustainability for fishers affected by the transition to ecological practices within the blue economy, including on associated training needs; stresses the importance of ensuring adequate funding for these purposes from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and Horizon Europe;
79. Asks the Council to proactively make public all documents related to the adopted regulations on total allowable catches, in line with the European Ombudsman's recommendation in case 640/2019/FP;
80. Recommends that data is continuously gathered so as to better evaluate the sustainability criteria and to prevent fishing zones being established where vulnerable marine ecosystems have been found to exist;
81. Insists that the priority for protected areas must be environmental conservation and restoration and that no activity in these areas should undermine this goal; calls on the Commission and the Member States to prohibit harmful human activity within MPAs; urges the Commission to ensure that sensitivity of species and habitats to human pressures in all sea areas are addressed in national marine spatial plans;
82. Underlines the importance of strengthening and effectively implementing existing MPAs, especially in biodiversity hotspots; calls on the Commission and the Member States to draw up, as a matter of priority, specific management plans for these areas, establishing clear conservation objectives and effective monitoring, surveillance and control measures; urges, in particular, the Member States to expedite the development and submission of joint recommendations for the management of fisheries in their MPAs under Article 11 of the CFP; considers that the effects of climate change on marine species should be fully taken into account; calls further on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to put forward criteria and guidance for appropriate management planning of designated MPAs, including in ecological corridors, based on the best available science, and to facilitate cooperation between Member States;
83. Calls on the Commission to count MPAs in international targets only once they are appropriately managed;
84. Considers that the new MPAs should be included in the Natura 2000 framework and promote ecological connectivity;
85. Highlights that when successful, MPAs offer considerable socio-economic benefits, especially for coastal communities and the fisheries and tourism sector, and that MPAs can perform key ecological functions for the restoration of fish stocks and improve their resilience;
86. Underlines that the new EU Forest Strategy must be aligned and consistent with the European Climate Law and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; emphasises the need for

⁸¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

a holistic and consistent EU Forest Strategy that enhances the multifunctional role of forests and the forest-based sector in the EU and that promotes the far-reaching environmental, societal, economic benefits of forests with full respect for the EU's climate and environmental objectives; emphasises the need for clear prioritisation with climate and biodiversity protection and restoration as central and interconnected objectives in the new EU Forest Strategy; calls for the inclusion in the nature restoration plan of specific binding targets for the restoration and subsequent protection of forest ecosystems, which should also be incorporated into the EU Forest Strategy; considers that the various circumstances at local, regional and Member State levels should be taken into account;

87. Stresses the need for the EU Forest Strategy to observe the principle of subsidiarity and recognise the EU's competencies in the area of protection of the environment, including forests recalls that, under Article 191 of the TFEU, EU policy on the environment must contribute, among other objectives, to preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment and to prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources; recalls that several pieces of EU legislation affect forests and forest management;
88. Calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure the highest standards of environmental protection of forests in their internal and external policies;
89. Stresses that the new EU Forest Strategy should promote sustainable forest management; recalls that the EU and its Member States have committed to apply the definition and principles of sustainable forest management; notes, however, that the Commission is developing an EU-level definition of sustainable forest management, which should be based on the highest sustainability standards, with protection of biodiversity and valuable carbon sinks as central elements, and calls in this regard for biodiversity-related indicators and thresholds to further develop this concept; welcomes the fact that the Commission intends to prepare guidelines on close-to-nature forestry that should be incorporated in the implementation of sustainable forest management;
90. Underlines the role of forests in contributing to the EU's climate targets; considers that the circular and cascading use of forest and other biomass resources that does not compromise on scientifically underpinned protection and restoration action and climate action should be prioritised; considers the use of wood as a building material as one good example;
91. Underlines the need to revise and align EU rules on the use of biomass for energy production with the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the European Climate Law, notably as part of the Renewable Energy Directive and the delegated acts under the Taxonomy Regulation;
92. Welcomes the commitment to plant at least three billion additional trees in the EU; stresses that the EU's tree planting initiatives should be based on clear ecological principles, proforestation, sustainable reforestation, greening of urban and peri-urban areas, restoration, enhancement of connectivity and agroforestry, in line with the latest scientific knowledge; calls on the Commission to ensure that these initiatives are carried out only in a manner compatible with and conducive to the biodiversity objectives, making sure that this planting does not replace existing old-growth and biodiverse

forests, and contributing to making sure forests are resilient, mixed and healthy;

93. Recalls its positions detailed in its resolution on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation; calls on the Commission to urgently present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on mandatory due diligence that ensures that value chains are sustainable and that products or commodities placed on the EU market do not result in or derive from deforestation, forest degradation, ecosystem conversion or degradation or human rights violations; notes that such an EU legal framework should also be extended to cover high-carbon stock and biodiversity-rich ecosystems other than forests, such as marine and coastal ecosystems, wetlands, peatlands and savannahs, so as to avoid pressure being shifted to these landscapes;
94. Asks the Commission to investigate the possibility of creating a legal framework, primarily within the World Trade Organization (WTO), allowing for the prohibition of trade in certain raw materials, products and services that endanger biodiversity;
95. Stresses that the environmental footprint of the EU's production and consumption should urgently be reduced in order to stay within planetary boundaries; calls on the Commission to propose binding EU targets for 2030 to significantly reduce the EU's material and consumption footprints and bring them within planetary boundaries by 2050⁸²; supports the Commission in taking a life-cycle approach to measuring the environmental footprint of products and organisations; considers that plastic production and use should be reduced; considers that economic activities affecting and exploiting ecosystems and their biodiversity should incorporate all possible safeguards to mitigate their negative impact on these ecosystems;

Climate change

96. Expresses its concern that the majority of the ranges of terrestrial species will decrease significantly in a 1.5 to 2 °C global warming scenario and that marine species will be equally threatened, especially since these temperature increases will most likely be exceeded with the current trajectories; reiterates, therefore, the need to significantly increase the EU's ambitions, prioritising nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in meeting climate mitigation goals and in adaptation strategies and to increase the protection of terrestrial and marine natural carbon sinks in the EU as a complementary measure to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions;
97. Calls on the Commission to assess the impact of climate change on the abundance and geographical distribution of species, to take this assessment into account when implementing the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and to help the Member States to incorporate the results into their national policies and in future reporting under the nature directives;
98. Highlights the essential role played by healthy ocean ecosystems in halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and in mitigating climate change; calls for the conservation and restoration of carbon-rich ocean habitats to improve carbon storage, coastal protection and the resilience of marine species and fisheries to climate change;

⁸² European Parliament resolution on the New Circular Economy Action Plan .

calls further for their inclusion in effectively managed MPAs;

99. Calls on the Commission, following the adoption of the European Climate Law⁸³ and considering the important role of natural carbon sinks in achieving climate neutrality, to propose an ambitious science-based EU 2030 target for the removal of greenhouse gas emissions by natural carbon sinks, which should be consistent with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and set in legislation; recalls, furthermore, that a swift reduction of emissions must remain the priority;
100. Calls on the Commission to present as soon as possible a long-term EU action plan on climate and biodiversity, including on the respective targets, that improves coordination and ensures coherence, sustainability and interconnections for future actions, and includes commitments under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, its nationally determined contributions and the SDGs; underlines the importance of formally coordinating, as soon as possible, the monitoring, reporting and reviewing of climate and biodiversity plans; highlights that resilient and healthy ecosystems are crucial in tackling and adapting to climate change and that synergies between biodiversity and climate policies should be ensured in the actions under the European Climate Pact;
101. Welcomes the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change; considers that the actions taken under the adaptation strategy should be fully aligned with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and with the measures on prevention and preparedness for natural disasters under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism;
102. Furthermore endorses ecosystem-based approaches as defined in the CBD, which offer a holistic strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way;
103. Stresses that the term ‘nature-based solutions’ should be better defined and that this definition should ensure biodiversity and ecosystem integrity are not compromised; calls, therefore, for a clearer definition to be developed at EU level as well as guidelines and tools on the use of nature-based solutions in order to maximise nature connectivity as well as benefits and synergies between biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
104. Notes that nature-based solutions are still absent in many national climate strategies; believes that a multi-stakeholder platform on nature-based solutions could help strengthen synergies across multilateral international conventions on biodiversity and climate change and support the achievement of the SDGs;

Pollution

105. Welcomes the Commission’s targets of reducing the use of more hazardous and chemical pesticides by 50 % and losses of nutrients from fertilisers by 50 %, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20 % by 2030, which should all be set in

⁸³ Provisional agreement on a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) (COM(2020)0080 – C9 0077/2020 – 2020/0036(COD)).

legislation and revised for the post-2030 period with a view to continuing the reductions and making long-term commitments; calls for an effective assessment of these targets on the basis of specific milestones;

106. Calls on the Commission to set clear and ambitious baselines for these targets and, together with the Member States, determine for each Member State fair contributions to the EU-wide targets reflecting their different starting points and circumstances; insists that each Member State should implement robust measures to meet their targets;
107. Opposes the reauthorisation of the active substance glyphosate after 31 December 2022; calls on all Member States to carry out the relevant preparatory work to provide all farmers with viable alternative solutions after the ban of glyphosate;
108. Recalls its resolution of 16 January 2019 on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides⁸⁴, and expects the Commission and the Member States to address all its calls without delay; calls on the Commission to include in its revision of the implementing measures of the Plant Protection Products framework provisions to support the EU-wide pesticide reduction objective, such as by strengthening and clarifying the environmental criteria for granting market access to pesticides; stresses that when EFSA concludes that there are unacceptable impacts on the environment, an approval decision should not be granted; calls on the Commission to make regulatory risk data more transparent and accessible;
109. Considers that the derogation envisaged in Article 53(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 should be clarified and only be applied for health and environmental reasons; deplores that this derogation is being used to undermine the ban on all outdoor uses of three neonicotinoids;
110. Calls on the Commission to swiftly finalise the revision of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides⁸⁵, including therein the pesticide reduction targets, and to take all measures to ensure that Member States commit to its implementation, including in their national action plans;
111. Notes that widespread use of pesticides leads to pesticide resistance, which is a significant problem that makes pesticides less effective; points out that increased use of and dependency on pesticides comes at a high cost to farmers; notes that in avoiding biodiversity loss and pest resistance, a hierarchy of action should be followed, in line with the eight principles of integrated pest management found in Annex III to Directive 2009/128/EC, according to which chemical pesticides must only be used as a last resort;
112. Regrets that the assessment of the impacts of chemicals on the environment and biodiversity tends to be underestimated and undervalued in the socio-economic analysis during the authorisation process under REACH; is concerned by the continuous use and authorisation of hazardous chemicals with negative impacts on the environment or in cases of missing safety data on environmental endpoints; calls on the Commission, in its

⁸⁴ OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 48.

⁸⁵ Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides (OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71).

role as risk manager, to take greater consideration of the impacts of chemicals, including their chronic and long-term effects, on the environment and biodiversity;

113. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure equal standards and effective checks on agricultural products imported from non-EU countries;
114. Calls on the Commission to review Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides⁸⁶ to incorporate animal health and environmental risks as criteria of the legislation;
115. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has committed to working with the Member States and stakeholders to ensure that from the outset, the national strategic plans for agriculture fully reflect the ambition of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, which includes an increased level of ambition to reduce significantly the use and risk of chemical pesticides, as well as the use of fertilisers and antibiotics; emphasises the importance of pursuing these targets in holistic and circular ways, such as by adopted agro-ecological approaches like integrated production and organic farming, including crop rotation; stresses also the contribution of precision agriculture, digitalisation and other tools for the reduction and efficient use of pesticides, fertilisers and nutrients;
116. Underlines that the EU agriculture, fishing and forest sectors have an important role to play in the protection and restoration of nature and must be fully involved in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; stresses that the implementation measures should be accompanied by well-defined support, training programmes and a toolbox of sustainable, safe, effective and affordable solutions and alternatives, as well as access to the latest knowledge, technology and advisory services; underscores, furthermore, the contribution that positive incentives and the exchange of best practices can make to the implementation of the strategy;
117. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 are fully reflected in the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and in the upcoming zero pollution action plan, which should also address light and noise pollution, including underwater noise; stresses the importance of tackling pollution at source as a priority while ensuring the use of best available technologies;
118. Calls on the Commission to set an ambitious reduction target for 2030 on the use of outdoor artificial light and to propose guidelines on how artificial light at night can be reduced by the Member States;
119. Stresses the need for the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to include dedicated measures on reducing pollution with a direct impact on biodiversity and health, such as plastic, microplastic and chemical pollution; calls on the Commission to ensure the swift implementation of all actions of the new circular economy action plan and related

⁸⁶ Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin (OJ L 70, 16.3.2005, p. 1).

legislation;

Invasive alien species (IAS)

120. Expresses concern about the fact that IAS pose a severe threat to the environment, livelihoods and food security, irreversibly damaging protected areas and their biodiversity, and that this is being exacerbated by climate change;
121. Regrets that the list of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern represents less than 6 % of the IAS present in the EU; calls on the Commission to step up action and ensure that IAS that affect threatened species are included in the list; calls further on the Commission to improve prevention by introducing mandatory risk assessments prior to the first import of non-native species and by proposing EU-wide white lists of species permitted for import, keeping, breeding and trade as pets on the basis of a scientific risk assessment and ecological characteristics in the EU as soon as possible;
122. Highlights that the exotic pet trade is one of the main pathways for introducing IAS and that apart from this, the introduction of IAS is also linked to other stressors such as terrestrial and marine transport and marine litter; calls for the development of additional measures at EU level on the prevention, control and eradication of IAS, including drawing up specific plans for those affecting critically endangered species; stresses the need for sufficient human, technical and financial resources to support prevention and help affected areas to tackle existing and newly introduced IAS;
123. Regrets that only one marine species has been included in the List of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern⁸⁷; calls on the Commission to address this disproportionately low number of marine IAS to ensure proper alignment with Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014⁸⁸;

Funding, mainstreaming and governance framework

124. Highlights that the societal and environmental benefits of prevention and restoration exceed the investment costs; calls on the Commission to ensure effective biodiversity mainstreaming and proofing across EU spending and programmes on the basis of the EU taxonomy; calls for the effective application of the ‘do no significant harm’ principle across EU spending and programmes; calls on the Commission to provide a comprehensive assessment of how the EUR 20 billion per year as a minimum needed for nature could be mobilised, to make corresponding proposals for the EU’s annual budget and to examine the need for a dedicated funding instrument for TEN-N; notes the agreement to mainstream spending for biodiversity of 7.5 % from 2024 and 10 % from 2026 onwards; considers that efforts should be made to reach at least 10 % annual spending on biodiversity under the multiannual financial framework as soon as possible from 2021 onwards; stresses the need to ensure consistency between climate and biodiversity funding; urges the Member States to include biodiversity actions in the

⁸⁷ Tsiamis, K. et al., ‘[Prioritizing marine invasive alien species in the European Union through horizon scanning](#)’, *Aquatic Conservation – Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, Vol. 30, No 4, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Chichester, 2020.

