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Parliament of Romania

Chamber of Deputies

OPINION

on the substance of the Communication 'Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020'

COM(2011) 244

Having regard to the Treaty of Lisbon and in particular Articles 5 and 12 TEU and Protocols 1 and 2 annexed to the Treaty,

Having regard to the Constitution of Romania, as republished, in particular Article 148 thereof,

Having regard to Decision No 11/2011 of the Chamber of Deputies,

Taking into account the opinion presented by the Committee on public administration, regional planning and ecological balance at its meeting of 31 May 2011,

Taking into account the final draft opinion presented by the European Affairs Committee at its meeting of 14 June 2011,

Having regard to the approval given by the Permanent Office of the Chamber of Deputies on 20 June 2011,

The Chamber of Deputies, acting in accordance with Article 40 of Decision No 11/2011 of the Chamber of Deputies of 19 April 2011, hereby adopts this opinion:

- It considers that the objectives and guidelines of the EU Strategy on biodiversity to 2020 correspond to the interests of the European Union and largely meet the requirements and conditions in Romania.
- It recommends that the European Commission insists on ensuring the pragmatic nature of the measures which will be taken to implement the strategy and on reducing formalities and bureaucracy.
- It considers that greater coordination needs to be ensured between the policies of the Union which this strategy is related to.
- It underlines that training the young generation in decision-making and planning processes and implementing measures which aim to protect biodiversity is a priority for the citizens of the Union, as the strategy relates to the future in which the children and young people of today will be living.
- It considers that the careful use of public resources and the grounding of the measures in detailed scientific knowledge are obligatory conditions for the success of such a strategy,

together with particular care to ensure that the taxes paid by European taxpayers are spent effectively.

In view of what has been highlighted above, we recommend that the European Commission, when applying and revising this strategy, takes into account the following aspects, which we consider have been insufficiently addressed in the document, even though they are relevant to the interests and future of the citizens of the European Union:

1. A calculation which is as documented and transparent as possible of the amount of grants for protecting biodiversity in the context of the common agricultural policy;
2. Consideration of the conservation of fishery resources in inland waters, not only in seas, by coordinating with the EU policy on fisheries;
3. Coordinating the policies on biodiversity with those which aim to manage forests throughout the EU;
4. Harmonising the indicators relating to the management of biodiversity with the indicators relating to common agricultural policies and to common fisheries policies, while taking into account the real possibilities for the efficient collection of input data to formulate these indicators in each Member State; allowing a period of grace for putting the systems of indicators into operation or for adapting national statistics systems, and for undertaking specific studies, such as market studies;
5. Encouraging specific measures to implement the biodiversity strategies; supporting research in the area by giving priority to field studies and to computerising biodiversity management;
6. Encouraging activities at national and regional level, but above all at local level, with regard to consulting on and implementing measures based on this strategy;
7. Increasing the role of the European Union in formulating policies based on the Rio Conventions and in the plans to implement these Conventions;
8. Supporting coordination between the implementing and reporting mechanisms of the Rio Conventions, with a view to stimulating practical aspects and removing excessive formality and bureaucracy;
9. Careful monitoring, verification and prevention of the risks of corruption or poor management of the programmes of the European Union which are aimed at or concern the protection and management of biodiversity and are managed by the European Commission;
10. Supporting and promoting modern remote-sensing and GIS techniques for the protection of biodiversity and collaborating with the European Space Agency to promote satellite products which are directly applicable to environmental planning and monitoring, including the management of Natura 2000 network sites;
11. Disseminating the message of biodiversity protection through modern channels which have a high impact and are highly effective (films on the Internet, 3D cinematography etc.) by including the message both in specific environment and biodiversity programmes and in the MEDIA programme of the European Union;

12. In line with the Communication 'Early childhood education and care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow – COM(2011) 66', which highlights the need to increase the quality of school curricula and to address the whole educational complex of young children, it is recommended that, when applying the strategy, the focus should be on supporting the diversification of educational alternatives for young people, which are relevant for forming a sustainable environmental consciousness (Waldorf, Montessori, 'forest nursery' etc).

13. In line with the Communication 'An EU strategy for youth: investing and empowering – COM(2009) 200' – Field of Action 5 – Participation, and with the guidelines of chapter 5 of this Communication concerning the cross-sectoral approach, it would be recommendable for the strategy on biodiversity to contain specific references to the participation of young people in decision-making and planning processes for biodiversity management, in particular at regional and local level.

This opinion shall be sent to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

PRESIDENT,

Roberta Alma Anastase