

“The European Biodiversity Conference called for more public-private partnership to save European biodiversity in times of financial austerity “

Press release

For release: Brussels 1st December 2011, European Parliament

Statement on the Conference: “The 2020 Biodiversity strategy: a public-private partnership for sustainable resource use”

Organised by the European Landowners' Organization and Véronique MATHIEU, MEP and Chair of the Intergroup on Sustainable hunting, biodiversity, countryside activities, agriculture and forest, the European Biodiversity Conference brought together the EU representatives, agribusinesses, NGOs, scientists, public authorities, and land managers to discuss how to overcome the financial challenges without scarifying biodiversity conservation. Short-term solutions may become long-term disasters. In the end, the global biodiversity crisis would cost more than the economic crisis.

However, as said by **Janez POTOČNIK**, EU Commissioner for the Environment: *«We are all aware of claims in some quarters that now is not the time to invest in environmental protection and that our focus should be on jobs and growth. This is a much too short term view of the world. We need sustainable jobs and sustainable growth and if we fail to transform our economies, fail to deal with the loss of biodiversity and the loss of natural resources then we will find ourselves in a much greater crisis further down the road. »*

Environmental challenges and the new course for resource consumption should not jeopardise the earth's life-support systems in the long-term. Yet sustainable use and management of natural resources is essential to achieve the 2020 biodiversity targets. According to the report on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report initiated by 13 environment ministers, the continuous loss of biodiversity will cost the world at least 7% of GDP by 2050.

Julie GIRLING, MEP and Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety commented: *«It is vitally important to ensure that biodiversity is at the top of the "wish-list" for European policymakers. With the European Parliament's post-Lisbon co-decision in Agriculture I look forward to helping to balance food production with environmental progress. »*

Véronique MATHIEU, MEP and Chair of the Intergroup on Sustainable hunting, biodiversity, countryside activities, agriculture and forest commented: *« We are aware of the fact that not only money is necessary to achieve the objectives but partnerships are key for the implementation of a realistic and balanced EU Biodiversity strategy. »*

Though-provocative statements launched fiery debate on possible solutions. How can the environmental performance of the CAP be improved? How to address environmental stewardship and services offered by lands managers? How will the industries implement the “No net lost” initiative? And should land managers be rewarded for their contribution for the EU biodiversity?

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General, European Landowners' Organization, concluded: *“Biodiversity is our lifeline, but it is mainly truth for these from us who work for it on daily basis-land managers. If the EU wants to avoid paying the bill for the biodiversity loss in the future, it is the highest time to finally take farmers, foresters, hunters and anglers on board. Investing in ecosystem services and biodiversity related measures under the CAP now, means to pay less for biodiversity loss in the future.”*

If there were to be as many private-public initiatives as people who filled the conference room (150) we could then hope for the success of the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.

Media Contact:

Barbora Buckova: +32 2 235 20 02/+32 479 497 223 ruraldev@elo.org