⁸⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).

recovery and resilience plans; insists that biodiversity-related EU spending should be tracked in accordance with an effective, transparent and comprehensive methodology to be set out by the Commission, in cooperation with the European Parliament and the Council;

125. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to assess by 2022 which subsidies are harmful to the environment, with a view to phasing them out without further delay; calls for the reorientation of financial incentives towards biodiversity-positive investments and taxation systems towards an increased use of environmental taxation and environmental revenues;
126. Recalls the EU's commitment to fulfil the objectives of the Paris Agreement; calls on the Commission and the Member States to end all indirect and direct fossil fuel subsidies as early as possible and by 2025 at the latest;
127. Considers that the phasing out of fossil fuel and other environmentally harmful subsidies should also be supported globally through the EU's trade policy and green diplomacy, including through an agreement on a roadmap with milestones for each trade partner;
128. Recalls that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has estimated that governments globally spend approximately USD 500 billion per year on support that is potentially harmful to biodiversity, i.e. five to six times more than total spending on biodiversity⁸⁹;
129. Calls on the Commission to provide clear guidelines and incentives to mobilise private finance for biodiversity and to align investments with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; calls further on the Commission to provide an ambitious and forward-looking framework integrating legislative measures and financial incentives for both the public and private sector to support the achievement of the goals and targets under the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 as part of the upcoming renewed sustainable finance strategy; calls on the Commission to take action on sustainable corporate procurement;
130. Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure policy coherence and align EU and national policies with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; calls further for all treaty principles to be upheld throughout EU policies, in particular the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle;
131. Highlights the need for a legally binding biodiversity governance framework – a biodiversity law – following a comprehensive impact assessment which steers a path to 2050 through a set of objectives, including targets for 2030 and the COP15 commitments, and which establishes a monitoring mechanism with SMART indicators, within and beyond protected areas; calls on the Commission to submit a legal proposal to this end in 2022; stresses that ensuring sufficient human and financial resources will be critical for effective governance;
132. Calls on the Commission to consider establishing an independent scientific European

⁸⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report of April 2020 entitled 'A Comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance'.

panel on biodiversity or similar body to assess the consistency of EU measures with the ambition of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and to make policy recommendations accordingly, avoiding any potential overlap with policies of the EEA or other EU and international bodies;

133. Recalls that Article 37 of the Charter reflects the principle of ensuring environmental protection in EU legislation; considers that the right to a healthy environment should be recognised in the Charter and that the EU should lead the initiative to recognise a similar right internationally;

Research, innovation and education

134. Calls on the Commission to reinforce biodiversity within EU youth programmes such as the European Voluntary Service, and to launch a Green Erasmus programme as part of the overall Erasmus programme focused on the exchange of knowledge, students and professionals in the field of restoration and conservation;
135. Highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the composition of biodiversity, its impacts on the functioning of ecosystems, and ecosystem resilience; considers that both basic and applied research on biodiversity should be increased and underlines that sufficient funding for this should be secured; calls for the inclusion of biodiversity research in different EU and national funding programmes; reiterates its calls for a specific mission dedicated to biodiversity within the EU research programme; underlines the need for a substantial increase in funding for public research;
136. Stresses the importance of more research on biogeographical regions and the taxonomy of organisms, as well as on the impact of deforestation and biodiversity loss on essential services, such as food provision; underlines the need to improve knowledge about the links between disease emergence on the one hand and legal and illegal wildlife trade, conservation and ecosystem degradation on the other;
137. Strongly believes that further research should be conducted on oceans, given that they remain largely unexplored; calls the Commission in this regard to play a major role in the UN's Decade of Ocean Science and to follow the recommendations made by Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters; considers that funding should also be provided for deep-sea ecosystems and biodiversity;
138. Encourages research on sustainable agricultural innovation, technologies and production methods and practices for farmers that improve biodiversity and ecosystem health, including on digitalisation, sustainable agroforestry, low-risk biological alternatives to chemical pesticides and pesticide-free agriculture;
139. Considers that increased research efforts should also cover the social and economic impacts and opportunities of conservation policies, soil biodiversity and the melting of glaciers and permafrost;
140. Welcomes the creation of the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity and the new EU Soil Observatory;
141. Underlines the importance of allocating adequate resources on data collection and the

development of indicators for supporting capacity-building and enhancing cooperation on biodiversity among stakeholders; recognises the potential of digitalisation, big data and AI to improve our understanding and knowledge about biodiversity;

142. Calls on the Commission to support the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in research and innovation efforts to contribute to the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
143. Believes that knowledge about the environment should be an integral part of education; supports the establishment of protected areas also for educational purposes; stresses that participative sciences and awareness-raising should be supported, *inter alia* to show society the need to protect and restore biodiversity;

Post-2020 global biodiversity framework, international action, trade and ocean governance

144. Recalls the position expressed in its resolution on COP15 on biodiversity and the need for a post-2020 multilateral binding agreement similar to the Paris Agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, with SMART targets and indicators, a robust implementation framework and a science-based, independent and transparent review mechanism; believes that 2021 represents a watershed moment for biodiversity globally and that the EU should act as a global leader and push for a high level of ambition, matching or exceeding its own, during the negotiations, including legally binding global restoration and protection targets of at least 30% by 2030; welcomes, in this regard, the commitment by the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People to protect 30% of land and sea worldwide; underlines the need to support low-income countries in the implementation of this new framework; stresses the importance of further commitments by the private sector to protect and restore biodiversity;
145. Calls on the Commission to push for ambitious and clear global long-term targets; reiterates its position that in the negotiations the EU should potentially call for protecting half of the planet by 2050⁹⁰;
146. Supports the development of an international treaty on pandemics under the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen resilience to future pandemics; notes that one of the recommendations of the IPBES workshop on biodiversity and pandemics is the formation of a high-level intergovernmental council on pandemic prevention that would facilitate cooperation among governments, including by providing policy-relevant scientific information and coordinating the design of a monitoring framework, and lay the groundwork for potential goals working at the crossroads of the three Rio conventions; calls for the EU and the Member States to promote the establishment of such a council in the COP15, which should work in synergy with existing bodies such as the WHO;
147. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to request an IPCC special report on biodiversity and climate change;
148. Is concerned about the new legal, environmental, biosafety and governance challenges that might arise from the release of genetically engineered gene drive organisms into the

⁹⁰ European Parliament resolution on COP15.

environment, including for nature conservation purposes; acknowledges the outcome of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity on gene drives and living modified fish⁹¹, which raises concerns about the difficulties of predicting their behaviour, assessing their risks and controlling them after release; notes that gene drive organisms could become invasive species in themselves; considers that global and EU-level risk assessment guidance materials, tools and an environmental monitoring framework, as well as clear global governance and effective mechanisms for controlling and reversing the effects of gene drive organisms, should be fully developed, and that additional research is required on the health, environmental, ecological, ethical and other implications of gene drive organisms to better understand their potential impact; considers therefore that no releases of genetically engineered gene drive organisms should be allowed, including for nature conservation purposes, in line with the precautionary principle⁹²;

149. Emphasises the potential of using green diplomacy, trade policy and multilateral action to promote the protection of biodiversity outside of Europe; expresses its support for the ‘UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration’ (2021-2031) and calls on the Commission and the Member States to effectively integrate the protection of the environment and biodiversity in all external action;
150. Invites the Commission to lead the efforts on an international agreement on the management of natural resources to stay within ‘planetary boundaries’ for natural resource use;
151. Emphasises that the degradation of and stress on ecosystems is harming overall efforts towards sustainable development and is undermining progress towards the achievement of most of the 2030 SDGs, in particular the objectives of ending poverty and hunger, ensuring access to water and sanitation, achieving food security, ensuring healthy lives and reducing socio-economic inequalities within and among countries;
152. Stresses that climate change and environmental degradation increasingly interact with the drivers of human displacement, since populations are being forcibly displaced from their homes by the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters; points out that, due to climate change and biodiversity loss, such crises will multiply in the decades to come unless swift and effective action is taken now; stresses that the EU must be ready for climate-induced displacement and displacement from environmental degradation and disasters and recognises the need for adequate measures to be taken to protect the human rights of affected populations;
153. Calls on the Commission to facilitate, in particular, capacity-building, including knowledge transfer, technology sharing and skills training for beneficiary countries to implement the CBD, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other conventions and agreements essential to the protection of biodiversity under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and Aid for Trade; insists on the need to strengthen cooperation programmes with non-EU countries for the conservation of their native biodiversity, including interparliamentary dialogue, and to assist developing countries in

⁹¹ Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group of the CBD of 15 April 2020 on risk assessment.

⁹² Ibid.

implementing them; calls further for joint management of transboundary ecosystems and migratory routes and species to be improved and for the potential of transferring risks of biodiversity loss to other parts of the world to be reduced;

154. Welcomes initiatives such as the African ‘Great Green Wall’ and calls on the Commission to develop similar initiatives for other regions and to support international initiatives to restore biodiversity around the world, while extending Key Biodiversity Areas aimed at fostering the resilience of developing countries to climate change; considers that the new NDICI could act as an important driver of change for biodiversity restoration and preservation worldwide; considers that in the new NDICI a substantial contribution of the budget should be used for biodiversity restoration and preservation, contributing to the overall biodiversity mainstreaming target;
155. Believes that indigenous and local knowledge is crucial to effectively protect biodiversity and recalls that the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land recognises the critical role played by indigenous peoples and local communities in environmental conservation; urges the Commission and the Member States to continue to work with the international community to recognise their contribution in the protection of biodiversity, to guarantee their rights, and to support their participation in decision-making processes; calls further on the Member States to ratify without delay the International Labour Organization (ILO)’s Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989 (ILO Convention No 169);
156. Supports the efforts by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment to develop guidance on human rights obligations relating to the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity; calls on the EU Member States and institutions to support and advocate for the global implementation of the 2018 framework principles on human rights and the environment presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment; also calls for the EU to support the UN Environment Programme’s environmental rights initiative;
157. Encourages the EU and the Member States to promote the recognition of ecocide as an international crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC);
158. Welcomes the Commission's commitments to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of biodiversity provisions in all EU trade agreements and to better assess their impacts on biodiversity; welcomes further the fact that the new trade strategy ‘calls for closer policy integration between trade policies and internal EU policies’, and recognises that ‘the preservation of biodiversity is a global challenge that requires global efforts’⁹³; underlines that the contribution of trade to drastic biodiversity loss has been inadequately addressed both by the structure of existing free trade agreements (FTAs) and current WTO rules; calls on the Commission therefore to consider specific and concrete measures without delay to ensure that EU trade agreements do not cause or threaten to cause biodiversity loss, and for EU trade policy to be effectively aligned with its Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
159. Calls further on the Commission to ensure that all new and future trade and investment

⁹³ Commission communication of 18 February 2021 entitled ‘Trade Policy Review – An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy’ (COM(2021)0066).

agreements are fully compatible with the European Green Deal, the Paris Agreement, the EU's biodiversity commitments and the SDGs, containing binding and enforceable chapters on trade and sustainable development, and including safeguards and effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for non-compliance, including the possibility of reintroducing tariffs; calls on the Commission furthermore to promote similar measures in existing trade and investment agreements;

160. Stresses the importance of systematically including, together with the economic and social dimension, a biodiversity dimension in all sustainability impact assessments (SIAs) which must follow a more robust methodology than previously, as suggested by Commission studies available, and consistently factor in biodiversity issues; calls for SIAs to be performed as part of the scoping exercise phase on future free trade and investment agreements; calls for SIAs to be regularly updated as negotiations develop in order to adequately identify, assess and address possible risks to biodiversity in the region concerned as well as in the EU as early as possible, and for them to shape relevant bilateral commitments outlined in the negotiations;
161. Calls on the Commission to ensure that trade and sustainable development chapters include a roadmap with concrete and verifiable commitments upon which progress in other chapters will be made; stresses the importance of systematically conducting regular ex post sustainability evaluations and impact assessments of trade agreements to ensure consistency with the EU's international commitments on biodiversity; invites the Commission to update existing chapters of trade and investment agreements by making use of active and timely review clauses to ensure alignment of existing FTAs with the European Green Deal at the earliest opportunity, and to present its results and planned adjustments to Parliament;
162. Asks that in its draft mandate for future agreements and when it reviews current agreements, the Council make the CBD an essential element of FTAs provided that mandatory mechanisms for reviewing national targets are agreed upon; asks the Council to also make the CITES and the Paris Agreement essential elements of FTAs, and to emphasise the need for their effective implementation; highlights the importance of the upcoming reform of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Regulation in providing for effective implementation of multilateral conventions on climate and environmental aspects covered by the regulation, including the CBD;
163. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make sure that imported products meet the same standards required of European producers, in order to protect the environment and biodiversity, and to ensure respect for human and labour rights; stresses the need to promote a global level playing field and to take measures to prevent the potential displacement of biodiversity losses abroad; calls on the Commission to provide a study on the effects of EU exports and their production methods on biodiversity;
164. Calls on the Commission to take action to prohibit the export from the EU of hazardous substances banned in the EU, in line with the 'do no harm principle', the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the European Green Deal;

165. Supports the Commission in its desire to raise and extend awareness about and promote, in international discussions on trade and the environment, an interpretation of relevant WTO provisions that recognises the right of members to provide effective responses to global environmental challenges, particularly climate change and the protection of biodiversity, notably via the use of non-product related process and production methods; believes, furthermore, that the EU should work to include binding levels of biodiversity protection in the upcoming work on WTO reform; encourages the Commission to consider the inclusion of expertise on trade and environment in disputes arising from conflicts between trade commitments and environmental protection exceptions; urges the Commission to promote this proposal in the context of its WTO climate and trade initiative; asks for an independent in-depth analysis of the effects of the remaining investor-state dispute settlement and investment court system provisions in trade agreements;
166. Regrets the implementation gaps of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations as they do not cover all critical species and do not provide the same protection for captive-bred animals; calls on the Commission to jointly address legal commercial trade and illegal trade in the review of the EU Wildlife Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, which should be fully in line with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and receive adequate funding, including assistance to non-EU countries and to wildlife rescue centres and sanctuaries; calls further on the Commission to propose legislation to ensure that the import, transshipment, purchase and sale of wildlife taken, processed, transported or sold in violation of laws in the country of origin is prohibited;
167. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to lead efforts to end the commercial trade in endangered species and their parts; stresses the importance of developing SMART targets to this end; reiterates its call for the full and immediate ban at European level of trade, export or re-export within the EU and to destinations outside the EU of ivory⁹⁴, including ‘pre-convention’ ivory, and asks for similar restrictions for other endangered species, such as tigers and rhinos; calls for the implementation of such a ban without further delay in 2021;
168. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to assist the global community in addressing risks linked to commercial trade and sales of wild animals; calls on the Commission to use the regulatory dialogues provided for in FTAs to promote stringent EU sanitary and phytosanitary standards and animal welfare in order to minimise the risks of future epidemics and pandemics; calls further on the Commission to consider, if necessary, the adoption of a moratorium on imports of wild animals or other species from emerging infectious disease hotspots in order to address any safety concerns;
169. Notes with deep concern that marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980, affecting directly at least 267 species and human health; expresses concern at the pollution caused by microplastics and nanoplastics and at their impact on marine biodiversity; underlines the need for synergies between the Circular Economy Action Plan and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
170. Calls for the EU to lead negotiations for a global agreement on plastics, including on

⁹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2016 on EU action plan against wildlife trafficking (OJ C 224, 27.6.2018, p. 117).

plastic-free oceans by 2030, with binding targets;

171. Takes note of the failure of the WTO members to conclude the negotiations on fisheries subsidies by the end of 2020; deeply regrets the failure to achieve the commitment under the SDGs (SDG 14.6) of phasing out harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020; supports the call for a global agreement to ban harmful fisheries subsidies; calls therefore for the EU to play a more prominent role in the negotiations and on the Commission to guarantee that fisheries provisions in trade agreements are consistent with protecting marine biodiversity;
172. Stresses that oceans should be recognised at international level as a global common resource with a view to ensuring their protection; calls further for the EU to push for the adoption of an ambitious global ocean treaty to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction worldwide in the next session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction and for an intergovernmental panel on oceans;
173. Stresses the need to achieve an integrated EU maritime policy framework that ensures consistency between marine biodiversity, climate policy and the CFP;
174. Highlights that the deep sea is believed to have the highest biodiversity on Earth and provides critical environmental services, including long-term carbon sequestration; points out that deep-seabed mining is highly likely to cause inevitable and permanent biodiversity loss; stresses that the precautionary principle must apply to the emerging deep seabed mining sector; recalls its resolution of 16 January 2018 on international ocean governance⁹⁵ and calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote a moratorium, including at the International Seabed Authority, on deep-seabed mining until such time as the effects of deep-sea mining on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities at sea have been studied and researched sufficiently and deep seabed mining can be managed to ensure no marine biodiversity loss nor degradation of marine ecosystems; emphasises the need for the Commission to cease funding for the development of seabed mining technology in line with a circular economy based on minimising, reusing and recycling minerals and metals;
175. Reiterates its call⁹⁶ on the Member States and the Commission to work through the International Seabed Authority in order to ensure transparency in its working methods as well as the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects and the protection and preservation of the marine environment, as required under Parts XI and XII of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and calls on the Member States to assume a proactive and progressive role within international bodies in order to put forward transparency reforms and increase the overall environmental ambition of actions undertaken;
176. Notes the critical importance of whale populations to marine ecosystems and carbon sequestration; recalls its strong support for the continuation of the global moratorium on

⁹⁵ European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2018 entitled 'international ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context' (OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 9).

⁹⁶ European Parliament resolution on international ocean governance .

commercial whaling and the ban on international commercial trade in whale products⁹⁷; regrets Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission (IWC); urges Norway and Japan to cease its whaling operations; calls for the EU and the Member States to urge the IWC to formally address Norway's commercial whaling activities;

177. Calls on the Faroe Islands to stop its controversial annual hunt on pilot whales, also known as the Grindadráp; calls on the European Commission and Member States to continuously engage with the Faroe Islands on this issue with a view of abolishing the practice;

Implementation and enforcement of nature legislation

178. Urges the Member States to fully implement and comply with the obligations set out in existing EU environmental legislation; calls on the Commission to more swiftly, effectively, and transparently, including through the regular follow-up of cases, pursue infringement procedures to remedy all cases of non-compliance, and to improve by 2022 its public database in order for the steps taken by Member States and the Commission in response to environmental infringements to be tracked in a clearly understandable and accessible way; calls further on the Commission to allocate sufficient resources in order to overcome the current delays; believes that a sufficient level of qualified staff and resources is crucial for the successful implementation and enforcement of EU policies;
179. Calls on the Commission, more specifically, to swiftly pursue infringement procedures on illegal logging cases, collaborating with other European organisations such as the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), and on non-compliance with the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in order to meet the requirements to achieve Good Environmental Status for European seas and waters;
180. Calls on the Member States, including regional and local authorities, to speed up implementation and enforcement, and on Member State governments to update their national biodiversity strategies and to submit biennial implementation reports to the Commission on the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 at national level; calls on the Commission to conduct a mid-term evaluation and to review the strategy if needed;
181. Stresses that implementing and enforcing EU legislation throughout the Member States is also important to provide a stable and transparent regulatory framework for stakeholders, including economic operators; urges the Commission and the Member States to achieve the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 in the most effective way, while avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens;
182. Believes that the fight against environmental crime needs to be strengthened in Member States and across their borders; considers that there are major disparities in EU Member States that prevent criminal environmental law from being effective; urges the Commission therefore to revise the Environmental Crime Directive in order to address these disparities; calls for environmental crimes and offences, such as IUU fishing, and wildlife crime to be recognised as serious crimes that should be adequately penalised with strong deterrents, especially in the context of organised crime; calls on the

⁹⁷ European Parliament resolution on whale hunting in Norway.

