

Biodiversity: Important environmental, health and socio-economic value. Bogusław Sonik MEP and Romana Jordan MEP

The European Parliament at its plenary session in Strasbourg, today adopted the Report on an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020.

"According to the UN Food Agriculture Organisation, 60 percent of the world's ecosystems are degraded or used incorrectly. Across the EU, only 17 percent of habitats and species, and 11 percent of key ecosystems are maintained in good condition. Halting biodiversity loss should be the main goal, which Member States must take up and successfully achieve in accordance with the decisions taken by COP 10 in Nagoya. The EU did not reach the 2010 biodiversity targets. Now in order to succeed the EU institutions and Member States must show greater determination and effectiveness," stated Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) Shadow Rapporteur, Boguslaw Sonik MEP.

Romana Jordan MEP, the Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE) Rapporteur on the issue, said: "The ITRE Committee confirmed that biodiversity is not only valued in terms of environmental protection and healthy living environment, but also has a socio-economic value. Rich and diverse nature is an inexhaustible source of new knowledge and inspiration for innovation and, as such, can develop new skills, jobs and business opportunities. Therefore, biodiversity should strengthen its horizontal role in European policies."

Biodiversity is a major challenge in the European Union. Almost 25 % of all animal species are at risk, and over 88% of fish stocks are over-exploited. However, it does not only lead to loss of resources, but also to economic losses. With 17% of damaged ecosystems, so that they can no longer provide the services that we rely on in performing daily activities and which determine the quality of life. Therefore, the Commission proposed a strategy, based on two objectives: to halt biodiversity loss by 2020, and to protect, assets and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2050.

The targets include strict enforcement of existing laws to protect nature and to improve conservation of habitats and species, maintenance and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services, particularly by establishing the green infrastructure, ensuring the sustainability of agriculture and forestry activities, protection of EU fish stocks, control of invasive species, increasing the EU contribution for a coordinated global action to prevent the loss of biodiversity, in accordance with international obligations, which were agreed in Nagoya, Japan.