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European Commission
By e-mail: EU2020@ec.europa.eu

Dear Sirs

**Scottish Natural Heritage Response
European Commission Consultation on the Future EU 2020 Strategy**

Thank you for giving Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) the opportunity to comment on the future “EU 2020” Strategy. Given SNH’s responsibility for the natural heritage in Scotland, we shall restrict our response to those issues which relate to the natural environment.

We were encouraged to see the Strategy recognises that the new vision and direction of EU policy needs to conserve natural resources and use them more efficiently, and that Europe needs a thriving agriculture and rural economy. However, we were disappointed that the Strategy did not develop these arguments any further and failed to acknowledge that management of our land (our natural capital) has a major role in achieving sustainable economic growth, as well as contributing to social well-being, adapting to climate change, the provision of ecosystem services and the conservation of Europe’s biodiversity. We believe this is a missed opportunity and limits the value of the Strategy as an innovative and forward-looking tool for securing a sustainable future for Europe.

We would therefore like to see the 2020 Strategy highlight the importance of land use for the economy, environment and social wellbeing of Europe, and set out a vision for the management of land which:

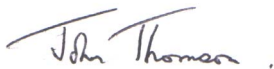
- secures healthy, resilient ecosystems which continue to provide the ecosystem services on which society depends,
- allows land to adapt and withstand external pressures such as climate change, for example, flood plain and wetland management,
- demonstrates how to restore biodiversity lost through past patterns of social and economic development
- recognises the role of land use in climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting carbon sequestration and storage, and limiting the amount returned to the atmosphere, for example, through appropriate soil, woodland and peatland management,

- enhances, rather than diminishes, the value of land and landscapes in providing cultural identity, contributing to human well-being and quality of life; and underpinning tourism and inward investment,
- acknowledges that the quality of the environment is important in the production and branding of many of Europe's quality food and drink products, and that future brand image is likely to be based on guarantees of sustainable production and perceptions of a high quality environment,
- recognises the value of greenspace within the urban environment, both for quality of life and opportunities for exercise, as well as designed for adaptation to climate change,
- recognises that renewable resources should be used within their capacity for renewal and that non-renewable resources are used wisely and sparingly.

Only when the EU 2020 Strategy actively recognises the value of the natural environment to its economic future can it truly hope to ensure a sustainable future for its citizens.

If you have any questions about the response, please contact Karen Wright (tel. 0131 316 2600 or e-mail karen.wright@snh.gov.uk) in the first instance.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Thomson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Thomson
Director of Strategy & Communications