Commission furthermore to explore the possibility of adding a protocol on wildlife crime to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

183. Emphasises the importance of liability in the event of breaches of legislation or damage to the environment; calls for the Environmental Liability Directive to be revised as soon as possible and to be transformed into a fully harmonised regulation;
184. Expresses its deep concern at the situation of environmental defenders and activists, especially in developing countries and calls on the Commission and the Member States to support them across the world;
185. Urges the Commission to define a specific protection and support strategy for local communities and defenders of environmental human rights and land rights, which should be coordinated across all external assistance programmes; also calls for enhanced support for civil society organisations working to protect the environment and biodiversity, in particular through the establishment of partnerships and the building up of capacity to defend the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities;
186. Reiterates that Member States must ensure the conservation of Natura 2000 areas and the maintenance or restoration of the favourable conservation status of protected species and habitats; calls for the Habitats Directive to be fully implemented aligning conservation actions with the latest technical and scientific progress; is aware of the issues arising from the coexistence of livestock farming with large carnivores in some Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States therefore to take adequate measures to address socio-economic conflicts linked to the coexistence with large predators, such as preventive and compensation measures, ensuring their protection; notes the existence of clear guidelines for implementing these measures, in compliance with Directive 92/43/EU, including on wolf hybridisation;
187. Underlines that the successful implementation of the strategy depends on the involvement of all relevant actors and sectors; underlines the need to involve and incentivise these actors and sectors to advance the goals of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; calls on the Commission to create a stakeholder platform for discussion with the various stakeholders and communities represented and to ensure an inclusive, equitable and just transition; believes that this platform should facilitate active and representative participation of communities and stakeholders in the decision-making process;
188. Stresses that it is essential for the upcoming Non Financial Reporting Directive review to integrate requirements covering both climate and biodiversity requirements;

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

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Biodiversity is the basis for the functioning of ecosystems and life on our planet. The supply of clean water and air, the provision of essential resources and human and animal health are dependent on biodiversity and a healthy environment.

Unfortunately, despite their importance, the latest biodiversity reports paint a depressing picture. The IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services⁹⁸ warns that one million species are in danger of extinction and the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report⁹⁹ reveals that none of the Aichi Targets have been met. Similarly, the *Era of Pandemics* report¹⁰⁰ warns that the alarming degradation of ecosystems and human beings' current relationship with nature is increasing the risk of pandemics.

We therefore need to change our interaction with nature, our society and our economy, starting by limiting human activities that lead to the transformation and destruction of ecosystems. At European level, the Biodiversity Strategy and the European Green Deal are the basis for this, while at international level the new global framework to be adopted at the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be a great opportunity – perhaps the last opportunity – to reverse the process.

Drivers of biodiversity loss

While there are many factors that lead to biodiversity loss, scientists have highlighted five main direct drivers: changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasion of alien species. If the situation is to be remedied, these drivers need to be properly addressed.

Changes in land and sea use

Although soil biodiversity is the basis for key ecological processes, there is no specific legislation in the EU to protect soil; rather, agricultural, industrial and water regulations have been fragmented in order to preserve it. The Commission therefore needs to put forward a legislative proposal establishing a common framework for the protection and sustainable use of soil.

Desertification must also be tackled. The EU is party to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, under which it has committed to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030; an EU-level strategy on desertification and land degradation is therefore needed to deliver on this commitment.

In addition, urbanisation and its effects on biodiversity need to be addressed. Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure make cities more resilient, hence a strategic approach is needed to improve the use of funding and its integration into EU policies and legislation. Likewise, given the importance of green infrastructure for the connectivity of protected areas,

⁹⁸ <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>

⁹⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>

¹⁰⁰ <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

a Trans-European Green Infrastructure Network (TEN-G), linked to the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N), is necessary.

Direct exploitation of organisms

In the context of the Aichi Targets, the EU had undertaken to halve the annual loss of natural forests by 2020, although a new FAO report is warning that another 25 years will be needed to achieve this goal.¹⁰¹ Forests are unique ecosystems that host 60 000 species of trees and almost a third of the earth's amphibians, birds and mammals, and are invaluable in natural processes such as carbon absorption or temperature regulation. All primary and old-growth forests in the EU must therefore be rigorously protected.

Forests are a common heritage of the Union¹⁰² and the future Forest Strategy must therefore be aligned with the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy. Specific targets should be set for the restoration of forests, as only 15% of forest habitats of European interest have favourable conservation status.

The impact of farming on biodiversity is undeniable, as is the importance of the agricultural sector in the EU. Together with the fisheries sector, the agricultural sector will have to undergo profound changes in order to adapt to the new models needed for the green transition. This will require support and training.

It is imperative to achieve the targets of a 25% use of agricultural land for organic farming and the return of at least 10% of agricultural land to highly diverse landscape features. Both of these targets need to be incorporated into legislation to become legally binding.

Despite all the efforts already made by the fisheries sector in Europe, further efforts are needed to ensure that all fishing activities are subject to maximum sustainable yield levels, to avoid incidental catches of sensitive species and to have fisheries management measures in all marine protected areas, for which the primary objective should be the conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

In terms of production and consumption, more than 90% of global biodiversity loss is caused by the extraction and processing of material resources. If we continue our production and consumption patterns, we will be consuming as if we were three planets in 2050.¹⁰³ The EU must therefore set a target to reduce the use of primary raw materials.

Climate change

According to the IPBES report, 16% of species are at risk of extinction in a 4.3°C warming scenario and the decline in species would be drastic even in a 1.5°C to 2°C scenario.

Marine and terrestrial ecosystems absorb around 60% of global anthropogenic emissions per year, and nature-based solutions will be responsible for 37% of climate change mitigation by 2030.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8642en/CA8642EN.pdf>

¹⁰² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=ecli:ECLI:EU:C:2018:255>

¹⁰³ [A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe](#)

¹⁰⁴ https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/ipbes_7_10_add.1_en_1.pdf

This shows that biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are interlinked and need to be tackled together. In this respect, a joint long-term climate and biodiversity action plan is needed that will improve the coherence and interconnection of future measures and integrate the EU's commitments under the CBD and the Paris Agreement.

Pollution

An integrated approach that also includes light and noise pollution is needed to tackle polluting factors such as emissions, chemicals or nutrients and their impact on biodiversity. In order to achieve this, the future Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the actions under the Chemicals strategy needs to be aligned with the Biodiversity Strategy.

In order to make legislative proposals binding, the Commission should set out the objectives to achieve a 50% reduction in chemical pesticides and more hazardous pesticides, a 20% reduction in fertilisers and a 50% reduction in nutrient losses by 2030. In addition, the derogations listed under Article 53(1) of Regulation 1107/2009 should be exceptional and the Commission should clarify the terms *emergency situation*, *special circumstances*, *reasonable means* and *limited and controlled use*.

Invasive alien species

There are currently 354 species threatened by invasive species in the EU and the 66 species on the EU's list represent only 6% of those present in Europe, which does not correspond to the scale of the threat they pose to biodiversity.

The cost of monitoring and remedying the damage caused by these species is estimated at around EUR 12 billion per year in the EU, making preventive measures the most cost-effective.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, the Commission should carry out mandatory risk assessments prior to the first import of non-native species and adopt white lists to identify species that would only be traded and held within the EU.

The Commission, together with the Member States, should also prioritise plans to prevent, control or eradicate invasive species that harm critically endangered species and work to ensure that the EU list adequately covers invasive species that affect endangered species and those in the early stages of invasion or species not yet present in the EU.

Conservation and restoration

By 2030, at least 30% of marine and terrestrial areas should be protected in accordance with science-based criteria and biodiversity needs and one third of these areas should be strictly protected, covering all natural carbon sinks in the EU. These objectives should be included in legislation.

Similarly, at least 30% of degraded ecosystems should be restored by 2030. The United Nations has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. In this context, the EU Nature Restoration Plan should be ambitious, implemented considering the entire territory of each Member State and focus on ecosystems that fulfil the dual purpose of restoring biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

¹⁰⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/docs/ias-brochure-en-web.pdf>

Funding, mainstreaming and governance framework

The Commission has estimated that EUR 20 billion per year is needed to implement the Biodiversity Strategy's actions, although a thorough assessment of how this amount would be mobilised is needed.

Biodiversity proofing should be mainstreamed across all EU spending and programmes on the basis of the EU Taxonomy, with the precautionary and 'polluter pays' principles taking precedence in EU actions, taxation systems reoriented towards an increased use of environmental taxation and subsidies harmful to the environment eliminated by 2030 at the latest.

There is also a need for a legally binding biodiversity governance framework, similar to the Climate Law, which steers a path through a set of binding objectives for 2030 and 2050, and the commitments made at COP15. The Commission should make a legislative proposal to that effect in 2022.

Moreover, in contrast to some national laws, there is no recognition at European and international level of the individual right to a healthy environment. Article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights only reflects the general principle of environmental protection in EU legislation but does not declare it a substantive right. The Commission should strive to fill this gap at European level and also promote international recognition of this human right.

Research and education

Education and the role of the younger generation will be vital in reversing biodiversity loss. In this regard, it would be a good idea to launch a Green Erasmus programme focused on projects to conserve and restore ecosystems for young people.

In relation to research, in addition to national programmes and the EU's R&D programme, other funds should allocate a higher share of the budget to research and innovation, especially in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, to support their transition to sustainable practices.

International action and ocean governance

The Global Nature Agreement reached at the 15th CBD COP will be instrumental in saving nature. As with the Paris Agreement, it should be legally binding, set limits beyond which biodiversity loss will be irreversible and set out ambitious targets, such as protecting at least 30% of the planet and restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030.

Likewise, it is worth noting the potential of the trade and development policy to protect biodiversity and the environment outside Europe. In this regard, the EU should advocate binding sustainable development chapters in trade agreements and work towards halting global deforestation by presenting a legislative proposal on deforestation-free chains to prevent the import of products that have contributed to it.

Moreover, marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980; as a result, the EU should lead negotiations for an international agreement on plastics to ensure that our seas and oceans are plastic-free by 2030.

Implementation and enforcement of legislation

At present, nature-related legislation is not sufficiently implemented or enforced. Environmental infringement procedures are also beset by unjustified delays that obstruct the implementation of the legislation; the Commission should therefore closely monitor the situation and allocate sufficient resources to overcome such delays.

Finally, the successful implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy will depend on the participation and involvement of all actors. A platform is needed where all stakeholders can discuss their ideas and to ensure that the transition is inclusive, equitable and just.

19.4.2021

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/2273(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Saskia Bricmont

(*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls that biodiversity is declining globally at unprecedented rates in human history, and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, impacting human health worldwide in a variety of ways, and, as reported by the WHO, that biodiversity loss is a driver of zoonotic pathogens such as COVID-19; highlights the scientific evidence on the role of unsustainable trade in biodiversity loss, in particular trade in minerals, biomass, wildlife and certain agricultural commodities, and on biodiversity loss due to climate change, global land use changes, invasive alien species, overexploitation of resources and pollution; recalls that USD 44 trillion of economic value generation – more than half of the world's total GDP – is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services, and is therefore at risk from nature loss;
2. Highlights that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have not been implemented as expected, and that global biodiversity is facing a severe crisis, directly threatening humankind's interests including food, health and security; notes that new targets for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including on trade issues covering wildlife and flora, are set to be agreed during the fifteenth meeting Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 15); calls on the Commission to advocate for greater ambition, including on binding targets for the protection of biodiversity and for quantifiable indicators and effective monitoring mechanisms; emphasises that, in order to allow a level playing field on international stage, it is important that the EU and Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD have the same level of ambition, especially for the levels of land and sea protection targets;
3. Underlines that the contribution of trade to drastic biodiversity loss has been inadequately addressed both by the structure of existing free trade agreements (FTAs) and current WTO rules; stresses that the precautionary principle must be the guiding

principle for the protection of biodiversity; warns of the risk of certain productive sectors relocating to countries where biodiversity legislation is laxer than in the EU, and thus calls on the Commission to take the lead in international forums and promote the protection of biodiversity; welcomes the fact that the new trade strategy ‘calls for closer policy integration between trade policies and internal EU policies’, and recognises that ‘the preservation of biodiversity is a global challenge that requires global efforts’; expects the Commission to maintain a high level of ambition not only in words but also in deeds; calls on the Commission therefore to consider specific and concrete measures without delay to ensure EU trade agreements do not cause or threaten to cause biodiversity loss, and for EU trade policy to be effectively aligned with its biodiversity strategy; stresses that coherence between different EU policies is crucial in international trade, articulating all sustainability and development aspects, social, environmental - including biodiversity - and economic, which also ensures fair competition with particular attention on SMEs and the farming sector, and that the future Open Strategic Autonomy Strategy should reflect this; recalls that trade agreements must ensure that the parties involved, including the EU and the Member States, participate actively in promoting sustainable development principles;

4. Stresses the importance of systematically including, together with the economic and social dimension, a biodiversity dimension in all sustainability impact assessments (SIAs) which must follow a more robust methodology than previously, as suggested by available Commission studies, and consistently factor in biodiversity issues; requests the Commission to secure adequate funding for carrying out these biodiversity analyses; calls for SIAs to be performed as part of the scoping exercise phase on future free trade and investment agreements; calls for SIAs to be regularly updated as negotiations develop in order to adequately identify, assess and address possible risks to biodiversity in the region concerned as well as in the EU as early as possible, and for them to shape relevant bilateral commitments outlined in the negotiations; highlights in particular the importance of adequate funding of governmental bodies, the support of civil society organisations, the definition and coverage of protected areas, and the designation of competent authorities; stresses the importance of systematically conducting regular ex post sustainability evaluations and impact assessments to ensure consistency with the EU’s international commitments on biodiversity; calls on the Commission to learn the lessons from the EU-South Korea Panel of Experts and from the precedent of the Vietnamese roadmap for the ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, so that trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapters include a roadmap with concrete and verifiable commitments upon which progress in other chapters will be made; invites the Commission to update existing chapters of trade and investment agreements by making use of active and timely review clauses to ensure alignment of existing FTAs with the European Green Deal at the earliest opportunity, and to present its results and planned adjustments to Parliament; underlines in this regard that EU trade and investment agreements facilitate a formalised dialogue with partners on all aspects of the European Green Deal, including biodiversity, sustainable food policy, pollution and the circular economy, in the framework of TSD chapters;
5. Welcomes the launch of an early review of the 15-point Action Plan on TSD chapters; acknowledges the non-paper from the Netherlands and France on trade, social economic effects and sustainable development including suggestions on the possibility to phase-in tariff liberalisation linked to the effective implementation of multilateral environmental

agreements; recalls, in the context of the review, its invitation to the Commission to explore a sanctions-based mechanism as a last resort in trade agreements in order to ensure their effective implementation; recalls that according to paragraph 161 of the Opinion 2/15 of the Court of Justice of the European Union, a breach of the TSD chapter could authorise the other Party ‘to terminate or suspend the liberalisation, provided that it is foreseen in the envisaged agreement, of that trade’;

