

M Vella, Commissioner for Environment,
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

26th of October, 2015

Dear Commissioner,

The REFIT process is currently underway for the two Natura 2000 directives. We, the environment ministers of Germany, Croatia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain, are following this process with great interest.

We would like to inform you of our view on this matter as a contribution to further discussion within the Commission.

The European nature conservation directives have proven their worth and have become an essential component of biodiversity conservation in Europe. It will not be possible to achieve the goals of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 without them. The first signs of success are evident.

There is now legal certainty as a result of well advanced implementation. Those affected have learned how to deal with the directives' provisions. Any amendment would require the allocation of personnel and financial resources for a period of many years, meaning that these resources would no longer be available for the much more important process of implementing the nature conservation directives. The result would be new legal uncertainty.

We therefore all agree that the directives should retain their current form. We believe that amending or merging the directives is not expedient.

In addition, France would like to stress that the focus needs to be put on strengthening and improving the directives implementation.

Please be assured that we are always ready to support the regional and national implementation of the Natura 2000 directives and to improve practical implementation. We believe that placing greater emphasis on implementation would be a more efficient means of achieving the Aichi and EU biodiversity targets than changing the legal frame.

Yours sincerely,



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Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature
Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
Germany



Mihael Zmajlović
Minister for Environmental and
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Croatia



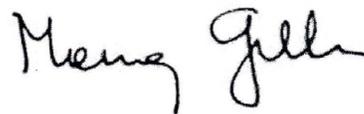
Ségolène Royal
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Gian Luca Galetti
Minister for the Environment and Protection of
Land and Sea
Italy



Carole Dieschbourg
Minister for the Environment
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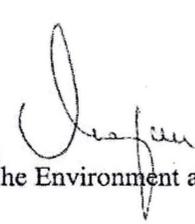


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