

22 September 2014

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

As one of the UK's elected representatives in the European Parliament, I am asking you to seek significant changes to the new European Commission proposed by Jean-Claude Juncker to ensure that sustainable development and the environment are at the heart of future EU policy.

The EU has provided global leadership on climate, nature protection, air and water quality and waste and a sustainable economy will ensure the EU is more competitive and resilient. We are therefore concerned that sustainable development does not feature in the portfolios of the Commission Vice-Presidents and that the Birds and Habitats Directives - the cornerstone of nature protection across Europe - are explicitly threatened by the mandate given to the Environment Commissioner. This pre-empts the Commission's Fitness Check underway for these Directives, would jeopardise progress towards European targets to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and bring uncertainty for government, industry and all other stakeholders.

To ensure a sustainable future for Europe, we are therefore asking you to seek the following changes to the European Commission:

- Establish a Vice-President for Sustainability to mainstream sustainable development across the work of the European Commission and co-ordinate the environment, fisheries, agriculture and regional policy portfolios.
- Provide new instructions to the Environment Commissioner designate to focus on effectively implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives, including a halt to the illegal hunting practices in Malta and other Member States, instead of merging or weakening them.
- Upgrade the Vice-President for Energy Union to a Vice-President for 'Climate Action and Energy Union' to ensure the European Commission representative at international climate negotiations would have a clear mandate to address the climate crisis.

If you would like further background information about these proposals, please contact Eleanor Burke, European Policy Campaigns Adviser, e:eleanor.burke@rspb.org.uk, t: +44 1767 693411.

A recent Eurobarometer poll found that 94% of UK citizens questioned feel the environment is important to them personally and 66% agree that EU legislation is necessary to protect the environment. The UK public's love of nature is also demonstrated by the millions who watch Springwatch and support nature NGOs, such as the RSPB.

As an MEP, you will of course understand the importance of standing up for the public interest. With this in mind, we ask that you please help ensure that significant changes are made to the new European Commission before it is adopted.

Thank you for your support.



Dr Mike Clarke
Chief Executive