6. Welcomes the appointment of the Chief Trade and Enforcement Officer and the setting up of the Single Entry Point whose role is to lead efforts across the Commission to strengthen implementation and enforcement, drawing on a range of available tools, and to address reported trade barriers and violations of sustainable trade commitments; considers it is in the Union’s interest to take action in response to violations of those commitments, and calls on the Commission to act when trading partners are not fulfilling their bilateral or multilateral commitments, including the possibility of the re-establishment of tariffs; calls on the Commission to learn the lessons from the EU-South Korea dispute settled by the Panel of Experts which found it significant that the TSD chapter did not set a specific target date or a particular milestone for the ratification process, and that the Parties had not referred to any specific target dates or discernible schedules, which may have helped guide the Panel’s analysis¹;
7. Asks the Commission to use the indicators developed in the search for possible risks to biodiversity to formulate short-, medium- and long-term goals for the protection of biodiversity; calls on the Commission to submit annual updates to Parliament on the status of implementation of these goals;
8. Stresses that the regulatory requirements that EU producers must adhere to should also apply to and be enforced for EU imports, and that access to the EU market should be granted only to products that are compliant with these requirements; considers this a non-negotiable point in free trade negotiations; considers it crucial that the Commission foster a non-product related process and production method approach in order to support measures that set out to prevent further biodiversity loss, under a secure, predictable and non-discriminatory framework between domestic and imported products, that is compatible with WTO rules; supports the Commission in its desire to raise and extend awareness about and promote, in international discussions on trade and environment, an interpretation of relevant WTO provisions that recognises the right of members to provide effective responses to global environmental challenges, particularly climate change and the protection of biodiversity; believes, furthermore, that the EU should work to include binding levels of biodiversity protection in the upcoming work on WTO reform, and thus in our free trade agreements, based on scientific evidence and without protectionist purposes;
9. Encourages the Commission to consider the inclusion of expertise on trade and environment in disputes arising from conflicts between trade commitments and environmental protection exceptions; urges the Commission to promote this proposal in the context of its WTO climate and trade initiative; asks for an independent in depth-analysis of the effects of the remaining investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) and investment court system (ICS) provisions in trade agreements, as well as of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), on biodiversity, and requests swift adaptations to the ECT and a reassessment of membership, including the possibility of withdrawal from the ECT if sufficient modernisation is not feasible;

¹ Paragraph 276, Panel of Experts Proceeding constituted under article 13.15 of the EU-Korea free trade agreement, Report of the Panel of Experts

10. Recalls that the OECD has estimated that governments globally spend approximately USD 500 billion per year on support that is potentially harmful to biodiversity, i.e. five to six times more than total spending on biodiversity²; considers that the EU's trade policy and green diplomacy should aim to support climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest, and to phase out subsidies to fossil fuels and other subsidies that are environmentally harmful as a matter of urgency in accordance with the commitments made at the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh in 2009; invites the Commission to agree on a roadmap with milestones with each trade partner covered by a trade agreement, and to show leadership in relevant international forums; highlights that sustainability and carbon neutrality will remain at the core objectives of EU programmes and trade policy, including supporting for the green transition, particularly of SMEs;
11. Requests that in its draft mandate for future agreements and when it reviews current agreements, the Council make the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) an essential element of FTAs provided that mandatory mechanisms for reviewing national targets are agreed upon; asks the Council to also make the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) together with the Paris Agreement essential elements of FTAs, and to emphasise their effective implementation; is of the view that in future transatlantic relations the EU should call on the US to join and implement the CBD; highlights the importance of the upcoming reform of the GSP Regulation in providing for effective implementation of multilateral conventions on climate and environmental covered by the Regulation, including the CBD;
12. Calls on Member States to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at national, regional and local levels through sectoral and cross-sectoral policies including trade, plans and programmes, in order to establish an effective institutional, legislative and regulatory framework that incorporates an approach that is inclusive; underscores the importance of openness and predictability for European businesses, especially SMEs, and that increased communication and capacity building are needed to allow SMEs to take full advantage of trade agreements in a sustainable way;
13. Notes on the one hand, that the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) estimates that the international legal wildlife trade has increased 500 % in value since 2005 and 2 000 % since the 1980s, and on the other hand, that its legal and illegal forms are often deeply intertwined; notes that over 38 700 species, including approximately 5 950 species of animals and 32 800 species of plants, are protected by CITES against overexploitation through international trade; acknowledges that the current system for forbidding the illegal trade in endangered species suffers from substantial enforcement deficiencies; invites the Commission to start monitoring and analysing the current system; calls on the Commission, on this basis, to explore the feasibility of a white list of endangered species in order to efficiently combat illegal trade, to improve the training of customs and other officials, and to support the establishment of a mechanism to prohibit the import into the EU of species that are nationally protected endangered species in their countries of origin along the lines of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest under Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) or similar to measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; calls on the Commission to scale up the Green Customs Initiative in the forthcoming Customs Union Action Plan, and asks the Commission to ensure better implementation of the current customs provisions at border

² <https://www.oecd.org/environment/resources/biodiversity/report-a-comprehensive-overview-of-global-biodiversity-finance.pdf>

inspections; calls in the longer term for a CITES reform centred on a reverse listing mechanism, aiming for paperless functioning and increasing its budget;

14. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the ‘One Health’ principle in policy-making, and that transformative changes are needed involving collaboration across disciplines and sectors; calls on the Commission to use the regulatory dialogues provided for in FTAs to promote stringent EU sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and animal welfare in order to minimise the risks of future epidemics and pandemics; calls on the Commission to consider, if necessary, the adoption of a moratorium on imports of wild animals or any other species from reported emerging infectious disease hotspots in order to adequately address safety concerns;
15. Calls for the Commission to explore the possibility of adding a protocol on wildlife crime to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; deems that the evaluation and revision of the Environmental Crime Directive is an opportunity to better address criminal offences of this kind, and to strengthen its enforceability;
16. Is concerned about deforestation policies targeting the Amazon rainforest, and the weakening of its irreplaceable ecosystem and biodiversity; welcomes the Commission’s intention to present a legislative proposal in Spring 2021 that will prohibit the placing on the EU market of products whose production processes are associated with deforestation or forest degradation; stresses the need for complementary work to address the supply side by highlighting the example of the VPAs on FLEGT aiming to preserve forests, as they are the natural habitat of many endangered species, to encourage sustainable forest management, and to address deforestation and forest degradation in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the CBD Aichi targets;
17. Highlights the importance of ensuring the role of agriculture and the rural environment in protecting biodiversity and the ecosystem; notes that the EU internal market is the world’s biggest importer and exporter of agri-food products; is convinced that the EU should use this position to set the benchmark in terms of standards for sustainable food systems, based on the precautionary principle, environmental protection and animal welfare; underlines that, as well as implementing the principles of the Green Deal, the EU must promote an upward global convergence of standards in order to avoid the possible relocation and outsourcing of environmental footprint to third countries; recognises that unsustainable farming is the primary driver of global biodiversity loss; considers that trade policy should encourage the development of organic farming in partner countries under standards equivalent to those for EU-produced goods, in line with EU objectives for 2030, and that financial support should be prioritised for products from sustainable supply chains, such as products protected as Geographic Indications and organic food, and aiming to achieve the SDG targets; calls on the Commission to commission a detailed and independent study on the effects of EU exports and their production methods on biodiversity; calls on the Commission to take action to prohibit the export from the EU of hazardous substances banned in the EU, in line with the ‘do no harm principle’, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the European Green Deal;

18. Calls on the Commission to guarantee that fisheries provisions in trade agreements are consistent with protecting marine biodiversity, and urges the trade partners to address all anthropogenic detrimental impacts on the marine environment in a holistic manner with a view to protecting 30 % of the ocean by 2030; calls on the Commission and the Member States to pool their efforts to reach an agreement on marine biological diversity beyond national jurisdiction; recalls that the establishment of marine protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction must be supported by socio-economic and ecological impact assessments based on the best available scientific advice;
19. Notes that trade and investment in biodiversity-based products and services can incentivise the reduction of over-exploitation of biodiversity while enabling the creation of more sustainable economic sectors that contribute to inclusive growth and sustainable production, trade and consumption patterns, including for developing countries; asks the Commission to investigate the possibility of creating a legal framework, primarily within the WTO, allowing for the prohibition of trade in certain raw materials, products and services that endanger biodiversity; supports the ongoing work at the OECD to strengthen the biodiversity component of the Responsible Business Conduct guidelines, and requests the Commission to adequately reflect this in the forthcoming EU due diligence package;
20. Emphasises that the degradation of ecosystems is undermining progress towards the achievement of most of the 2030 SDGs, in particular ending poverty, access to water and sanitation, food security, ensuring healthy lives and the reduction of inequalities; calls on the Commission to prioritise capacity building, including knowledge transfers, technology sharing and skills training for beneficiary countries to implement the CBD, the CITES and other conventions and agreements essential to the protection of biodiversity under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument and Aid for Trade; calls on the Commission to promote synergies with other conventions, international organisations and third countries when facilitating and implementing capacity-building activities related to biodiversity protection, and to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation; notes that market incentives and capacity-building should be made accessible to businesses in order to involve them in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as to help them meet consumer expectations and increasing demands for nature to be protected; underlines also, in this context, the need to support third countries, especially least developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries, whose development model relies on exports of goods and services harmful to biodiversity, by means of financial support and capacity-building in order to reduce their over-reliance on such goods; underlines, in this respect, the crucial role played by local communities, indigenous peoples and environmental human rights defenders in maintaining biodiversity, and the need to respect the UN principle of free, prior and informed consent in the spirit of the ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples;
21. Calls on the Commission to create a centralised system of data and statistical analysis supported by Eurostat and EU statistical agencies in order to be able to obtain more detailed ecosystem inventories.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	15.4.2021
Result of final vote	+: 33 -: 1 0: 7
Members present for the final vote	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Jordi Cañas, Daniel Caspary, Miroslav Číž, Arnaud Danjean, Paolo De Castro, Emmanouil Fragkos, Raphaël Glucksmann, Markéta Gregorová, Roman Haider, Christophe Hansen, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Karin Karlsbro, Maximilian Krah, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Margarida Marques, Gabriel Mato, Sara Matthieu, Emmanuel Maurel, Samira Rafaela, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Massimiliano Salini, Helmut Scholz, Liesje Schreinemacher, Sven Simon, Dominik Tarczyński, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Substitutes present for the final vote	Markus Buchheit, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Joachim Schuster

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

33	+
ID	Jean-Lin Lacapelle
NI	Tiziana Beghin
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Daniel Caspary, Arnaud Danjean, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Gabriel Mato, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Simon, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Renew	Barry Andrews, Jordi Cañas, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Liesje Schreinemacher, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
S&D	Miroslav Číž, Paolo De Castro, Raphaël Glucksmann, Margarida Marques, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Joachim Schuster, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt
The Left	Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz
Verts/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Sara Matthieu

1	-
ID	Maximilian Krah

7	0
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Emmanouil Fragkos, Dominik Tarczyński, Jan Zahradil
ID	Markus Buchheit, Roman Haider, Danilo Oscar Lancini

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

12.3.2021

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/2273(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Isabel Carvalhais

(*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas agricultural biodiversity covers all components of biological diversity of relevance to food and agriculture; whereas it also covers the variety and variability of ecosystems, animals, plants and micro-organisms, at genetic, species and ecosystem level, which are necessary to sustain the key functions of the ecosystems;
- B. whereas the major direct drivers of biodiversity loss are changes in land and sea use, natural resource extraction, climate change, pollution and the invasion of alien species; whereas these drivers result from an adverse set of underlying causes related notably to production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends, trade and technological innovations¹⁰⁸;
- C. whereas the long-term trends in farmland, forest and common bird and grassland butterfly populations demonstrate that Europe has experienced a major decline in farmland biodiversity; whereas this is primarily due to loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural ecosystems, mainly caused by agricultural intensification, intensive forest management, land abandonment and urban sprawl¹⁰⁹;
- D. whereas agricultural land accounts for almost half the area of the EU and forests cover about 42 % of the EU's territory; whereas the sustainable management of agricultural lands contributes to wider ecosystem

¹⁰⁸ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), 'Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services', 2019.

¹⁰⁹ European Environment Agency (EEA), 'The European environment – state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe', 2019.

functions such as biodiversity protection, carbon sequestration, the maintenance of water and air quality, soil moisture retention with a reduction in runoff, water infiltration and erosion control;

- E. whereas agriculture and forestry are key components of the European economy and society, providing safe, quality and affordable food and representing a major factor in the viability of rural areas in terms of preserving employment, economic opportunities, quality of life and the environment;
- F. whereas the specific nature and structural features of the EU agricultural sector, which is mainly composed of small farms based on family labour, two thirds of which are of less than 5 ha in size and around one third of whose managers are 65 years old or over, poses specific challenges that need to be taken into consideration by policy makers in designing measures and policies involving the sector;
1. Recalls that agricultural productivity and resilience depend on biodiversity, which is essential to guarantee the long-term sustainability and resilience of our food systems and food security; underlines, furthermore, that much of the biodiversity across Europe exists as a result of its diverse farming systems and forestry and that its maintenance is dependent on the continued active, low-impact and sustainable management of land and of agricultural and forest ecosystems; underlines, however, the negative impact on biodiversity of certain farming systems which lead to an overexploitation of natural resources;
 2. Notes that the cascading effect of landscape simplification leads to lower crop production through, in particular, reduced pollinator and natural enemy richness¹¹⁰; reiterates that replacing the natural enemy population with the use of insecticides further exacerbates the problem of reduced pollination, which is a direct component of crop production; calls for a holistic approach in order to safeguard ecosystem services through measures leading to increased landscape heterogeneity;
 3. Stresses the importance of genetic diversity, species and natural landscapes, and considers that agriculture makes it possible to preserve the biodiversity of many regions, such as open mountain areas, by preventing the proliferation of invasive plant and animal species;
 4. Emphasises the important role of small farms in biodiversity and landscape preservation; stresses that small farms contribute to biodiversity conservation by applying less intensive and mechanised practices and by using fewer inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers; underlines, furthermore, that small farms protect sensitive rural areas (mountainous, disadvantaged, island and Natura 2000 areas) by preserving agriculture and therefore biodiversity;
 5. Welcomes the high level of ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 in seeking to halt and reverse biodiversity loss in the EU; considers that this level of ambition is necessary, encourages policy development and implementation at all levels, and promotes the development and mainstreaming of research, innovative and feasible solutions, and their translation into policy, in order to tackle biodiversity loss;
 6. Recalls that effective implementation of the strategy requires acknowledgement of all three dimensions of sustainability: environmental, social and economic; stresses that the continuous decline in farmland biodiversity, including on landscape scale, is a reality, and that bold action, taken by society as a whole and backed by scientific consensus, is needed to counteract this trend;
 7. Regrets the fact that the EU's Biodiversity Strategy up to 2020 did not set measurable targets for agriculture, making it difficult to assess progress and the performance of EU-funded actions; recalls that poor coordination between EU policies and strategies dealing with biodiversity has led to a failure to address the decline in genetic diversity¹¹¹; calls on the Commission to follow recommendations of the European Court Auditors (ECA) and to build on the lessons learned in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;

¹¹⁰ Dainese, M. et al, 'A global synthesis reveals biodiversity-mediated benefits for crop production', *Science Advances*, Vol. 5, No. 10, 2019.

¹¹¹ European Court of Auditors Special Report 13/2020, 'Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline', 2020;
<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=%7bB5A7E9DE-C42E-4C1D-A5D2-03CA1FADE6F8%7d>

8. Notes that after the ideals and good intentions of the Green Deal, there must be consequent follow-up in terms of implementation, notably in the common agricultural policy, which has a highly significant impact on biodiversity as it governs land use not only in the EU but also beyond;
9. Calls on the Commission to ensure access to new technologies for European farmers and to enable continuous development in the agricultural sector by ensuring an innovation-friendly regulatory framework;
10. Recalls the importance of encouraging a collective approach and taking advantage of its multiplier effect in order to promote the actions of the Biodiversity Strategy, and calls on the Commission to promote and support associative enterprises, such as agri-food cooperatives, in the implementation of measures to protect biodiversity in a collective manner;
11. Emphasises the strong link with the Farm to Fork and Forest Strategies and the need for a holistic approach to the food system and the forest value chain;
12. Calls on the Commission to conduct impact assessments and to establish a comprehensive science- and evidence-based evaluation of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy's measures and targets, including on high-diversity landscape features, taking into account specific national conditions; believes that the strategy should look in particular at individual and cumulative impacts on the social and economic sustainability of agriculture, forestry and rural areas in the EU, food security, the availability of land and of agricultural and agri-food products, prices, wood availability and the potential risks of displacing biodiversity losses to non-EU countries by replacing local agricultural production with imports; stresses the need to look at both the short- and the long-term negative and positive impacts with regard to resource use and food security;
13. Considers that, for effective implementation, the biodiversity goals, when agreed by the co-legislators, must be reflected across relevant EU legislation;
14. Notes with great concern the recent scientific assessment of the cumulative effects of the Farm to Fork and biodiversity strategies by the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture¹¹²;
15. Calls, too, on the Commission to produce an evidence-based impact assessment of the potential risks in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, rural and regional viability, food prices and strategic regional food and supply security arising from the effects of the possible relocation and displacement of agricultural production within the European Union as a result of implementing the strategy's measures and objectives;
16. Considers that biodiversity conservation is a key societal goal supported by a majority of Europeans¹¹³, which requires action by all social and economic sectors and a broad and inclusive debate, with the effective participation of everyone in society at European, national and regional level; notes that, in particular, biodiversity conservation requires the increased participation of all those implementing the measures, such as farming communities, including small-scale and young farmers, and the forest sector, while at the same time benefiting from their knowledge and experience, sharing win-win solutions that benefit both biodiversity and farming and forestry revenues, and creating a sense of ownership, which is vital for the successful implementation of the strategy;
17. Stresses the importance of a bottom-up participatory process, positive incentives and support in increasing motivation and commitment with regard to biodiversity protection, while highlighting the complementary added value of voluntary initiatives;

¹¹² Beckman, J. et al, 'Economic and Food Security Impacts of Agricultural Input Reduction Under the European Union Green Deal's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies', Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

¹¹³ Special Eurobarometer No 481, 'Attitudes of Europeans towards biodiversity', May 2019, https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2194_90_4_481_ENG

18. Considers that more focus should be placed at all policy levels on developing win-win solutions for biodiversity protection that promote all three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental);
19. Considers that the creation of sub-zones or regions in existing protected zones, where different ranges of activities could be permitted based on the specificities of these areas, would allow for more flexibility while at the same time increasing the effectiveness of the protection;
20. Stresses the key role of the common agricultural policy (CAP) in protecting and promoting farmland biodiversity, including genetic diversity, together with other policies and instruments set out in the Green Deal; recalls the objectives of the CAP stated in Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
21. Underlines the potential of the green architecture components of the upcoming CAP in promoting and providing individual and collective incentives for the transition to more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems for producing food and maintaining high nature value farmland and biodiversity on farmland, if properly designed;
22. Considers that Member States must set appropriate baselines for sustainability and biodiversity when defining their conditionality standards, and ensure the ambitious and prompt development and uptake of interventions, in particular eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate measures in rural development, which contribute to enhancing the delivery and potential of biodiversity benefits in line with the required level of ambition, while taking into consideration specific local needs, conditions and starting points on the basis of an evidence-based SWOT analysis;
23. Stresses the crucial importance of the CAP's agroforestry and afforestation measures and encourages the continuity of forestry measures, in line with the EU Forest Strategy;
24. Stresses that the implementation of this strategy will not be as effective as intended from an environmental point of view unless support is provided to ensure that farmers and their businesses maintain viability and competitiveness;
25. Calls on the Commission to make immediate use of the possibilities for climate change mitigation and adaptation provided by the restoration of forests, wetlands, peatland, grasslands and coastal ecosystems and to integrate the preservation of nature into all relevant EU policies and programmes;
26. Considers that the small changes introduced by the various reforms of the CAP have not represented a strong signal for farmers to change their practices and is of the opinion that a significant change based on climate and biodiversity crises is necessary to assure farmers of its relevance to their businesses and livelihood;
27. Regrets the fact that the CAP was not effective in reversing the decades-long decline in biodiversity and that intensive farming remains a leading cause of biodiversity loss; stresses, furthermore, that according to ECA Special Report 13/2020¹¹⁴, the agriculture target and actions in the EU biodiversity strategy are not measurable, making it difficult to assess performance;
28. Stresses, therefore, the importance of following the ECA's recommendations to the Commission to better coordinate the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, enhance the contribution of direct payments and rural development to farmland biodiversity, track budget spending more accurately and develop reliable indicators to assess CAP impact;

¹¹⁴ European Court of Auditors Special Report 13/2020, 'Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline', 2020;
<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=%7bB5A7E9DE-C42E-4C1D-A5D2-03CA1FADE6F8%7d>

29. Highlights the importance of creating, maintaining and restoring high-diversity landscape features in agricultural landscapes, as well as maintaining and supporting farming practices and/or productive characteristics beneficial for biodiversity, pollinators and the natural biological control of pests;
30. Calls on the Member States to develop the necessary measures under their CAP Strategic Plans to promote biodiversity-rich areas, including landscape features, with the aim of achieving an area of at least 10 % of high-diversity areas beneficial for biodiversity, for example hedgerows, buffer strips, areas in which no chemicals are used and temporary fallow land, as well as extensive farmland dedicated to biodiversity on a long-term basis, and promoting interconnectivity between habitats and the creation of green corridors as much as possible in order to maximise the potential for biodiversity;
31. Recalls that lack of access to land is one of the primary factors limiting the settlement of young farmers and the renewal of generations on European farms, which is an important objective of the CAP; considers that the setting-up of non-productive areas should be assessed to avoid producing as far as possible a negative impact on young farmers' access to land;
32. Stresses that where conservation measures restrict the use of privately owned land or negatively affect its value, adequate compensation must be granted to the owner;
33. Welcomes the recognition of organic farming as one of the strong components on the EU's path towards more sustainable food systems, namely as regards biodiversity concerns, and in achieving the public policy objectives of economic development, rural employment, environmental protection and climate action; stresses the importance of the European action plan for organic farming in increasing the uptake of organic farming;
34. Underlines that the development of organic food production must be accompanied by market-driven and supply chain developments and measures that stimulate demand for organic food, including through public procurement and a broad variety of promotion measures, research, innovation, training and scientific knowledge transfer, aiming to support the stability of the organic products market and the fair remuneration of farmers and promoting measures that support young organic farmers; highlights the need for the development of the entire organic food chain in order to allow for local processing and the distribution of the Union's organic produce;
35. Notes that Member States will contribute differently to these Union-wide targets depending on the level of development of their organic sector and therefore calls for the definition of national targets; highlights that these targets will not be met without strong financial support, solid training programmes and advisory services; calls on Member States to shape their CAP Strategic Plans accordingly and on the Commission to make sure that these Strategic Plans are up to the task;
36. Emphasises the strong links between the European Forest and Biodiversity Strategies;
37. Underlines the importance of resilient and healthy forest ecosystems, including fauna and flora, in maintaining and enhancing the delivery of the multiple ecosystem services that forests provide, such as biodiversity, clean air, water, healthy soil, and wood and non-wood raw materials; points out that achieving the EU's goals for the environment, climate and biodiversity will never be possible without forests and forestry that is multifunctional, healthy and sustainably managed and that takes a long-term perspective;
38. Points out the need to develop a coherent approach to bring together biodiversity protection and climate protection with a thriving forest-based sector and sustainable bio-economy;
39. Notes, in this regard, that focusing at the same time on the social, environmental and economic benefits of forestry can help to ensure resilience and adaptive capacity, as well as to achieve the transition to a circular bio-economy and improve the protection of biodiversity; considers that targets and implementation need to take into account the precise conditions and opportunities of each country and result in positive impacts on forests and forestry conditions, livelihoods in rural areas and the biodiversity of forests in the EU;

40. Underlines that forests, especially primary forests, are of particular relevance in protecting biodiversity and calls for their protection; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and Member States to bring in a definition of old-growth forests to be prepared by the Standing Forestry Committee as a part of the future EU Forest Strategy;
41. Highlights the importance of the Natura 2000 forest sites in preserving forest biodiversity; notes, however, that sufficient financial resources are needed to manage such areas and to ensure enforcement;
42. Underlines the importance of strengthening sustainable forest management in a balanced manner for the health, climate resilience and longevity of forest ecosystems and the preservation of the multifunctional role of forests, including for maintaining forest biodiversity, as well as for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the European Green Deal; highlights the value of incorporating genetic diversity into planting considerations, as this limits the risk of pest attacks and of the spread of disease, and of local/native species;
43. Points out the importance of training for forest owners, local awareness-raising projects and public participation processes, and continuous afforestation and reforestation programmes; calls on the Commission to promote EU-wide specialised training programmes and a comprehensive and efficient information system for forest management;
44. Highlights the number of valuable traditional agroforestry systems in the EU and the potential of innovative systems; stresses the potential of agroforestry to improve and boost a wide variety of ecosystem services, farmland biodiversity, carbon sequestration, soil protection and water cycle regulation, while enhancing farm productivity and sustainability;
45. Recognises the need to increase knowledge of and promote training on agroforestry widely among farmers in order to make them aware of the benefits and the practice of integrating woody vegetation with agriculture;
46. Calls on the Commission to pay attention to the loss of biodiversity caused by the built environment; considers that urban and peri-urban areas, including former industrial and rehabilitated land, would be particularly suited to tree plantation, thereby contributing to enhancing biodiversity in urban areas; recognises the potential of agroforestry and of areas not suitable for food production in increasing tree numbers, and that planting in high nature value sites should be avoided;
47. Acknowledges the role of using the wood from sustainably managed forests and wooden products to contribute to the move towards a CO₂-neutral economy and to the development of the circular bio-economy;
48. Calls on the Member States to improve national legislation in order to put in place, or strengthen where necessary, protection against illegal logging and the loss of biodiversity;
49. Emphasises that achieving the EU's goals for the environment, the climate and biodiversity will never be possible without healthy forests; encourages actions, therefore, to increase forest cover made up of trees that are appropriate for local conditions and ecosystems, avoiding in particular exotic species that sustain far less local biodiversity; stresses that subsequent new forest must not have negative impacts on existing biodiversity or on carbon sinks, and that planting should be avoided in particular in wetlands and peatlands, high-biodiversity pasture and other high nature value land; stresses that protection, reforestation and afforestation, with location and environment appropriate tree species, should be the focus of any future EU Forest strategy;
50. Highlights the importance of enhancing biodiversity in agro-systems at all levels, from fields to landscapes; considers it fundamental to reinforce scientific research on the relations between agricultural practices, ecological processes and ecosystems services, promoting the development of innovative practical solutions and the site-specific knowledge necessary to promote ecosystem services in a wide range of ecological contexts;
51. Stresses that the choice to sustain and further boost the bioenergy industry could lead to a management choice to shorten the rotation period or use fast-growing species which will lower the quality of wood and

the value of products and threaten the wood-working industries; notes that the win-win solution of limiting the use of whole trees in energy production proposed in the Biodiversity Strategy is also important for wood-working industries;

52. Considers that support to afforestation initiatives should take a holistic approach, taking into account local economic and social conditions and local communities and favouring resilient, mixed and healthy forests;
53. Stresses the importance of plant protection products and tools for the stability of agricultural production, food safety and security, climate change adaptation and the sustainability of farmers' incomes; considers that, although progress has been made, a substantial reduction in the use and, more particularly, in the risks of chemical pesticides is needed in order to reduce the impact on biodiversity, taking into consideration specific national conditions; considers that the option of using target corridors should be thoroughly explored;
54. Stresses the key role of integrated pest management¹¹⁵ (IPM) and sustainable systems, including agro-ecological approaches to reducing pesticide dependency, and urges the Member States to ensure that IPM is applied and its implementation is assessed systematically;
55. Stresses that in order to reduce the need for pesticides and achieve a further reduction in chemical pesticide use and the associated risks, farmers need a bigger toolbox of alternative, effective, affordable and environmentally safe crop protection solutions and methods; suggests that this could include the enhanced adoption of cultural, physical and biological control techniques, new low risk pesticides and bio-pesticides, more effective application techniques facilitated by tools such as digital and precision farming, epidemiological models, a wider and improved range of options for resistant varieties requiring fewer inputs, and bolstered research and innovation training and advisory systems, including in agro-ecological farming practices;
56. Calls on the Commission to improve the regulatory framework to speed up the adoption of new and alternative plant health solutions, including plant protection products with a lower environmental impact, such as low-risk substances, bio-control solutions and natural substances;
57. Highlights the role that beneficial species play in the agro-ecosystem, notably for pest control, but also for pollination, plant and soil protection; notes that the right choice of wildflower mixes can attract and sustain insect predators and parasitoids, benefiting production and increasing pollination services;
58. Considers that there should be adequate incentives and compensation for taking up sustainable practices such as IPM and agro-ecological approaches;
59. Welcomes the joint actions of Europol and the Member States to combat the illegal imports of plant protection products from third countries, but is extremely concerned that it is continuing, which is also affecting the environment and biodiversity in the EU;
60. Regrets the fact that agricultural production and consumption are being increasingly concentrated in a limited range of agricultural crops, and within them, varieties and genotypes; underlines that further enhancing and preserving genetic variability in all its components is crucial to promoting the diversity and richness of agricultural ecosystems and to the preservation of local genetic resources, in particular as a repository of solutions to help in facing the environmental, climatic and food security challenges that lie ahead;
61. Notes the importance of preserving cultivars and old varieties as they can endure less than optimal conditions; notes further that the most cost-effective way of preserving these genes and traits is in the field; welcomes the fact that the Commission is considering the revision of marketing rules for traditional crop varieties in order to contribute to their conservation and sustainable use; welcomes, too, its intention

¹¹⁵ In line with the general principles established in Annex III of Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides (OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71).

- to take measures to facilitate the registration of seed varieties, including of organic heterogeneous material, and to ensure easier market access for traditional and locally adapted varieties;
62. Draws attention to the fact that in perennial crops the loss of diversity also occurs through loss of genetic diversity within the varieties themselves; regrets that the EU's vegetative propagation systems are designed in a way that does not promote the conservation of intra-variety biodiversity; calls on the Commission to promote regulatory changes to the EU vegetative propagation legislation, encouraging 'on farm' conservation of the genetic variability of traditional European varieties;
 63. Recalls that a number of native and indigenous animal breeds are raised in the European Union, representing elements of regional habitats and/or of the traditional livelihood of local communities, and integral aspects of biodiversity; calls on the Member States to continue to uphold measures aimed at the protection of these breeds; is concerned that diseases like African swine fever put some species, such as East Balkan swine, at risk of extinction; calls on the Member States to establish timely measures and resources to prevent the loss of this biodiversity;
 64. Calls on the Commission to develop ambitious, appropriate and renewed regulations and plans to prevent the incursion of invasive species into the different European territories and seas, with comprehensive protocols to prevent the entry of both plant and animal species, which can have major negative impacts not only on biodiversity, but also on agriculture and fisheries, resulting in significant economic losses, which should include the design of lines of action for the management of invasive species and the effects that they may have on different ecosystems and sectors;
 65. Calls on the Commission to ensure that any target for non-productive agricultural land, non-productive landscape features and protected areas is flexible enough to be implemented according to the exact circumstances and possibilities of each Member State, and respects the rights of farmers, fishers, and land and forest owners, while maintaining strict protection as a voluntary option for land and forest owners;
 66. Underlines that the abandonment of agricultural fields affects between 10 and 50 % of the EU's agricultural land, which results in the loss of traditional landscapes, increases the risk of soil erosion and deteriorates habitats for numerous farmland species; recalls the fundamental role of the measures for areas facing natural constraints in avoiding land abandonment and maintaining human occupation of these areas, but also in forest fire prevention and in protecting specific ecosystems and natural resources, such as high nature value farmland areas;
 67. Underlines that changes in land use, the expansion and intensification of agriculture, and the unsustainable trade in and consumption of wildlife are key drivers of biodiversity loss and increase contact between wildlife, farm animals, pathogens and people, which creates the conditions for emerging infectious diseases;
 68. Notes that fur production, which involves the confinement of thousands of undomesticated animals of a similar genotype in close proximity to one another under chronically stressful conditions, can significantly compromise animal welfare and increases their susceptibility to infectious diseases including zoonoses, as has occurred with COVID-19 in mink;
 69. Emphasises the need to develop business models by rewarding farmers, market gardeners, fishers, and other area owners and users for the ecosystem services they provide;
 70. Acknowledges the importance of tracking biodiversity-relevant economic instruments and the finance they generate and of establishing consistent and comparable finance tracking and reporting across Member States;
 71. Notes the crucial role that pollinators play in biodiversity and agricultural production; is concerned about the high mortality trends among pollinators, including honey bees, which have been documented in a number of regions in the EU; calls on the responsible authorities of the Member States for more control over the use of substances that are not authorised or are harmful to pollinators;

72. Calls for a holistic approach when adopting measures in support of pollinators and for support under the CAP not to lead to weakened or lost pollination services; calls on Member States to include in their draft Strategic Plans measures targeting various groups of pollinators;
73. Considers that digital technologies, including precision farming, can help European farmers to provide safe and quality food while helping to preserve biodiversity and reducing the environmental impact of agriculture; points out the importance of supporting the development of digital tools that enable biodiversity planning at farm level and beyond and of improving network connectivity in rural areas;
74. Stresses that enabling access to these tools through the CAP is needed to ensure that everyone benefits from the digitalisation opportunities; notes further the need to facilitate the implementation of digital agriculture in an inclusive manner, through training and rural extension;
75. Acknowledges the diversity of European agriculture and the high biodiversity potential of its agricultural systems, such as pastoralism and grazing systems that conserve meadows and hedges, agroforestry and extensive managed farmland;
76. Calls on the Commission to promote environmentally friendly production methods, such as integrated production, a method which is widely established in many Member States and which optimises the use of natural resources, protects soil, water and air, and promotes biodiversity;
77. Calls on the Commission and Member States to promote the use of pasture and pastoral habitats, including wooded pasture and other agroforestry systems, in synergy with the maintenance of high nature value grassland communities;
78. Recognises the potential of agro-ecological systems, namely in combining diversification practices, simultaneously providing multiple ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation, and supporting crop yield and farmers' income¹¹⁶; recognises further the value of promoting the adoption of existing win-win approaches;
79. Points out that some trade agreements currently under negotiation or finalised may not be in line with the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy; recalls the need to ensure that trade agreements contain applicable chapters on trade and sustainable development that aim to promote biodiversity and alignment with European standards on sustainability;
80. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to ensuring full implementation and enforcement of the biodiversity provisions in trade agreements and to better assessing their impact on biodiversity; calls on the Commission to put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that the products imported to the EU follow the measures applicable to European farmers, rounding off the efforts made by EU farmers to produce food more sustainably and thus make biodiversity protection more effective globally;
81. Insists on ensuring the consistency of the Union's trade policy by avoiding the facilitation of the importation of agricultural products produced as a result of deforestation, which is seriously damaging to global biodiversity; calls on the Commission to propose a package of measures to ensure sustainable agricultural zero deforestation supply chains for products placed on the EU market;
82. Notes that nutrients are essential for agricultural production and for maintaining healthy soils; welcomes the Commission's proposal to reduce nutrient losses and points out that the excessive use of fertilisers is a source of air, soil and water pollution and climate impacts, with negative effects on biodiversity; stresses that improved management of nutrients presents both economic and environmental benefits;

¹¹⁶ Tamburini, G. et al, 'Agricultural diversification promotes multiple ecosystem services without compromising yield', *Science Advances*, Vol. 6, No. 45, 2020; Revision of 98 meta-analyses based on 5 160 original studies, comprising 41 946 comparisons between diversified and simplified practices. In 63 % of cases, agro-ecology boosted biodiversity without any cost to yields, and in many cases, yields actually increased;

<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/45/eaba1715>

Van der Ploeg, J. D. et al, 'The economic potential of agroecology: Empirical evidence from Europe', *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol. 71, 2019, pp. 46-61; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.09.003>

83. Stresses that a strategy to reduce nutrient losses should focus primarily on enabling farmers to increase the efficiency of nutrient management and highlights the importance of innovative technologies and solutions in this regard; urges Member States to put forward in their Strategic Plans measures promoting the efficient management and circularity of nutrients, and to strongly support the education of farm advisors and farmers;
84. Calls for the creation of, and support for, educational programmes which lead to a good understanding of both agronomic and nature conservation;
85. Stresses that research, innovation, knowledge exchange, raising awareness, education and advisory services will be key to gathering data and finding the best solutions for biodiversity conservation;
86. Highlights the fundamental role of farm advisory services in disseminating innovation and knowledge on biodiversity promotion strategies, stimulating the sharing of experiences, especially peer-to-peer exchanges, and promoting practical demonstrations, in particular by working at local level to enable farmers to better adapt to the specific realities on the ground, including small-scale, young and women farmers and people who live in disadvantaged rural areas; calls on Member States to provide comprehensive advice to farmers on adopting production systems and management practices promoting biodiversity conservation and restoration on farmland;
87. Underlines that research and innovation are key drivers in accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems, notably by providing advanced knowledge that enables farmers to produce food with fewer inputs and to increase the delivery of ecosystem services, while supporting social and economic sustainable development; considers that bringing innovation to the market requires an enabling regulatory environment and adoption of incentives;
88. Notes the enormous contribution of healthy living soils to global biodiversity and ecosystem services and the strong link between a living, healthy, biodiverse soil, communities, the productivity and profitability of farms, their resilience to climate change, and food and biomass security, especially drought and flooding; points out that over 60 % of all European soils are in an unhealthy state¹¹⁷ and that policy measures to promote conditions for life in soils are needed; notes the impact of microplastics on soil biodiversity;
89. Welcomes the Commission roadmap to establish a New Soil Strategy for the protection and sustainable use of soil, the launch of the EU Soil Observatory and the EU mission on soil health and food entitled ‘Caring for soil is caring for life’; calls on the Commission and Member States to support further research into soil ecosystem services and to adjust relevant existing funding programmes in order to facilitate such research projects;
90. Reiterates the importance of the sustainable use and management of water resources for the protection and restoration of biodiversity; encourages the Commission and the Member States to strengthen their support for effective and efficient irrigation systems and sustainable water management;
91. Highlights the success of the Birds and Habitats Directives¹¹⁸, and notes that the EU has the largest network of protected areas in the world and that effective management of natural processes is of the utmost importance for maintaining biodiversity;
92. Points out the significant differences between Member States in implementing Natura 2000 and the consequent uneven playing field as regards protection; stresses the need to involve all relevant actors at EU, national, regional and local level for better implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives; recalls the results of the fitness check of the directives; recognises the flexibility of the directives as regards implementation, which should be fully explored to allow specific national circumstances to be

¹¹⁷ Interim report of the Mission Board for Soil Health and Food, ‘Caring for soil is caring for life’, European Commission, 2020;

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4ebd2586-fc85-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1/>

¹¹⁸ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7); Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

taken into account, helping to reduce and progressively resolve conflicts between nature protection and socioeconomic activities;

93. Underlines the need to support agricultural practices, such as agroforestry and pastoralism, in high value areas, which provide a wide variety of ecosystem services; recalls that large carnivores, especially wolves, can have an impact on the viability of farming, particularly in some extensive managed farmland rich in biodiversity; recalls that changing conditions have led to population growth in certain protected species of large carnivores and their prey; stresses the need to manage certain areas of biodiversity to allow for the balanced development of all species; recalls the responsibility of the Commission to assess progress in achieving conservation status for species region by region and, where necessary, to adapt it if the desired conservation status is reached, with a view to protecting livestock;
94. Takes note of the Commission's proposal to increase the areas under protection and under strict protection and echoes the Council conclusions of 16 October 2020 on biodiversity in that a stricter level of protection may allow for certain human activities in line with the conservation objectives of the protected area; considers that human activities compatible with protection goals, or even positively contributing to biodiversity, should be admissible in areas under strict protection;
95. Strongly encourages Member States to reward farmers properly and incentivise them by awarding financial compensation for areas designated protected and strictly protected under Natura 2000, as well as covering any increased production costs incurred as a result of protection and conservation measures;
96. Recalls that 7.5 % of annual spending under the MFF in the year 2024 and 10 % of annual spending in the years 2026 and 2027 must be earmarked for biodiversity objectives.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	4.3.2021						
Result of final vote	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">+:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>–:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> </table>	+:	35	–:	8	0:	5
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–:	8						
0:	5						
Members present for the final vote	<p>Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Álvaro Amaro, Eric Andrieu, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Mara Bizzotto, Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais, Asger Christensen, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Luke Ming Flanagan, Dino Giarrusso, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Martin Hlaváček, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Gilles Lebreton, Norbert Lins, Colm Markey, Alin Mituţa, Marlene Mortler, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Maxette Pirbakas, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, Bronis Ropé, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Veronika Vrecionová, Sarah Wiener, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez</p>						
Substitutes present for the final vote	Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Petros Kokkalis						

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

35	+
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Veronika Vrecionová
NI	Dino Giarrusso
PPE	Álvaro Amaro, Daniel Buda, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Jarosław Kalinowski, Norbert Lins, Colm Markey, Marlene Mortler, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Renew	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Asger Christensen, Jérémy Decerle, Martin Hlaváček, Elsi Katainen, Alin Mituța, Ulrike Müller
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Isabel Carvalhais, Paolo De Castro, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno
The Left	Luke Ming Flanagan, Petros Kokkalis, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop

8	-
ID	Ivan David
PPE	Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik
Verts/ALE	Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Bronis Ropé, Sarah Wiener

5	0
ECR	Bert-Jan Ruissen
ID	Mara Bizzotto, Angelo Ciocca, Gilles Lebreton, Maxette Pirbakas

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

25.3.2021

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/2273(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Bettina Vollath

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment of 24 January 2018 presenting framework principles on human rights and the environment and of 15 July 2020 entitled ‘Human rights depend on a healthy biosphere’,
 - having regard to the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature entitled ‘United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development’, adopted by the political leaders at the UN Summit on Biodiversity of 30 September 2020,
 - having regard to the study of its Policy Department for External Relations of April 2020 entitled ‘Biodiversity as a Human Right and its Implications for the EU’s External Action’,
- A. whereas the prevailing negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards 80 % of the assessed targets for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the areas of poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land;
- B. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the health and livelihoods of people around the world; whereas the destruction of natural habitats, in particular tropical forests, which constitute exceptional reserves of biodiversity, increases the areas of contact between humans and wildlife and could be an important factor in the future emergence and spread of viral diseases;
- C. whereas the UN Convention on Biological Diversity serves as the basis for defining policies aimed at protecting biodiversity from a human rights perspective and for extending the scope of international obligations on biodiversity in relation to human rights; whereas the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment paves the way to shape a legal framework of human rights obligations relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- D. whereas the EU and its Member States must comply with their international obligations on biodiversity and human rights in good faith and with mutual support, in addition to their obligations under EU law on policy coherence in external action, in line with the obligation under the EU Charter of Fundamental

Rights to integrate into the policies of the Union a high level of environmental protection and the improvement of the quality of the environment and in accordance with the principle of sustainable development;

- E. whereas the number of environmental and land human rights defenders who have been murdered or subjected to acts of violence, abduction, threats, harassment, intimidation and smear campaigns has increased considerably worldwide in recent years; whereas they often face great adversity and danger, sometimes in circumstances characterised by the profit-driven exploitation of natural resources coupled with endemic corruption and poverty;
- F. whereas at least a quarter of the global land area is estimated to be owned, managed, used or occupied by indigenous peoples and local communities, and is under growing environmental stress due to human activity; whereas the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognises indigenous peoples' collective and individual rights;
- G. whereas marine plastic pollution has increased significantly in the last few years, affecting biodiversity; whereas efforts should thus be undertaken towards a new global treaty to tackle marine plastic pollution;

The importance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity for human rights

1. Stresses that the degradation and destruction of ecosystems and the stress on them caused by unsustainable resource exploitation and climate change is leading to the extinction of species and the loss of biodiversity at unprecedented rates and is threatening the human rights of current and future generations, such as the rights to life, health, food, water, sanitation and housing, as well as the rights of the most vulnerable people, including women, children and disabled people, the rights of indigenous peoples and the rights of rural and natural-resource-dependent communities; also emphasises that the degradation of and stress on ecosystems is harming overall efforts towards sustainable development and is undermining progress towards the achievement of most of the 2030 SDGs, in particular the objectives of ending poverty and hunger, ensuring access to water and sanitation, achieving food security, ensuring healthy lives and reducing socio-economic inequalities within and among countries;
2. Recalls that agricultural productivity and resilience depend on biodiversity to guarantee the sustainability of food systems without the use of chemical pesticides; underlines, furthermore, the importance of sustainable farming and forest management for the preservation of biodiversity, the health, climate resilience and longevity of forest ecosystems, and the protection of all plants and animals faced with particular threats, such as pollinating insects;
3. Underlines the need to intensify efforts to maintain and restore biodiversity, in particular by taking effective actions to simultaneously protect human rights and conserve and sustainably use natural resources; calls in this regard for the development of a holistic and human-rights-based EU policy approach aimed at preventing biodiversity loss and degradation and for EU sectoral policies to be aligned with these objectives; highlights the importance of biodiversity conservation in the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories and Outermost Regions and emphasises, in this regard, the need to maintain EU funds and programmes aimed at this objective; also stresses the need to strengthen international environment and human rights law, environmental legislation and procedural environmental and human rights, in particular by improving access to information, public participation and access to justice and effective remedies, and by supporting and promoting the crucial role of local communities, indigenous peoples and environmental human rights defenders in maintaining biodiversity;
4. Stresses that biodiversity and human rights are interlinked and interdependent, and recalls the human rights obligations of states to protect biodiversity on which those rights depend, including by providing for the participation of citizens in biodiversity-related decisions; welcomes progress towards recognition of the linkage between human rights and the health of the biosphere at international and national level; calls for the EU to advocate for the universal recognition of a right to a healthy, sustainable, clean and safe environment at the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly; considers that this recognition should serve as a catalyst for stronger environmental policies and legislation;

5. Supports the efforts by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment to develop guidance on human rights obligations relating to the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity; calls on the EU Member States and institutions to support and advocate for the global implementation of the 2018 framework principles on human rights and the environment presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment; also calls for the EU to support the UN Environment Programme's environmental rights initiative;
6. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the 'One Health' principle in policymaking and that transformative changes are needed involving collaboration across disciplines and sectors; also highlights the risk that the global recession caused by the pandemic may push states worldwide to divert their focus away from environmental protection in order to stimulate short-term economic activity; stresses that measures to respect and protect biodiversity must be integrated into all economic sectors;

The future European biodiversity governance framework and corporate responsibility

7. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to develop a new European biodiversity governance framework and to follow an inclusive approach involving civil society in a compliance watchdog role to monitor the implementation of EU environmental legislation; also welcomes its aim to put forward a new initiative in 2021 on sustainable corporate governance to address human rights and environmental due diligence across economic value chains; insists, in this regard, on the need to elaborate EU legislation for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence for EU companies, EU-domiciled companies and third-country companies operating in the internal market, imposing legal obligations to identify, assess, prevent, cease, mitigate, monitor, communicate, account for, address and remediate the potential or actual adverse human rights abuses throughout their supply chains and establishing effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; calls on the Commission to urgently present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on mandatory human rights and environmental corporate due diligence which, among other objectives, should ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains; also calls on the Commission to consider addressing the import of goods whose extraction or production causes the destruction or degradation of biodiversity; underlines the need to fight impunity for corporate and state abuses by creating instruments which allow for a full, effective and sustained implementation of human rights and environmental laws and their enforcement;
8. Stresses that deforestation, land-grabbing and other unsustainable resource-exploitation and extraction activities carried out by certain private or public activities have a significant and multi-faceted impact on indigenous peoples and local communities; stresses that these groups often lack recognition of their communal property rights over their land, waters or other resources that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used; underscores that women are disproportionately more affected by the deprivation of property rights; calls on all stakeholders and businesses to engage in the promotion of sustainable forest management and to recognise the rights of indigenous peoples, including by ensuring free, prior and informed consent and effective indigenous and local participation in decision-making processes over resource management and exploitation; urges businesses to conduct rigorous impact assessments for all activities that may affect the biodiversity of local communities and indigenous communal lands, waters and other natural resources, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct and framework principle 12 of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment; calls for the EU not to support or finance projects which may contribute to the eviction of indigenous peoples from their homeland; welcomes the call to action by the UN of November 2020 on building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future with indigenous peoples;

Using EU external action to promote the EU Biodiversity Strategy

9. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to mainstream the protection of biodiversity and its interlinkages with human rights into EU external action, including through its human rights dialogues and trade policy, to promote ambitious biodiversity-related policies in

international forums, in accordance with the European Green Deal and the new EU Biodiversity Strategy, and to implement measures through the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) to address the impact of biodiversity loss on the exercise of human rights;

10. Calls on the Commission to deal with cooperation issues related to the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem integrity and respect for international environmental and human rights obligations in a common and consistent way, in particular through EU international comprehensive and sectoral agreements and political dialogues with partner countries, including by following fair trade rules in relation to the environment, and to make the most of impact assessments on human rights and sustainable development and the related recommendations; calls on the Commission to carry out thorough impact assessment studies prior to the conclusion of trade and cooperation agreements and the implementation of development projects, with a specific focus on measuring their effects on the rights and lives of local populations; insists that impact assessments must be conducted with the genuine and meaningful participation of civil society and local communities and that their findings be duly taken into account; calls on the Commission to reassess the execution of projects in the event of potential or actual adverse effects on human rights related to the environment and biodiversity; also calls on the Commission and the EEAS to draw up guidelines on the right to a clean, healthy, safe and sustainable environment, to include biodiversity and its interlinkages with human rights in their periodic reports on the human rights situation in non-EU countries, and to develop tools and training materials for EU Delegations on the relevance of biodiversity for their work on human rights; calls on the EU Delegations to engage with business and relevant stakeholders to raise awareness, encourage projects, facilitate the participation of civil society organisations, and share information in this regard;
11. Stresses that trade agreements must uphold and make a positive contribution to biodiversity in third countries, including through robust, ambitious and properly enforced trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapters; urges the Commission's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer, in this regard, to oversee compliance of such agreements in close cooperation with the European Parliament; welcomes the integration of international environmental and human rights standards within the framework of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP); calls on the Commission to take into account the interlinkages of biodiversity with human rights when assessing the implementation of international human rights and environmental conventions under the GSP; calls for the inclusion of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples within that framework and recommends that EU Member States which have not yet done so ratify the convention; calls for the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in and enhanced transparency of GSP dialogues;
12. Calls on the Council to provide the Commission with a mandate to conduct negotiations on behalf of the EU concerning its participation in the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights with a view to adopting a binding and enforceable UN Treaty on business and human rights; stresses the importance of this process, notably in relation to the phenomenon of land-grabbing and its impact on biodiversity and on indigenous peoples' and human rights;
13. Pays tribute to defenders of environmental human rights and land rights, local community representatives, lawyers and journalists standing up to protect natural resources, and strongly condemns all acts of violence, including killings, and the criminalisation of their activities; acknowledges the contributions, experiences and knowledge of these groups in the fight against biodiversity loss and environmental degradation;
14. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to continue to systematically take up cases of defenders of environmental human rights and land rights facing threats of violence with the countries concerned; calls on the EEAS, in this regard, to continue the practice of handing over a list of individual cases of human rights violations against human rights defenders, when partaking in human rights policy dialogues and visits to third-country human rights institutions;
15. Welcomes the renewal in November 2019 for another three years of the EU human rights defenders mechanism ProtectDefenders.eu; recalls the importance of this mechanism vis-à-vis the growing needs

and variety of problems including violence and attacks faced by human rights, land and environmental defenders; calls for this mechanism to be reinforced and continually reassessed in line with its needs;

16. Urges the Commission to define a specific protection and support strategy for local communities and defenders of environmental human rights and land rights, which should be coordinated across all external assistance programmes; also calls for enhanced support for civil society organisations working to protect the environment and biodiversity, in particular through the establishment of partnerships and the building up of capacity to defend the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities;
17. Calls on the representatives of the EU and the Member States who will participate in the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) in October 2021 in Kunming, China, to advocate for biodiversity and ensure that global action on biodiversity and related objectives are linked to respect for and protection of the rights to life, health, food, water and housing, as well as the human rights of women, children, disabled people and other vulnerable groups affected by biodiversity loss; reiterates its call for the EU to push for the same high level of ambition during the negotiations in order to ensure a global level playing field, including legally binding international global restoration and protection targets of at least 30 % by 2030 in order to reflect the EU's domestic ambitions; urges the Commission and the Member States to consult and engage with relevant civil society groups and other interested stakeholders in advance of, during and after COP 15; strongly supports the integration of human rights in the COP 15 post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and calls for the establishment of nature conservation objectives at global and national level, building on the right to a clean, healthy, safe and sustainable environment;
18. Welcomes the commitment of the EU heads of state and governments under the 'Leaders' Pledge for Nature' to end environmental crimes, and with this aim, to ensure effective and dissuasive legal frameworks; urges, in this regard, the EU and the Member States to redouble their efforts to honour their obligations relating to environmental crimes and to promote an international approach to environmental criminal law; calls for the setting up of legal frameworks to ensure access to effective remedies in cases of loss and degradation of biodiversity; calls for the EU and the Member States to pursue new initiatives in order to make 'ecocide' a crime recognised under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, ensuring that its perpetrators are held to account; recommends that the scope of the serious human rights violations covered by the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime be extended to include environmental crimes; calls on the Commission to address the EU external dimension of the Environmental Crime Directive and the Environmental Liability Directive.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	17.3.2021
Result of final vote	+: 55 -: 5 0: 10
Members present for the final vote	Alviina Alametsä, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Lars Patrick Berg, Anna Bonfrisco, Reinhard Bütikofer, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Tanja Fajon, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Giorgos Georgiou, Sunčana Glavak, Raphaël Glucksmann, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Márton Gyöngyösi, Sandra Kalniete, Karol Karski, Dietmar Köster, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Javier Nart, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Jérôme Rivière, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Andreas Schieder, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Sergei Stanishev, Tineke Strik, Hermann Tertsch, Hilde Vautmans, Harald Vilimsky, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, Thomas Waitz, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Željana Zovko
Substitutes present for the final vote	Markéta Gregorová, Marisa Matias, Nicolae Ștefănuță
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Stelios Kympouropoulos, Leopoldo López Gil, Samira Rafaela

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

55	+
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Márton Gyöngyösi
PPE	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Michael Gahler, Sunčana Glavak, Sandra Kalniete, Andrius Kubilius, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Leopoldo López Gil, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Lukas Mandl, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Radosław Sikorski, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Željana Zovko
Renew	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Javier Nart, Samira Rafaela, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Hilde Vautmans
S&D	Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Tanja Fajon, Raphaël Glucksmann, Dietmar Köster, Claudiu Manda, Sven Mikser, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Giuliano Pisapia, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Andreas Schieder, Sergei Stanishev
The Left	Giorgos Georgiou, Marisa Matias, Manu Pineda, Idoia Villanueva Ruiz
Verts/ALE	Alviina Alametsä, Reinhard Bütikofer, Markéta Gregorová, Jordi Solé, Tineke Strik, Thomas Waitz, Salima Yenbou

5	-
ECR	Hermann Tertsch, Charlie Weimers
ID	Lars Patrick Berg, Harald Vilimsky
NI	Kostas Papadakis

10	0
ECR	Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Witold Jan Waszczykowski
ID	Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi, Thierry Mariani, Jérôme Rivière
PPE	David Lega, Miriam Lexmann

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

25.3.2021

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives
(2020/2273(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Gabriel Mato

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and in particular to Aichi Biodiversity Target 11,
- A. whereas the EU fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors subscribe to one of the highest standards of environmental and social sustainability throughout the entire value chain, including labour rights and animal health and welfare, and provide high-quality seafood products; whereas these sectors play a fundamental role in food security and nutritional well-being to an ever increasing population; whereas it is therefore of the utmost importance to achieve a fishing model that reflects a balance between the three fundamental dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and ensure the availability of food supplies, in line with relevant international commitments, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); whereas the role of the fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors in contributing to the achievement of several of the UN SDGs should be duly taken into account in the EU Biodiversity Strategy;
- B. whereas many of the seas bordering on Member States also border on third countries to which Community law does not apply and/or where no specific policy for the management of fisheries stocks or quotas exists;
- C. whereas EU fishers and fish farmers must participate in and contribute to the development of sustainable policies and continue providing not only healthy foods of high nutritional value, but also fundamental social and economic support to many coastal, inland and riparian communities, while adhering to Union environmental legislation;
- D. whereas fishing is a long-standing family tradition in some communities, but one that may nevertheless be discontinued or disappear altogether if the right balance is not struck between requirements and rules on the one hand, and sourcing food through small-scale fishing on the other;
- E. whereas fishers are more than explorers of sea resources, but are present on a daily basis, from coastal and inland areas to the high seas, being, on numerous occasions, the first to identify environmental accidents or degradation and to alert the authorities; whereas fishers participate in and contribute to

preventing environmental degradation, take steps to conserve the marine environment, and should therefore be seen as the guardians of the sea;

- F. whereas the degradation of habitats and the disruption of migration corridors by, for example, river modifications and dams, overexploitation for their caviar and meat, as well as pollution, have driven sturgeons to the brink of extinction; whereas the drastic decrease in the number of spawners, associated with the population decline, has triggered the failure of natural reproduction, reducing the chances of the few remaining males and females to meet and spawn;
- G. whereas the outermost regions (ORs) account for 70 % of European biodiversity;
- H. whereas the data held by research institutes indicate that the populations of sturgeon species are fragmented, missing certain generations and the natural reproduction of sturgeon species is deficient, that the number of adults migrating to the Danube for reproduction is extremely low and the sturgeon species is on the verge of extinction;
- I. whereas the EU Biodiversity Strategy should take into account the considerable improvements in fish populations in certain of the EU's sea basins, which should serve as an example; whereas, as a result of the implementation of improved management measures, there has been a 50 % increase in the stocks' biomass in the north-east Atlantic in the space of only 10 years and overfishing in the EU is constantly decreasing, while bearing in mind that it needs to be eliminated altogether; whereas, in the same sea basin, almost 100 % of the landings from EU-regulated stocks for which the respective scientific assessments are available come from stocks fished at the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels; whereas, however, in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea the majority of fish stocks remain overexploited;
- J. whereas in spite of the improvements in sustainability verified in the exploitation of marine resources in some sea basins, there are still areas that present worrying situations, in particular the Mediterranean Sea; whereas this sea has the highest percentage of marine protected areas in European seas, but at the same time represents the greatest cause for concern in terms of the general state of its resources, habitats and biodiversity;
- K. whereas the European Union has set itself some ambitious targets under the common fisheries policy (CFP), revised in 2013, and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; whereas, over and above the progress made in achieving MSY in some European basins, measures are still needed in order to achieve the overall objectives of good environmental status for waters;
- L. whereas marine biodiversity is seriously endangered, as highlighted in the 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate;
- M. whereas scientific studies have raised concerns about the significant long-term adverse impact that the use of certain fishing techniques can have on ocean biodiversity and the marine environment;
- N. whereas the European Green Deal and nature policy documents provide new opportunities and measures to better integrate environmental aspects into the sectoral policies, restore species and habitats, and promote more environmentally friendly investments;
- O. whereas the report of the European Environment Agency entitled 'Marine messages II', published in May 2019, warns of the current state of degradation of the European marine environment and the need to rapidly restore our marine ecosystems by addressing the impact of human activities on the marine environment;
- P. whereas light pollution alters the natural night lighting levels for humans, animals and plants, thereby negatively affecting biodiversity in the sea and the deep sea, lakes, inland waterways and coastal areas;

- Q. whereas the European Court of Auditors' Special Report 26/2020 entitled 'Marine environment: EU protection is wide but not deep' states that although a framework is in place to protect the marine environment, EU actions have not led to sufficient protection of ecosystems and habitats, and that current marine protected areas (MPAs) provide only limited protection;
- R. whereas the target of ensuring that at least 30 % of all marine habitats are protected by 2030 should be established at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021;

Protected areas and targets

1. Welcomes the fact that fisheries have been included in the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives (COM(2020)0380); stresses the need for fisheries, aquaculture and marine issues to be an integral part of the global framework for biodiversity in the Union;
2. Stresses the importance of ensuring coordination and mutual support between all European Green Deal initiatives, and between the EU's and the Member States' objectives regarding, inter alia, food security, climate change, marine natural resources and sustainable fisheries management;
3. Recalls that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)¹, it is becoming increasingly clear that well-managed fisheries have seen increases in average stock biomass, with many reaching or maintaining biologically sustainable levels, while fisheries with less-developed management systems are in poor shape;
4. Stresses that effectively implemented MPAs are a management tool for enhancing biodiversity in the marine environment and for the restoration and protection of habitats and the species inside and around them;
5. Highlights that, when effectively implemented and managed, MPAs can perform key ecological functions for the reproduction of marine species and habitats (providing spawning grounds and nurseries) and improve their resilience, also to climate change, and offer socio-economic benefits for coastal communities and the tourism sector;
6. Stresses that the ecosystem conditions required by each fishing basin must be guaranteed in order to enable fisheries resources to be maintained or even progressively increased over time;
7. Welcomes the establishment of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, setting ambitious targets; shares the view that urgent action is needed to preserve and restore biodiversity;
8. Points out that the need to preserve and restore biodiversity concerns the land, sea and oceans equally; calls, therefore, for the link between the land and the sea to be highlighted within the strategy, since what happens on the land has an impact on what happens at sea, particularly as regards the health of marine stocks and ecosystems;
9. Regrets the fact that greater attention is not paid to fisheries and aquaculture in the Commission's communication on the strategy; calls for fisheries and aquaculture to occupy their rightful place in the measures that are to follow the communication;
10. Calls for special attention to be paid to ORs and their specific features in the biodiversity strategy, given that these regions account for 70 % of European biodiversity;
11. Welcomes the goal that at least 25 000 km of watercourses should become free flowing once again by 2030 in order, for example, to facilitate the passage of migratory fish or improve the flow of water and sediment, thereby helping to improve the quality of coastal water bodies;

¹ FAO, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020 – Sustainability in action, Rome, 2020.

12. Points out that establishing MPAs does not have to be incompatible with the sustainable practice of activities, including extractive ones, as long as they do not compromise the values of the protected areas and provided that they are established following the best available scientific knowledge and advice and that there is adequate management and control;
13. Underlines that the implementation of strictly protected areas or the closure of fishing areas may have immediate negative impacts on social welfare and economic prosperity in coastal communities that would render the acceptance of these management tools difficult, and that this, in turn, can have a direct impact on the SDGs, such as SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); stresses, therefore, that, in order to establish MPAs, full impact assessments are a prerequisite and compensatory solutions for the coastal population concerned should be envisaged;
14. Highlights that establishing MPAs can contribute to the achievement of SDG 14;
15. Underlines that all protection objectives should be based on the best available scientific knowledge and advice, since the most important thing is to ensure that the established protection zones cover the areas of high ecological value, which must be protected;
16. Stresses that it is equally important to establish MPAs covering representative areas with ecological representation value and connected to other MPAs, as well as to wider seascapes that are equitably and effectively managed;
17. Stresses that, while their primary objective is to protect and restore marine biological diversity, MPAs also have an impact on fisheries; highlights that, according to recent studies², MPAs tend to increase catches in overexploited fisheries and to decrease catches in well-managed fisheries and in those which are under-fished compared to the MSYs;
18. Considers it fundamental that the implementation of all MPAs should be based on the best available scientific knowledge, associated with a proper specific impact assessment and in close coordination with local authorities, communities and stakeholders;
19. Considers strengthening and efficiently implementing existing MPAs to be a necessity; calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish, as a matter of priority, specific management plans for these areas, defining clear conservation objectives and effective monitoring, surveillance and control measures; in particular, urges the Member States to expedite the development and submission of joint recommendations for the management of fisheries in their MPAs under Article 11 of the CFP;
20. Stresses that management plans should be based on the best scientific knowledge and advice and on an integrated approach, and developed through mechanisms that ensure the active participation of the affected parties in the coastal communities, such as the fisheries sector, the scientific community and social and environmental organisations, so that they can actively engage in the co-management of these areas; stresses that only such proper governance of MPAs would decisively contribute to achieving their objectives;
21. Requests that the above prerequisites also apply to all new MPAs;
22. Points out the need for all new MPAs created under this strategy to be included in the Natura 2000 framework and, where appropriate, supplemented by additional designations by the Member States;
23. Notes with concern that some man-made wetlands are under constant pressure from the improper management of certain protected species of birds and mammals, such as great cormorant, herons or otters, which are seriously damaging aquaculture farms, pushing the farmers to the brink of abandoning their activity and thus leading to more damage to overall biodiversity;

²Cabral, R. B., et al, 'A global network of marine protected areas for food', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 117, No 45, November 2020.

24. Stresses the importance of including in the EU Biodiversity Strategy ‘other effective area-based conservation measures’ defined in CBD Decision 14/8³ as ‘a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values’; calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to transpose the established CBD criteria for, and to ensure the effectiveness of, these ‘other effective area-based conservation measures’;
25. Acknowledges that fish farming and seafood aquaculture generate the lowest carbon footprint in the animal husbandry sector; encourages the Commission to use the Biodiversity Strategy to recognise, support and promote the environmentally friendly management practices developed by farmers;

Strictly protected areas and no-take zones

26. Stresses that protecting nursery and spawning areas is essential for the restocking and breeding of many species essential for biodiversity, such as marine cetaceans; emphasises the importance of prohibiting, in no-take zones, fishing techniques and other extractive activities that can have a detrimental impact on ocean biodiversity and the marine environment;
27. Points out that the strict protection of marine areas does not always mean that extractive activities, including fishing, have to cease altogether, provided that they are controlled and limited to ensure protection of the conservation values;
28. Points out that strictly protected areas and no-take zones can bring great alternative benefits to coastal areas, as well as serving as important sites for education, ocean literacy and research into marine biodiversity, and environmental awareness in local communities and visiting populations; stresses that non-extractive uses in these areas and zones can play a major role in their surveillance and monitoring through the participation of visitors in citizen science actions and programmes;
29. Stresses the extreme urgency of establishing ‘fish stock recovery areas’ (or ‘no-take zones’) in the Black Sea, to allow the recovery of the wild populations of sturgeons, as such areas have proven beneficial both for biodiversity conservation and fisheries management;
30. Stresses that the deep sea is home to the greatest diversity of species and ecosystems on Earth, provides critical environmental goods and services, including long-term carbon sequestration, and is characterised by environmental conditions that make it highly vulnerable to human disturbance; points out that scientists have warned that deep seabed mining will cause biodiversity loss, both by destroying seabed life where the mining takes place, with little prospect of recovery, and by generating plumes, light, toxins and noise that could have an impact on both benthic and mesopelagic marine life far beyond the actual mining sites, and that the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for the protection of the ocean, for resilience to be built, for the restoration of degraded ecosystems and for the sustainable consumption and production of resources;

Spatial planning

31. Stresses the importance of proper and inclusive spatial planning, which takes sufficiently into account the environmental, social and economic sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture, as well as the status and sensitivity of habitats, pointing to the need for a transparent and participative mechanism, following the Marine Spatial Planning Directive, for allocating space to all stakeholders in an equitable manner, including to existing and new fishing grounds and aquaculture farms;
32. Recognises the difficulties associated with making the different uses of the sea compatible with one another and with conflict management between certain uses of space, including recreational and leisure activities; highlights that technology is constantly evolving and, as a consequence, all activities are also evolving, making it necessary to consider spatial planning as evolutionary;

³ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf>

33. Recalls the need to consider all other blue economy activities in spatial planning, in particular recreational and leisure activities; stresses the need to avoid banning entire sectors from marine protected areas; in the case of fishing, calls on the Commission to distinguish between different types of fishing gear and to take into account fishing effort and specific impacts, to determine which activity should, or should not, be restricted; underlines that some fishing activities, such as small-scale or recreational fisheries, can be very selective and even non-extractive;
34. Urges the Commission and the Member States, given the expected expansion of renewable energy at sea, to boost scientific research into the impact of energy solutions such as ocean energy, offshore wind farms or solar panel farms at an environmental level – notably into their impact on biodiversity – and at a socio-economic level;

Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems

35. Recalls that the CFP provides for a robust regulatory framework with sophisticated tools, which has set down the dates of publication of specific reports, whereby the Commission is to report to Parliament and to the Council on the functioning of the CFP by 31 December 2022;
36. Recalls also that, according to the new Technical Measures Regulation⁴, the Commission must submit a report to Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2020, and that in cases where there is evidence that the objectives and targets have not been met, the Commission may propose measures;
37. Urges the Member States to take action to strengthen the ex situ conservation of sturgeons in special facilities, resume supportive stocking programmes with native juvenile sturgeons and launch studies assessing the percentage of adult fish returning for spawning;
38. Calls on the Commission, therefore, to propose an action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems in order to prevent any further degradation of biodiversity in accordance with the CFP obligations, considering, where appropriate, additional and complementary measures to the CFP framework; calls on the Commission, in the context of its action plan and as part of the ecosystem-based implementation of fisheries management, to identify practices which have a significant adverse impact on ocean biodiversity and the marine environment and, where necessary, to introduce appropriate mitigation measures;
39. Recalls the importance of the proper and diligent implementation of the Control Regulation⁵, the reform of which is to be adopted soon and which will promote the protection of marine biodiversity in European seas;
40. Stresses the importance of continuing to implement a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal, unregulated and undocumented (IUU) fishing, and of promoting sustainable fishing by combating overfishing and bycatches of endangered species, as well as other species;
41. Calls for third countries, in particular neighbouring countries, to be required to monitor the fisheries resources in their waters in an equivalent manner in order to ensure a healthy ecosystem in marine habitats which are not linked to artificial man-made borders;

Fair treatment of the fisheries sector

42. Emphasises the need to ensure the fair treatment of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors with regard to other sectors; welcomes the fact that the proposed strategy outlines that ‘the progress towards the target will be under constant review, and adjustment if needed, to mitigate against undue impact on biodiversity, food security and farmers’ competitiveness’; stresses that this provision should equally apply to fishers and aquaculture producers and refer to them;

⁴OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 105.

⁵OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

43. Expresses the need to accord the fisheries sector the importance it justly deserves in order to guarantee in all cases socio-economic sustainability for all people affected by the transformation processes of the marine environment required to guarantee the biodiversity indices needed by the various ecosystems to remain healthy and to continue to provide the environmental services resulting from natural processes, including, where necessary, the promotion of new alternatives that the blue economy will offer to fishing communities and the associated training processes that they may require;

An ecosystem approach to the CFP

44. Calls for the Commission to establish a genuine ecosystem approach to all drivers of marine biodiversity loss, which takes account not only of the pressure of fishing on stocks, biodiversity and marine ecosystems, but also of other factors, such as pollution and climate change, shipping, coastal and near shore uses, dredging, and seabed mining among other things; recalls that fishing is not the only activity responsible for the failure to achieve good ecological status in marine ecosystems;
45. Points out the need to evaluate, through a proper impact assessment, the drivers of marine biodiversity loss, which include pollution from industrial activities, shipping, plastic pollution, offshore wind energy and seabed mining;

Fishing gears

46. Recommends that the strategy should not single out specific gears or techniques; recognises that bottom trawling has been identified by the FAO as the gear type that contributes most to annual levels of discards and that it can have a highly detrimental impact on the seabed, depending on the fishery and the particularities of the fished areas; highlights, however, that this impact can be mitigated to reduce the pressure on the seabed and minimise the impacted area with the implementation of several mitigation measures; recalls that bottom trawling is not the only activity which has an impact on the seabed; demands that the Commission conduct an in-depth analysis, including relevant environmental impact assessments, in each area where this gear is used, thereby clarifying the negative or positive consequences it may have on each of them, in order to facilitate decision-making; recalls the requirement to cease fishing with bottom-contacting gear below 400 m in areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to exist;
47. Recalls that bottom trawling is one of the most common and most regulated fishing gears in Europe; stresses that it is currently the only viable way to catch many key species in quantities that can satisfy demand in the EU market and that almost all of the key species for which scientific assessments exist in the north-east Atlantic are fished at MSY levels and some of them are Marine Stewardship Council certified; calls for specific measures to be proposed for fisheries not yet managed at MSY levels, such as those included in the multiannual management plan for demersal species in the western Mediterranean Sea⁶;
48. Calls on the Commission to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management by adopting and implementing actions in order to improve fishing gear selectivity, contributing to the survival of non-target species, and to implement measures to reduce the impact of fishing techniques on marine ecosystems; stresses that fisheries management plans should take into account the results of scientific studies that analyse fishing practices and their impact on species, habitats, ocean biodiversity and marine environments, and contribute with solutions to resolve the negative impacts identified, including limiting their use or introducing new technological mitigation solutions;

Specific recommendations for aquaculture

49. Highlights the need to simplify administrative procedures on aquaculture activities, especially in Natura 2000 areas, and asks the Commission to fully implement and, if needed, update its guidance on

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2019/1022 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for the fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean Sea and amending Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, OJ L 172, 26.6.2019, p. 1.

‘Aquaculture and Natura 2000 areas’, where harmful interactions with the marine environment must be avoided as far as possible;

50. Considers that ecosystem services provided by aquaculture, of which the maintenance of biodiversity is an important example, must be taken into consideration and supported; underlines that the value of the ecosystem services provided by pond farming is greater than that of any agricultural sector, but that support for the complex natural value services created and maintained by aquaculture is significantly lower than in agriculture;
51. Points out that some forms of aquaculture, such as the pond farming of carp, lagoon aquaculture, shellfish and algae aquaculture, especially those which are traditionally managed, not only have a long history of being integrated within the ecosystem, but are of the utmost importance for the maintenance of wetland habitats, improving biodiversity and consequently providing a full range of ecosystem services, not only as a healthy food provider, but also involving regulation services such as carbon sequestration, nutrient removal, bioremediation or cultural services;
52. Welcomes the proposals to reduce and limit the use of pesticides and other chemicals in order to protect biodiversity; strongly believes, however, that such measures should be pre-assessed diligently and should include cumulative impact assessments;
53. Embraces the ambitions set out in the Water Framework Directive⁷ and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive⁸; highlights that aquaculture can play a role in restoring degraded marine and freshwater ecosystems, with known contributions from low-impact aquaculture farms for the conservation objectives of areas such as wetlands and lagoons;
54. Strongly supports the objective of zero tolerance of IUU fishing; points out that IUU fishing has an extremely negative impact on the state of stocks, marine ecosystems, biodiversity and the competitiveness of European fishers; calls, in this regard, for greater consistency between EU trade and fisheries policies in order to ensure that IUU fishing is combated effectively;
55. Welcomes the strategy’s emphasis on international ocean governance and MPAs in the Southern Ocean; calls for the EU to take on the role of leader in international ocean governance, as it will not be able to ensure the preservation and restoration of biodiversity in the world on its own; calls for the Commission to demand that the Ocean be declared a shared asset of humankind;
56. Calls for special attention to be paid to the Arctic Ocean, since it is not covered by any regional fisheries management organisation, and calls for monitoring of the agreement to prevent unregulated fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean;

Funding

57. Stresses the importance of adequate funding, including for the artisanal component of the fishing sector, in the transition towards more selective and less damaging fishing techniques, through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and Horizon Europe, in order to achieve the EU’s goals on biodiversity;
58. Points out that the key objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 are also valid for agreements with third countries and that partnership agreements of this kind should therefore be revised accordingly;

Conclusions

59. Welcomes the high level of ambition when setting targets, namely to protect and conserve, through a well-connected and effective system of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, at least 30 % of the sea in the EU by 2030, of which one third (10 % of the sea in the EU) should be strictly protected; strongly recommends, however, that such targets should be implemented on a

⁷ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

⁸ OJ L 164 25.6.2008, p. 19.

case-by-case basis, adapted to local specificities (given that that different seas have different physical and chemical characteristics, and that different traditions exist and/or are practiced) and to the level required to protect nature and biodiversity, with the creation of fisheries co-management groups; recommends that such targets should also take into account socio-economic considerations, be backed by reconversion programmes and alternative livelihoods for fishing communities, consider the need to ensure a long-term resilience of the fisheries and aquaculture value chain, be proportionate with the objective pursued and have a solid scientific basis; points out that healthy and resilient ecosystems are in the mutual interest of nature, the environment and the fisheries sector;

60. Calls on the Commission to develop a robust reporting process with criteria to count officially marine protected areas within international targets only once they are actively managed;
61. Points out that, in the case of many seas bordering on the EU, dialogue and close cooperation is required with third countries as the EU does not have uniform legal and/or treaty arrangements or agreements with all these countries, and this should be taken into account when establishing targets for the preservation of biodiversity;
62. Stresses the importance of the constructive, effective and equal consultation of all relevant stakeholders involved in blue economy activities, in particular fishers and marine and freshwater aquaculture producers, including their associations and alliances, in any decision concerning management tools and spatial planning related to biodiversity or any other protection measure of habitats, species or the environment; recalls that the success of MPAs and other protected areas lies in their being accepted and embraced by fishers, coastal communities and other stakeholders;
63. Calls on the Commission to consider the need to facilitate the active participation of the fisheries sector, including its artisanal component, the local communities and all relevant stakeholders in the design, management and monitoring of MPAs when drafting the action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems;
64. Stresses that fishing has the lowest carbon footprint when compared with other food production industries, since wild-caught seafood does not require to be artificially fed, or the use of water supply, antibiotics or pesticides; in the light of this, underlines that the impact of the fishing sector on the marine environment mainly concerns commercial fish species; acknowledges, however, that while commercial fishing does have an influence on species abundance and presence in specific regions, it has not ever caused the extinction of any fish species in the oceans; notes further that in terrestrial areas, whole ecosystems have been destroyed and completely replaced as a consequence of land-based industries whose impact deeply affects the marine environment as well; points out, as an example, that over 80 % of so-called marine litter in reality comes from land-based sources;
65. Stresses the need to conduct comprehensive impact assessments that take into account the impact on small-scale fishers and small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, and that consider the accomplishments achieved to date and the availability of alternative products, economic impacts alongside effects on food security and food safety, with a view to guaranteeing the preservation of biodiversity together with the competitiveness of the seafood value chain;
66. Emphasises the importance of ensuring an adequate and fair income to fishers, aquaculture producers and farmers, as well as a level playing field with imported food; reiterates that the EU has the responsibility to promote the global and equitable sustainable development of all countries; stresses that the needs of some developing countries are not always compatible with the EU's ambitious environmental objectives; highlights that highly demanding measures within the EU will significantly increase imports from third countries with lower environmental standards, resulting in negative impacts on the world's biodiversity and thus undermining the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, as well as EU international ocean governance goals; points out that stricter standards on the traceability of fisheries products could help to achieve this aim;
67. Advocates for the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to be achieved in the most effective way while ensuring economic competitiveness and social benefits for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;

68. Calls on the Member States to allocate more resources for research and development into fish and non-fish species, and for material support for research facilities, to ensure the provision of precise and timely information which can be used when making recommendations and taking decisions;
69. Notes the Commission's remark that in order 'to have healthy and resilient societies we need to give nature the space it needs'; stresses that, to succeed in this aim, sustainability needs to be seen from a holistic perspective, accounting for its environmental, social and economic aspects, and that if we are to have healthy and resilient societies, not only do we need to give nature the space it needs, but also to give fishers and aquaculture producers the space they need;
70. Calls on the Commission to develop revised, appropriate and ambitious plans and regulations to prevent the incursion of invasive species into the various European seas and oceans with comprehensive protocols to prevent, above all, the entry of species that can have a major negative impact not only on biodiversity overall, but also on fisheries, resulting in large economic losses, and including the design of actions for the management of invasive species, and in order to minimise the negative effects that invasive species can cause on the different sectors and ecosystems in the event that such incursions cannot be avoided;
71. Calls for policy coherence among EU environmental, fisheries, trade, including external trade, and other EU policies to uphold the integrity of the single market and the competitiveness of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
72. Welcomes the restoration of the free flowing of rivers in a sustainable way, taking into account the environmental, social and economic aspects, investing in technology and innovation for the creation of fishing migration routes, without hindering the right of Member States to decide on their energy mix, the economic activity of hydropower plants, and the energy security and environmental benefits of hydropower.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	
Result of final vote	17 4 0: 7
Members present for the final vote	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, François-Xavier Bellamy, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Isabel Carvalhais, Rosanna Conte, Rosa D'Amato, Giuseppe Ferrandino, João Ferreira, Søren Gade, Francisco Guerreiro, Anja Hazekamp, Niclas Herbst, France Jamet, Pierre Karleskind, Predrag Fred Matić, Francisco José Millán Mon, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Grace O'Sullivan, Manuel Pizarro, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Ruža Tomašić, Emma Wiesner, Theodoros Zagorakis
Substitutes present for the final vote	eu, Gabriel Mato, Annalisa Tardino

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

17	+
ID	France Jamet
PPE	François-Xavier Bellamy, Niclas Herbst, Gabriel Mato, Francisco José Millán Mon, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Theodoros Zagorakis
Renew	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Søren Gade, Pierre Karleskind, Emma Wiesner
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, Isabel Carvalhais, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Predrag Fred Matić, Manuel Pizarro

4	-
ECR	Bert-Jan Ruissen, Ruža Tomašić
PPE	Annie Schreijer-Pierik
The Left	Anja Hazekamp

7	0
ID	Rosanna Conte, Annalisa Tardino
The Left	João Ferreira
Verts/ALE	Benoît Biteau, Rosa D'Amato, Francisco Guerreiro, Grace O'Sullivan

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	28.5.2021
Result of final vote	+ : 62 - : 4 0 : 12
Members present for the final vote	Nikos Androulakis, Bartosz Arłukowicz, Margrete Auken, Simona Baldassarre, Marek Paweł Balt, Traian Băsescu, Aurélie Beigneux, Monika Beňová, Sergio Berlato, Alexander Bernhuber, Malin Björk, Simona Bonafè, Delara Burkhardt, Pascal Canfin, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Esther de Lange, Christian Doleschal, Marco Dreosto, Bas Eickhout, Cyrus Engerer, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Pietro Fiocchi, Catherine Griset, Jytte Guteland, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Martin Hojsík, Pär Holmgren, Jan Huitema, Petros Kokkalis, Joanna Kopcińska, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Peter Liese, Sylvia Limmer, Javi López, César Luena, Fulvio Martusciello, Sara Matthieu, Liudas Mažylis, Joëlle Mélin, Tilly Metz, Silvia Modig, Dolors Montserrat, Alessandra Moretti, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Ville Niinistö, Jutta Paulus, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Luisa Regimenti, Frédérique Ries, Michèle Rivasi, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Sándor Rónai, Rob Rooker, Christine Schneider, Günther Sidl, Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, Linea Søgaard-Lidell, Maria Spyraiki, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Nils Torvalds, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Petar Vitanov, Alexandr Vondra, Mick Wallace, Pernille Weiss, Emma Wiesner, Michal Wiezik, Tiemo Wölken, Anna Zalewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Salvatore De Meo, Ondřej Knotek, Andrey Slabakov, Nikolaj Villumsen

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

62	+
ECR	Joanna Kopcińska, Andrey Slabakov, Alexandr Vondra
NI	Ivan Vilibor Sinčić
PPE	Bartosz Arłukowicz, Traian Băsescu, Alexander Bernhuber, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Salvatore De Meo, Christian Doleschal, Agnès Evren, Esther de Lange, Peter Liese, Fulvio Martusciello, Liudas Mažylis, Dolores Montserrat, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Christine Schneider, Maria Spyra, Pernille Weiss, Michal Wiezik
Renew	Pascal Canfin, Martin Hojsík, Ondřej Knotek, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Linea Søgaard-Lidell, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir
S&D	Nikos Androulakis, Marek Paweł Balt, Monika Beňová, Simona Bonafè, Delara Burkhardt, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Cyrus Engerer, Jytte Guteland, Javi López, César Luena, Alessandra Moretti, Sándor Rónai, Günther Sidl, Petar Vitanov, Tiemo Wölken
The Left	Malin Björk, Petros Kokkalis, Silvia Modig, Nikolaj Villumsen, Mick Wallace,
Verts/ALE	Margrete Auken, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, Pär Holmgren, Sara Matthieu, Tilly Metz, Ville Niinistö, Jutta Paulus, Michèle Rivasi

4	-
ID	Teuvo Hakkarainen, Sylvia Limmer
Renew	Nils Torvalds, Emma Wiesner

12	0
ECR	Sergio Berlato, Pietro Focchi, Rob Rooker, Anna Zalewska
ID	Simona Baldassarre, Aurélia Beigneux, Marco Dreosto, Catherine Griset, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Joëlle Mélin, Luisa Regimenti
Renew	Jan Huitema

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention