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CHANGE

BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE DIRECTORS MEETING

ATHENS

24-25 APRIL 2014





A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Good morning to all.

Dear colleagues and guests, let me extend to all of you formally this time a warm welcome to Greece and thank you for being with us at the traditional two day meeting of the EU Nature and Biodiversity Directors.

Mrs Nadia Giannakopoulou, the Secretary General of the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change honors us with her presence and I would like to give her immediately the floor for the welcome address, being aware of her tight schedule.

Mrs Giannakopoulou, please you have the floor.

K. GIANNAKOPOULOU (GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen I would like to welcome you all to the EU Biodiversity and Nature Directors Meeting organized by the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change in the frame of the Greek Presidency of the Council of Europe and to thank you very much for your participation.

Today, more than ever conservation of Biodiversity is globally highlighted as of paramount importance for the protection of the natural environment and it is at the top of the political agenda of our Ministry. Our political commitment was recently proved in practice with the adoption of the new Regulation of Invasive Alien Species despite the very limited time available and the diverging view between the three Institutions as well as the Member States.

Biodiversity is our natural capital delivering ecosystem services that underpay in our economy. Its deterioration and loss jeopardizes the provision of services spanning a variety of sectors. Food Security, Recreation and Tourism, Public Health, Education, Research and Innovation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Growth and Jobs. In financial terms these Ecosystem Services exceed by far the costs for conserving Biodiversity. When we loose species and habitats we endanger our own well being. Loss of Biodiversity can weaken the resilience of Ecosystems compromising the delivery of Ecosystems Services and making them more vulnerable. These can further hinder the possibilities for sustainable development. Biodiversity loss is the most critical global environmental threat together with Climate Change.

On the other hand, investing in natural capital such as Green Infrastructure often brings high returns than classical alternatives, which have also higher costs. To us Sustainable Development, Green Growth, Sustainable Tourism and Employment are concepts that go hand in hand with the conservation of the Biodiversity and we try to bring this message to all the involved stake holders in our country.

Our country is in a process of redefining and solidifying its identity for the future. As Representatives of the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, but first and foremost as humans, integral component of ecosystems we believe that this future should be built on integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. We are blessed to live in a country in terms of very gifted in terms of Biodiversity. Approximately three hundred (300) species of flora and fauna, four hundred and forty (440) species of birds and ninety habitat types of community interest, plus a great number of endemic species is a heritage that assigns us with a very heavy duty. We are putting a great effort on preserving this important part of our common well being. We



are happy to have our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan at the Ministerial Council for final approval.

Drafting the Strategy was a huge undertaking that went through very exhaustive consultations. Soon, we will launch the dialogue for the reform of our system of Protected Areas Management with the view of using the current experience for overcoming burdens and malfunctions. Particular attention will be given during this process to the management of Natura 2000 sites which cover more than 27% of our territory. Effective management and restoration of these areas is central to the attainment of the EU and global Biodiversity goals to 2020 and even beyond.

Monitoring of species and habitat types is also within our priorities. We have several projects running in order to update evaluations on conservation status of species and habitat types. Setting up a national system for continuous monitoring is a challenge of our future work. Financing of Biodiversity Actions through the next Multiannual Financial Framework is also one of our current challenges. Our competent services strive to integrate as far as possible Natura 2000 and Biodiversity in the programming procedure.

As a country facing a financial crisis and recession we carry forward the message that a well functioning Natura 2000 network provides a wide range of both environmental and social economic benefits. I'm confident that this meeting will be an excellent opportunity for all our guests, all of you, to exchange views and suggestions for the implementation and financing of the European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Your experience is valuable and your interventions and proposals are expected as constructive input towards our common effort for preserving nature.

I would like to thank you all for coming and wish you all the best for your work through out this meeting. Thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Secretary General for your welcome address.

Thank you for presenting the views of the Ministry and also thank you very much for giving us some of your valuable time, staying with us as I understand for a while at the meeting.

Now allow me to continue on a slightly personal note. It gives me great pleasure to welcome in particular the European Commission Representatives, Ms Pia Bucella, Mr Stefan Leiner, Mr Francois Wakenhut and Mr Fotis Papoulias. I used to cooperate with them when I was working at the European Commission long ago and I'm really glad to meet them again and work with them again in our new capacities.

Dear colleagues, you were invited to this meeting by Mr Tiligadas who started organizing this event being at the time the Director General of the Environment. In the mean time the Minister decided to recently a rotation of Directors General in our Ministry, a fact that brought me back to the Environmental Policies and offered me the opportunity to cooperate with you and among else to convene this meeting.

In a way this is what we call the continuity of the Administration. We are fully aware of the importance of Biodiversity and Natura 2000 as well as of the enormous challenge to implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy and hold the loss of both Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the EU by the year 2020. This challenge becomes even more important under the financial circumstances of the current period at national and international levels.

In spite of actions taken to combat Biodiversity Loss there are continual and growing pressures on Europe's Biodiversity related to land use changes, over exploitation, spread of invasive alien species, pollution, climate change, population growth, limited awareness about Biodiversity and the fact that Biodiversity Economic Value is not reflected in decision making. Not yet.

We have to work hard to cope with all these pressures and speed up the EU's transition towards a resource efficient and Green Economy. In the coming two days we will exchange views on several issues of concern for the implementation of the related Strategy. A major challenge which constitutes our first agenda item is Financing the delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The current approach is based on integration of the financing of the Biodiversity and Natura 2000 into the funding streams of different EU policy sectors. Integration is a difficult process as we all know and requires well structured programming, strong cooperation of the competent Authorities as well as of stakeholders, political support and arguments on the socioeconomic benefits of Biodiversity funding.

It is a challenge of us all to make good use of the current financing opportunities. Furthermore it seems that it might not be possible to fully cover the financial needs of Biodiversity and Natura 2000 in the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 to 2020. Effective management and restoration of Natura 2000 sites is central for the attainment of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. We will have the opportunity to discuss about the state of play as regards attaining Target 1. We will also address the need to timely complete Natura 2000 especially in the marine areas as well as to effectively manage and restore such sites.

The establishment of the Marine Network under Natura 2000 will significantly contribute not only to the target of helping the loss of Biodiversity in the EU, but also to broader marine conservation and sustainable use objectives. The new Natura 2000 by geographic process for assisting member states in managing Natura 2000 as a coherent ecological network is a tool for facilitating implementation of Target 1. It offers additional possibilities to exchange experience and best practices, address objectives and priorities and enhance cooperation and synergies.

We are happy to be the first member state to host a Seminar referring to the Mediterranean region under the updated process. We have great expectations from this process and we trust that they will be fulfilled in cooperation with our colleagues from their respective countries. Yet, to protect and restore Biodiversity and associate the consistent services we need other actions too. Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy focuses on maintaining and enhancing Ecosystem Services and restoring degraded Ecosystems. Green Infrastructure is a successfully tested tool for providing ecological, economic and social benefits through natural solutions.

Monitoring and assessment of ecosystems and their services can provide a knowledge base for underfeeding the achievement of the other targets of the Strategy and also for supporting a number of other EU sectoral policies such as Agriculture, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and Cohesion. Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy will be discussed extensively during our meeting.

Last but not least we are very happy being the member state that assumes the Presidency of the EU Council, to have facilitated the conclusion of the new regulation for the Invasive Alien Species. It was also mentioned by our Secretary General.

We would like to thank the Lithuanian Presidency that preceded us, all member states and the European Commission for the joint efforts. We will have the opportunity to be briefed on the latest development under the last agenda item of today.

Let me add at this stage a few more words regarding the structure of our meeting. As reflected in the agenda it is divided in two parts. One open session that will start in a while today and will be completed with our visit to Parnitha National Park tomorrow and one closed session of the Natura Directors exactly after coming back from our tomorrow visit.

Today after the closure of the discussions we will have the guided tour at the New Acropolis Museum followed by a dinner at the Lycabettus Hill with a magnificent view of the city. We will provide you with further information on this later on.

I would like to thank you again for your presence and participation wishing us all very fruitful discussions. Now with these words I turn to the European Commission and invite Ms Pia Bucella to take the floor. Please Ms Bucella.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Dear, Ms Giannakopoulou, dear Athena, it's a pleasure to sit here today.

I must confess that during your speech I was sometimes distracted by the most beautiful views you are presenting to us on screen, on your Natura 2000 area in Greece. It is really magnificent.

In that respect I just want to tell and somehow to congratulate all of us because we have now over one million (1.000.000) square kilometers, Stefan am I right, of Natura 2000 area in Europe, both mainly terrestrial and some also marine area. This is really impressive, it is unique because it remains the only protected system which is not

purely protected where economic activity can and must continue going on.

This also shows that a collective effort pays off much better than separate effort by each of us. This is the true value of having a European Union and in that respect all Presidencies are doing a great job. I can confirm this because I was sitting with some Presidencies now as you can imagine and this, you, as Greek Presidency have really managed a great effort in our area in getting the Regulation on Invasive Alien Species for Council and Parliament. It was not an easy negotiation and I think that we all together at some for that the end result might not be there. It looked as moving away from us from time to time.

But it is true that US Presidency has done a great effort but as you mentioned it was thanks to also the preceding Presidency Lithuania, who prepared the ground and mainly it is thanks to the collective will of all of us. If there is will we can make it. If there is a will there is a way. This was firstly said I think in the 18th century by a British priest who wanted to climb Mont Blanc, who couldn't afford to pay all the price from Chamonix, but he wanted to climb Mont Blanc and he found another way which was much cheaper.

So now, let's come back. We look forward to working together. We have quite a full and very interesting agenda and I think that we have all basic elements, we have the financial regulations all in place by now. Now we need to implement whatever the outcome is, we need to make the best with what we have and make sure that for our target for our objectives we can make it work. So thank you again for hosting this two day meeting and we all look forward from the Commission side to it.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Pia.

Thank for enlightening us on the state of play and for your kind words. Now, knowing the very pressing schedule of the Secretary General I will thank her again for being with us.

K. GIANNAKOPOULOU (GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): I'm very sorry I have to leave.

I really, I hope you have a very fruitful discussion and work today. Thank you very, very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much for being with us.

K. GIANNAKOPOULOU (GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): I'm very sorry for having to leave. Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): So we start with Item 1, Financing the delivery of the EU by Biodiversity Strategy, an issue which is crucial for all of us. Since the previous EU Financial Framework most EU co-funding for the Natura 2000 Network and Biodiversity has been made available by integrating Biodiversity goals in various existing EU funds or instruments. This integrated co financing model continues in the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 – 2020. This approach supports the strategic goal to incorporate the implementation of the EU's Biodiversity Policy into other relevant policy sectors and link

Biodiversity goals with a broader management of land and natural resources.

Further to the foreseen opportunities for funding through the relevant EU Funds there is a range of innovative opportunities for funding like the establishment of a Natural Capital Financing Facility in collaboration with the European Investment Bank. For the first time in this Multiannual Financial Framework member states approached in a commonly structured way the use of different EU Funds for Natura 2000 through the prioritized action frameworks. PAFS as we usually call them can serve as strategic planning tools to strengthen the integration of Natura 2000 financing into the use of relevant EU financial instruments for the next programming period.

This new period will be the first time that operational programs and prioritized action frameworks are used together as programming tools for funding Natura 2000. The key questions during this session proposed are the following: How complimentary among instruments and consistency with the PAFS could be achieved. How tracking of Biodiversity related expenses at national level could be achieved and what Biodiversity related projects could be possibly financed through Natural Capital Financing Facility.

We have foreseen three key presentations, key speakers. We hope that each one will not exceed the ten minutes. I give the floor first of all to the Representative of the Commission, for presenting the Overview of Nature and Biodiversity Financing under new EU Funds.

Somebody is helping us I think with the slideshow. The gentleman over there.

STEFAN LEINER (HEAD OF THE NATURE UNIT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG ENVIRONMENT): Okay? You hear me?



Well, Good morning, dear colleagues and also it's a pleasure for me to be here in Athens and to meet all the colleagues again. This will be a joint short presentation from me and Francois just to very quickly introduce this point. For those who don't know me I'm Stefan Leiner, I'm the Head of the Nature Unit DG Environment working in Pia's Directorate in charge mainly on the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive and Natura 2000.

What we will just do is just to recall very quickly where we are in the process of this agenda of trying to get as much as possible from the different financial instruments for helping us achieving our objectives in the Biodiversity Strategy, ranging from financing Natura 2000 to also write about Biodiversity issues, Green Infrastructure, Invasive Alien Species, etc.

I will just say very quickly where we are on the programming cycle and the challenges we are facing at the moment in integrating these issues in the different Operational Programs, Partnership Agreements, etc and then Francois will speak a bit more about the tracking of Biodiversity and the Natural Capital of Financing Facility and write about Biodiversity aspects.

I think you all know about this so I will not spend much time. Basically the...as Pia has said, we now know what is on the table. So we now add in the legislative framework in which we are operating, some very recent decisions. For example, on the delegated acts for the Common Agricultural Policy, particularly as regards the first pillar, further clarifying or not things, what is clear about this state there is a lot of room of maneuver for the member states to take certain choices that can be more or less helpful in getting financing for Biodiversity and Natura 2000 agreed.

This is the same with the Cohesion Policy, Fisheries Policy, Horizon 2020. Also for the Life I think it is now clearer to everybody what will be the priorities in the next years to come. Francois will mention the Natural Capital Financing Facility which has been clarified in the past month you now also have the work program and I think it is also clear what is meant by these integrated projects which is the new thing about the new Life Program that has now being adopted.

We are in the process where the position papers there have been finalized for a long time, that outlined what the Commission saw as the main priorities at the different member states and also as regards to Partnership Agreements which is the agreement between the Commission and member states about the overall framework that is in the supple for them the details that are in the individual financial perspective elements and in most of the member states it clarifies that we are in the final stages of approval of those Partnership Agreements. From our assessment in most of those the situation is very positive. Meaning that Biodiversity and Natura 2000 in many of them even the PAFS are mentioned as an explicit, important issue to be dealt with in the next stages of the implementation.

In some member states there has been further delay in the approval of those Partnership Agreements but in many of them they are in the final stages of adoption or agreement and I would say our assessment is that overall the situation looks quite good. The doors are open as regards our objectives and those Partnership Agreements. The real important element will now be also to follow that up in the agreement and the negotiations on the Individual Operational Programs in particular as regards the Agricultural Rule Development Plans, but also as regards the Cohesion Operational Programs, Regional Policy and in the Fisheries Funds different Operational Programs and here particularly

as regards the WANDS from the Rule Development and from the Regional Policy the negotiations are under way.

We are already receiving informally at this stage first drafts. It will be a huge challenge for all of us. We have over five hundred (500) Operational Programs from all of the EU that will all come in the coming six months. It will be really important to make sure that there we do the right assessments in order to make sure that we can flack where there has been inconsistencies with the Prioritized Action Frameworks, but also where wider Biodiversity opportunities have not been sufficiently taken into account.

So we have to look into first of all the strategic objectives that are particularly relevant for our objectives which are the thick ones in the Regional Policy, which deals with Environment. But we also have to look into the others particularly in those member states where there has to be huge concentration effort and it will be a challenge to get funding for these six priorities. There are opportunities in others that deal for example with Job creation with Small and Medium Enterprises, with Urban Development, with Climate Change Adaptation, with Energy, Renewable Energy Issues in which you can also use those priorities to do work on Green Infrastructure, on other issues that also can contain Natura 2000 aspects.

It's also important to look at them to see that the other parts of the Operational Program do no fund particular activities that we know will be very damaging for our own Biodiversity objectives so to make sure that there is also coherence between the overall effects or the overall efforts that we want to do on Agriculture, on Fisheries and on Regional Development that doesn't undermine our Biodiversity objectives so to make sure that there is a real good impact assessment of those strategies

that reflects the situation we have as the state of our Biodiversity in the individual member states.

We have seen that in some there has already been these inconsistencies where on the one hand there are investments that are being planned to protect wetlands, but on the other hand there are huge infrastructure developments that are planned in order to promote either renewable energy or to promote transport in rivers and that can be sometimes contradictory. Therefore it is important that in those Programs there are the right words that make sure that whatever is being funded is not undermining also the achievements of the Biodiversity and Nature objectives.

So it is important that we have synergies between those different objectives. We have consistency with the Prioritized Action Frameworks, that we have also not only the right words in them but also that the financial allocations are matching the objectives that are in the different Operational Programs. That we have the right indicators that are outcome oriented and that allow those who implement those Programs at the end also to demonstrate that yes these investments have helped improving Biodiversity in the individual member states and that we have also a good complementarity between the funds. In some they will use more agricultural rule of development funding, in other member states other funding instruments will be more used in order to achieve our Biodiversity objectives.

Just a last line from my side and then I hand over to Francois. You all know that we had this contract about financing Natura 2000, helping us in order to get the framework in place in order to help you to get as much as possible out of these financial instruments for Natura 2000. This contract is now really finalizing, the handbook is being updated, is now close to being finalized.

What I want just to say is that we have organized the contract together with you. Individual Seminars in twenty four (24) member states and those Seminars were really an excellent opportunity to put all the relevant actors particularly from the different Ministries around the table and to discuss what are the challenges in the next seven (7) years to come in financing Natura 2000 and what are the opportunities and in most of those workshops I think they were very much welcomed by those who have participated because they allowed also people from other Ministries to recognize that there is actually a huge potential in financing Biodiversity and Nature in achieving other objectives in Agriculture, Job Creation, Economic Values, etc. and that is also a lot of opportunities in those financial regulations that have been adopted in order to allow for funding Nature and Biodiversity.

But of course the challenges are huge and we have to work together now in the next I would say six (6) to seven (7) months very intensively in order to make sure that in the detailed Operational Program, Rule Development Plans, etc, we have the right financial allocation and also the right elements in order to have this coherence with the PAFS and the Biodiversity objectives are mentioned.

I hand over now to Francois.

FRANCOIS WAKENHUT (HEAD OF THE BIO – DIVERSITY UNIT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG ENVIRONMENT): Thank you Stefan.

Good morning everyone. Let me continue with two (2) additional elements one some information about the Natural Capital Financing Facility. The reason why we thought it would be useful to provide you with a few elements on it is that it is new and it is not something we have done before, so we thought that it would be interesting now that things have been finalized as a result of the Life Committee Vote and

the finalization of this process to give you the elements we have about that instrument will actually do. Why did we work in a such instrument in the first place. Clearly we wanted to address some of the remaining financing gaps for Biodiversity and adaptation. We wanted in doing so to try and see whether we could generate additional funding from some of the sources that are not traditionally been mobilized in support of our Policy. So that was the main rational for it.

Also, we wanted to address barriers to investment in Biodiversity and adaptation and in doing so, trying to offer some schemes that could be attractive to investors that with otherwise not have taken the risk to go to into our field. In terms of objectives one of the key elements there is to encourage investments in revenue generating cost saving projects promoting Biodiversity and Conservation objectives. So we are there to leverage additional funding and we there to strengthen the delivery on our objectives. Those are two crucial elements.

We also want though the NCFE to demonstrate to some of the private investors that have not yet ventured into our areas that they should do so. There is actually a potential for them to do so more importantly than they have done in the past. For that we will need to generate a solid initial project pipeline and that's one of the elements on which we will certainly need to work very closely in the coming months so that we can arrive at a good set of projects that will actually demonstrate the usefulness of the Instrument.

When it comes to the initial phase where we are in pilot phase that will run until 2017, we are testing the approach and if it works we will obviously expand. If it doesn't we will draw lessons from it, but we are confident that we can get a critical mass of projects that can actually lead to a bigger facility in a second phase, which would actually be financed through other means. We are going to work through an

investment facility and support facility, that is the novel approach of the Instrument. And when it comes to the actors that are now contributing financially, there is obviously the European Commission, though money from the Life Subprogram for the Environment, thirty million (30.000.00 €), but also from the Subprogram for Climate Change thirty million (30.000.00 €) and we've got then in matching contribution from the EIB, which we be there to also yield and generate additional funding from those that will invest in the facility.

Who are we targeting in the first place? Utilities, SMES, but also local authorities, public authorities, land managers. We are looking at a very wide range of potential actors that can be involved and we want in doing so to build on some of the very good practices that are in place. In some of the member states for instance there is an established practice already now of private acquisition of land and support of conservation objectives. We believe this is exactly this type of action that could be funded through the facility for instance. So that is a very open Instrument in that sense. What we want to do with it?

We clearly want to deliver on Biodiversity and Nature objectives, the facility will serve Natura 2000 as well as wider Biodiversity objectives. In doing so we will look at potential for Green Infrastructure funding, also innovative pro Biodiversity and adaptation businesses, activities that can be supported and sustained. Schemes for payments for existent services, which we really believe need to be further developed at EU level and can greatly benefit from such an instrument. We will also been looking at the possibility of offsets much beyond legislative priorities (39.50, 1^η ώρα) because obviously we will not want to do that within the context of legal obligations.

Moving on to the other topic that I wanted to highlight now, tracking Biodiversity related expenditure. You heard from Stefan about

the new financing outlook for the coming seven years. It is a complex one, it is a challenging one and the coming six months will indeed be critical. But in order to be able to demonstrate how we make progress it will be essential for us to be able to track Biodiversity financing in a way that is much improved from what we were able to do in previous periods. In the 7th Environment Action Program we received a mandate to do so as you can see from the slide and this is clearly one of the main conditions for effective mainstreaming of Biodiversity into EU Policy Instruments.

To cut a long story short on this I can mention that whenever we discuss these matters with our colleagues from DG Agriculture, DG Mare, DG Regional Policy there was often a challenge on their own side in defining how much has gone to Nature and Biodiversity. They are not really certain of amounts so we need to fix this and have a scheme that can be recognized by all as legitimate and provide us with a clear picture that is not an inflated picture of what the contribution is. Because there is always a temptation to demonstrate that you have done more than you actually had and we need to do so based on criteria that are also comparable across the EU, with member states and beyond at international level. Because this is also linked to reporting obligations we have in the context of the CBD.

So, to do so we have developed a methodology which is similar for Biodiversity and Climate Change and which looks at a ratio that depends on whether Biodiversity is the primary objective that is accounted for 100% or one of the benefits but not the prime objective 40% or not at all an objective and therefore not relevant 0.00% . It's a bit crude but it is the best methodology we have so far and one that has established itself. So we have worked on that.

We have also worked on Ex Ante Ex and Post tracking. This is particularly important because Ex Ante you are able to look at the projections of funding and Ex Post you look at what is actually being dispersed so you can establish comparisons in terms of the intention and the actual disbursements which is quite helpful in accessing why uptake is not as good as it should be.

What we have done so far is quite significant now because Biodiversity is now formally part of the 2015 Program Statement Exercise that is managed by our Budget Authorities and the Commission. So all relevant services in the Commission are providing for the first time relevant Ex Ante estimates of Biodiversity Funding. Ex Post tracking is still under development and we will have reported data by 2016 - 2017.

We are developing improvements to the methodology through contractual assistance and this is something on which we will want in due course to communicate with you and discuss with you how we can do better. Because as I said the methodology we have been using is quite crude, so any improvement to it that can allow us to have more accurate estimates is something that we should strive for. We will have preliminary estimates in reporting to the CBD already now in 2014.

Turning now to the last segment of the presentation with this last slide we have suggested in the paper that accompanies this presentation possible Nature Directors conclusions. There are three of them. There is one that focuses on the integration of Nature and Biodiversity Issues in PAs and OPs and the need for complementary cross instruments as well as consistency with PAFS. This is one of the crucial elements on which we will be very much welcoming some commitment from the Nature Directors as a result of today's discussion. We then have the issue of tracking where we believe that it would be important for all of us to

recognize the importance of this exercise for us to be in a much better position to defend the Biodiversity and Nature agenda over the years.

We also believe that what we have been developing at EU level we need to be replicated across the boarding member states. We know that some of you have been working on tracking methodologies and tracking approaches at national level. We also know that some member states have not yet started this work and we believe that it would be in our collective interest to be able to have a collective picture on this matter.

The last point relates to the NCFE where we will certainly welcome a welcome from your side to the establishment of the facility and a Joint endeavor to make the facility deliverance support of our conservation objectives both within and outside the Natura 2000 network in support of the Biodiversity Strategy objectives at large.

Thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much both of you Stefan and Francois.

I think that it was a very useful presentation for us all. There are lots of new possibilities and tools and it is important to understand them first in order to be in a position to use them well afterwards.

Now I give the floor to Miss Rozália Érdiné Szekeres, maybe I'm not pronouncing it well, she will excuse me, to present to us the experiences from Hungary as regards integrating Natura 2000 and Biodiversity in programming documents.

You have the floor.

ROZÁLIA ÉRDINÉ SZEKERES (HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT FOR NATURE CONSERVATION): Good Morning everyone.

Thank you for the possibility from the Greek Presidency and the Commission. Mr. Roginski asked me from the Commission that I would share the experiences of Hungary.

First of all I would like to show in the Nature about Biodiversity Conservation in Hungary and experiences from last period and planning for next period. You can see that Hungarian Administration is very centralized and coordinated and the main actors of playing of financing is National Bio – Directorates which organization and responsible for management of Protected Sites as well as Natura 2000 sites.

If you can that we have ten (10) National Bio – Directorates and in their operational areas they are responsible for management and these territories cover all the country. We have 9% of Protected Sites in Hungary which are incorporated into Natura 2000, but now we have to focus on Natura 2000 in Hungary. We have 20%, more than 20% of the national territory and you can see that it is proud to say that the network of sufficiencies is 100%. I suppose the Commission thinks the same. More of them 90% of Protected Areas included into Natura 2000 network. We asked to communicate better Natura 2000 communication and that's why we had a survey last year that Natura 2000 provide ten thousand (10.000) jobs in Hungary and it is a good message for politics all the time.

But we have challenges in Natura 2000 because of high level of degradation and more than (49.00, 1^η ώρα έχει και άλλο κόκκινο λίγο πιο κάτω) level in favor of the conservation status of Species and of Habitats mainly of habitats and we have challenges with Invasive

Species and changing natural water (; ; ; ;) because of Climate Change as I said low awareness of NATURA 2000.

So just moving on to the financing figure for last period, we have operated seventeen (17) Programs and from them I emphasize the Environment and Energy Program and Rural Development which were very efficient for supporting Natura 2000 and Nature Conservation. From the Cohesion Policy Funding we have more than one hundred thousand million euros (100.000.000.00 €) and if you see that the total ERDF for Nature was not so many, less than 1% , but was huge step in Hungarian Nature Conservation because we had a lot of investment for Nature. For example, we had measures for site restoration of degraded habitats and I emphasize the reducing the negative effects of linear structures. We retrofitted a lot of electric liners (50.40, 1ⁿ ópa) against casualties of birds and we had a lot of ecologic passes under the roads and so on. So we improved the site management infrastructure and had a lot of Nature scores.

The main beneficiary is the National Bio Directorates absorbed more than 60% of funds but we involve other beneficiaries. You can see the sites restoration was the main focused area and in site restoration I would emphasize the Wetland restoration. So moving under Rural Development Funding a lot a fillers not too so not that bad the main fillers was the Agri - Environment Scheme, Natura payments for Grassland and Forests and some element for non productive investments. In the Agri - Environment payments we have set high nature value Farmer Programs in twenty five (25) designated areas focusing so called flagship species like green (52.00, 1ⁿ ópa) bustard crane/wild goose, falcon species and then small game.

The other pillar from the EAFRD was the Natura 2000 payments for Grassland. It was quite popular among the farmers in Hungary and they have set up thirteen (13) obligatory land use prescriptions for that.

The other pillar was Natura 2000 payments for Forest. So, we have to say about Life Plus last February we had all together fifteen (15) projects and the continued complex habitat restoration. Life Plus field is very good in the financing because we could focus on priority species like Hungarian meadow viper, (53.00, 1^η ώρα) red footed falcon, imperial eagle with other countries in cooperation.

The key beneficiaries were not only National Bio – Directorates but NGOs and Municipal Defense. The key outputs were that the degraded habitats restored not only for the bad conservational status of habitats, but even the historical garden as Botanical Gardens because they are often part of Natura 2000. So all together more than one hundred thousand (100.000) hectares were improved. With the Rural Development Fund improved further territories in Farmland and Grassland and Forest.

The conclusion was that the network of National Biodirectorates proves very helpful, useful and very promising key actors and we would like to continue this work with them. A lot of management capacities were developed beside Hungarian Administration and they could involve non traditional players but the participation was far below expectation because they hadn't shown any interest for example the Local Authorities. They had challenges to set up good impacts and very tangible impacts of project but we have to try to draft better our objectives. So we had quite success in implementing Life project we have so but the co – financing was a bit problematic for Hungary.

So what about the planning for the future period? As you will see first of all we have surveyed or analyzed the conservation status of species and habitats and we set up the Hungarian PAF with the nine (9) conservation priorities and forty one (41) measures and this month we try to push to all of Operational Program this kind of imaginations.

Rural Development mainly, Fishery Fund, Environmental Energy Efficiency and others.

The objectives to 2020 are almost the same that it was in the previous period the measures to improve conservation status implemented, targeted at 5% of the national Natura 2000 Network. We would like to improve the infrastructure as well and the compulsory management prescription we are set up for Grassland and Fisheries and Forest as well.

So, we would like to finish the Natura 2000 management plans from the Rural Development Fund and would like to reduce the unknown species by 50%. So, that document in monitoring method is missing all the time. The Cohesion Fund, we will have less money than we had in the previous period. We are continuing habitat restoration and species conservation measures, management infrastructure and new element in our imagination the basic interpretation infrastructure for Natura 2000 and we would like a strategic survey about mapping of ecosystems. We would like to join other old case as well.

The Rural Development Funding is under negotiation but the priority measures remains the Agri - Environment. Natura 2000 payments and management enters. I said bad challenge monitoring and assessment in terms of impacts of Biodiversity. We are moving towards for Farmland planning of land use because we have a Zonar and Horizon Programs but they transcription the matter that is specific. That's we they are moving farmland planning. We would like farmers to compose a prescription list and they should compose their own package.

We would like to continue new Life Program, Algos at least, four traditional project there and we don't have idea how to reach one integrated project for Nature but we would like too. Maybe we can implement selective priorities of the national PAF for Natura 2000 but

full implementation is not realistic as we heard two weeks ago at Life Unit presentation that one integration priority would be enough for a country's PAF implementation.

Differences between two periods, less money is available for Hungary, that is sure, that its good news for us that more pronounced presence of Natura 2000 it is helpful for communication amongst other sectors. The thematic concentration is a bit reducing the money but we can recognize this is an important thing, but we have two challenges with the PAF, new Instrument to set and integration PAF for Natura 2000 is not (1.00.00, 1^η όρα) in the DG Regional and in the informal negotiation we had a very disappointing filling about it.

Other disappointing attitude was in the informal negotiation that the DG Regional wants us to show very short and results and they don't have enough experience about how the Nature and the Ecosystem works. That's why they should like to have some help from the DG Environment. New topics that Natura 2000 interpretation as I said and Life integrated projects.

My conclusion and recommendation from the point of the Hungarian view so the PAF has a key role in integration and is to be curtailed and used at its full potential so I would like that the PAF won't be a paper plan but it would be a very strong mean in our hands. My recommendation would be that they use this PAF template not only in the member state but along the beaches as well. So, I suppose that Natura 2000 financing needs are deeply represented during informal operational negotiation and I would recommend that DG Regional should be back that feed in the professional knowledge from the DG and the other experts from the WWF or other NGOs if they want to have any. Perhaps not in the interservice consultations.

Very good news in the Life that they have the capacity building but they would like to have this kind of possibilities in other financing

program as well. The monitoring is another green issue for us and for member states it would be important to finance somehow and stay mostly outside the so called PAF funding. It would be better if we can to share experience is how to finance better monitoring and good quality of that PAFs.

Thank you very much for your attention.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Rozália, very, very interesting.

Thank you and I think that we all understood the need for interactions within the member states but also within the Commission and other Organizations maybe.

Before moving to the next presentation I call to the Presidency table two more colleagues, Mr Dimopoulos and Mr. Thanos. Mr Thanos is the President of the Natura 2000 National Committee. Mr Dimopoulos used to be the Vice President of the same Committee and he is now a coordinator of a special Committee we have in the Ministry with people outside the Ministry who are helping us very much for Nature issues.

Thanks for joining us.

So I call now Mr Rastislav Rybanič, sorry again for the pronunciation but you could tell us how you pronounce it yourself from Slovakia and he is going to share with us his experience for Natura 2000 integration.

Thank you.

RASTISLAV RYBANIČ (MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC): Thank you very much for inviting me, my name

is Rastislav Rybanič in Slovak. That you did it very well. Some people used to call me Rastio so that is also fine.

I would like to thank the Commission and the Greek Presidency for giving us the opportunity to introduce also our experience in Slovakia with integration of Nature, Natura 2000 and Biodiversity into the Operational Programs into the financial perspective.

Thank you very much.

So I will briefly introduce the briefing and then Rozália, because she took it from the ground. It was very interesting briefing introduce what means Natura 2000 in Slovakia. Then I will speak about PAF which is instrument we used in the process. Will briefly mentioned Natura 2000 Workshop we had in a frame of project, Francois already mentioned. Then I will be allowed to pay some attention to the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programs and examples of positive integration.

I wish to be... able to be more specific in this presentation but as you know also in your countries the negotiations are really under way not all the documents are adopted by our governments. Some in the pipeline, on some documents they are still discussions so I will be able to talk only about all those things which are clear now.

So very briefly as regards the Special Protection Areas Slovakia has about 26% of territory covered by forty one (41) species and we are having species like imperial eagles, red footed falcons, golden eagles and many, many endangered species of birds. As regards the Habitat sites we are still in the process of completing Natura 2000 sites. We are not fully finished, we are working on it. Currently there is coverage of Natura 2000 sites 11.9% of the territory, covering many species, many habitats, many endemics, I will not go to the details.

As regards the structure of the Nature protection in Slovakia it is a bit similar to those presented by Rozália and functioning in Hungary. It is probably a bit of Central European tradition to go this way. We have centralized State Nature Conservation Agency which manages National Parks and Landscape Protected Areas and are under their responsibility there are also Natura 2000 sites. They have competence also in larger countryside not only protected areas to ensure the connectivity and ecological networks. Of course State Nature Consultancy faces many problems as similarly in your countries.

When we started together developing the right Action Framework for Natura 2000 financing, in the Commission when we discussed the document we hoped that this will be a new tool which we can use in our programming discussions. It was not easy to compare it. Also the process was hard on national level. At the beginning it was not understood what kind of document it is internally so we had some difficulties in approval process but finally approximately a year ago after the heavy consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and heavy internal discussions at the Ministry of Environment we finalized the document and send it to the Commission.

But afterwards it was proved that all these hard preparations were very useful because given the priority setting also for habitat and species conservations and also for measures we got the tool which helped us to be ahead of our colleagues in various Ministries or also in our Departments in the Ministry who they are preparing or will be preparing Operational Programs even before the Regulations have been approved.

So it was very useful to have the PAF and it especially helped us internally in the Ministry of Environment to speak about our Operational Program, Quality of Environment which is managed by the Ministry of

Environment and it really after everybody understood what kind of document it is and what is its use, it gave us or opened us doors and they found out that the structure is useful and estimates have been prepared and de calculations are being so. I think it was a good decision within the Commission to take this way and we can learn from it for the future.

Of course things are changing. In the meantime we completed the second report of Article 17 Habitats Directive and the first full report of Article 10, 12 of the PAFs Directive and some things changed so our PAF would need some updates. Also we have now much more experience in preparing measures and also integrating measures into other sectors so our plan is to update the PAF just for our internal purposes and its use. I hope we will be able to make it by autumn.

Very useful in the process was also the help of the consultants and with the financing handbook and series of financing workshops. Our Slovakian one was held in November in Bratislava. It was a lot of interest from various groups both the decision makers from various Ministries who they are working on Operational Programs and various state holders. We had fifty nine (59) participants and given the state of the preparations of Operational Program already at the time even that the basic legislative documents were not finally approved. It would be better we know it now it would be better to have the Seminar half year earlier to have better possibility to influence initial thinking or starting discussions during the preparation of Operational Program so in particular Ministries. But we regard the Workshop and the discussions as a very positive element and we are also planning to continue in this kind of meetings from our own limited capacities to better or to continue the dialogue.

After the Operational Programs will be approved it will clear what kind of measures need but this is as we know only half way because it looks nice when the measures are written on the paper and money allocated in the documents but reality can be different. We are only to work on preparing good projects and creating partnerships and financing and really doing the work.

One of the interesting things, one of the discussion which started at the Seminar, at the Workshop then leads to a change in approach in Slovakia because in previous program period we also had as main beneficiaries for using the Natura 2000 related financing. The State Organizations which are responsible for a managing Natura but then we changed it and we decided after wrong discussions to take more decentralized way. So now also the users and owners of land in Natura 2000 sites will be able to be beneficiaries of projects given that they will be able to fulfill certain conditions and we would prefer partnerships with our Organizations. We feel now after these long discussions that perhaps it would be risky in some cases but it will be better received and the motivations of those managers, landowners will be greater.

Partnership Agreements, I mean they are very important documents. Our colleagues responsible for the document they decided to put this worldly picture on the cover of that called even in Slovak. This is it again. I thought it would be interesting for you to see, you wouldn't understand perhaps but so there is a lot of words, I hope you know how it works, how this tool works. You put a document on a website on the internet and it creates such nice pictures using the most used words in the document. And from those the bigger ones we can read of course Slovak Republic Transportation, GDP, Public Administration Services and so on and so on.

I tried, I couldn't find words Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, Nature there. I looked very carefully, even within those very small letters but in the documents where we have around two hundred (200) pages, it is there. We have been lucky that our proposals has been incorporated of course in very general manner into the documents and we are more less happy with that and Stefan already said that, that overall Partnership Agreements are in good shape. Of course Partnership Agreement is one important step but details are always, the diablo is in details. So Operational Programs are much more important documents for us.

So we, of course as I said in the introduction these are days when we are still discussing or some of the Operational Programs have been approved by our Government last week. The first two Operational Programs Quality of Environment and Integrated Infrastructure. They are on the way to the Commission I think the deadline for us is end of April. But some others are still discussed either in the sector of consultations or after. I know that at these very moments my colleagues are sitting with our colleagues from Ministry of Agriculture and fighting over out proposals to the Rural Development Plan and I'm very nervous because I don't know what will happen. I couldn't manage that the meeting would be postponed until I will be back in the office.

Only what I can say, provide you with more details in words than in writing in the presentation because things are still not approved. Nature Biodiversity measures in Operational Program Quality of Environment which is managed by the Ministry of Environment and it is easier for us to integrate within our colleagues which sit in the same building. It has integrated in my opinion really well Biodiversity and the Nature measures. So we have integrated it in two axes. It is within special kind of self or special objective for Nature and Biodiversity which include measures directed to Natura 2000 sites management,

infrastructure building and species protection as well as Green Infrastructure outside the protected areas for better connectivity and combating Invasive Species.

We have measures including on monitoring and more data gathering on various issues of better conservation management and also outreach activities for better communication of Nature. But and this is obvious and we know that given the fact that we are still receiver, Slovakia is still receiver of the money we had been lucky that we could budget it into the Operational Program, money which would help us to better manage the Natura 2000 sites. But also within our Streams which have been prepared by our colleagues responsible for waters or adaptation for climate change within our Operational Programs there are measures directed at removing barriers in the rivers for better connectivity for fish and aquatic life.

So we regard it as a Green Infrastructure in Blue Water and we are hoping that these measures will be a little successful. But at the same time need take care that they are really helpful to Biodiversity as well. There are in axis which is aimed at the adaptation to Climate Change. There are measures for ecosystem days adaptation anti flood protection using ecosystems, various pointers and combination of Gray and Green Infrastructure for adaptation for Climate Change. So far, even if at the moment couldn't really measure what it would be in terms of expenditure and we will probably only know that afterwards but we are happy that we have been able to integrate this important measures for Biodiversity into those Programs.

Of course as I mentioned that and I will speak about that a bit later we have Development Program that was at the moment it seems not very positive example of integration in Slovakia. So, I mentioned these facts already so Green Infrastructure, Invasive Species, Biodiversity,

Natura 2000 protection that's all included and the allocation is higher compared to the previous financing period so we all hope that with your help to boost Nature Protection, Biodiversity Protection in Slovakia. Then, just the headings for other programs but I can not speak about more details at the moment because it is not really final documents.

For instance in the Integrated Region Operational Program which was given in Slovakia to the regions and they really managed to prepare all the measures. We have been surprised than even we talked to them the uptake of integration of various measures based on ecosystems or integrating Green Infrastructure into the Program is quite high. Of course when the measures are secondary aimed at Biodiversity and Nature it is difficult to foresee what will be real uptake and within the new tracking system what would be the final outcome of that, but that's also part of our work to ensure that at least some money is really going to the Nature and Biodiversity.

Integrated or Infrastructure Operational Program DGs mainly concern with Transport Infrastructure and information tools but it includes measures of Green Infrastructure especially green bridges over existing and planned, planned highways so the habitat during these seven years we really solved many problems which were backtracking for some time in Slovakia. So, these are very positive examples. We did other Operational Program, it is not much but so far we are on a good way.

A big but is with our Development Plan. Because so far we feel that the money, so less money will go to Nature and Biodiversity compared to previous period. The communication was very difficult with the Ministry of Agriculture. I mean I would say it was one way communication, we are trying to send them some proposals for measures but no response or very little. So, we don't know how the final

negotiations will complete today and then probably the Commission who access the Program. Just one example even though they though they included Natura 2000 payment within the Rural Development Plan, they allocated only eight million euro (8.000.000,00 €) for seven years given that Natura 2000 in Slovakia which is together about 20% of the territory and you can imagine how under graded that is and they cut it some a green nonmetal and forestry environmental measures. They have made changes but the main motivation in our opinion is really fight for money and they didn't want to put money on something which they do not perceive as a priority. Which maybe is understandable but the CAP financing is not only for Farming. It is also Public Goods and Environment and they should pay for some things.

So, thank you very much, I exceeded my time so sorry for that.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you, Rastio, for sharing this experience with us.

I think that from both presentations from Hungary and from Slovakia we can notice the importance of the PAFs and will come to this during the discussions I guess.

So the floor is open now for those who would like to take it. If you could try and focus on the questions or maybe if you have other important points to raise of course we are open to hear.

Who would like to start? You could raise your flags please. We will take note of the requests. Who would like to start?

Is there any member state who would like to start first or we start with the stake holders? We don't mind but if there are some member states maybe we could start with them.

Poland? Please you have the floor.

ANNA KLISOWSKA (MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, POLAND): Thank you.

I would think it is a good start if nobody wants to say something. Ok Anna Klisowska from the Ministry of the Environment, Poland.

Maybe one comment on the PAF presentation from Hungary and Slovakia. In both presentations was showed that we don't have enough money, enough funds in Rural Development Programs for Nature and Biodiversity protection. I think it is a very important issue is because this Program and these funds are very important especially Agri – Environment Program for financing Nature protection in new financial perspective. That is why my proposal is maybe, it would be useful to emphasize the need for better integration of Rural Development Programs with Biodiversity measures and to add additional conclusions for our Nature Directors meetings.

Because we have general information about integration in every Operational Programs in every funds, but I think that Rural Development Program is very important funds for Nature protection and I think its worth to add and emphasize these funds. Because we see even in Poland we have a lot of problems with integration our Biodiversity measures in rural Development Programs that it is why maybe it's worth to add and emphasize this integration need.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

WWF, please you have the floor.

IOLI CHRISTOPOULOU (WWF GREECE): Thank you.



My name is Ioli Christopoulou, I'm here as representing WWF Greece. Thank you very much to the Presidency for having us here today and a warm welcome to all foreigners being in our country.

As WWF as you heard we worked very closely with the Commission and of course with many of you in National Authorities in organizing so many Seminars on Financing NATURA 2000. We are very glad to hear that this was received well and actually served on many occasions as an opportunity to bring together different Services, different Authorities and of course various stake holders in discussing the future of financing of Natura 2000. We are very keen supporters of this multi -stake holder approach and engagement and we are glad that through this project we were able to see that to the stake together with the Commission that provided the contract.

I worked with the organizing the Seminars here in Greece as well as the Seminar in Cyprus and I can share as well that the excitement I guess of discussing this openly with the question of timing being quite critical on all the occasions. We were worried on some occasions whether we were late or not and this was shared across the different member states, maybe it was too early, if we had started earlier. I heard one proposal that maybe these Seminars were to be, would be more useful if they were to be scheduled earlier.

The big challenge, of course, was that we didn't have the Regulations ready so how can we have a discussion on what are the opportunities when we don't know what will be at play. Perhaps we need to think about what it really means this excitement for these Seminars. Maybe it is really valuable to have these open discussions and then to have a second level of discussion more specific. We need to think about what can be done in the future as we undertake the process later on.

Just a few comments on the PAFs. We have heard how useful they are. One recommendation that we would have would be to make these publicly available across all member states and maybe to be also available somewhere centrally. We believe that they are good instruments also to share lessons learned to have an opportunity to exchange ideas. Both on how countries and all member states look at the Natura 2000 Network. But, also, on their thoughts on financing and their needs. So, we would highly recommend to all of these documents could become publicly available.

We have a question regarding the monitoring or the PAF. We heard and we know the challenges of Biodiversity Tracking in terms of expenditure, but how about implementing the PAFs? The expenditure tracking is maybe one aspect of seeing where the funds go but what about the ideas and the proposals included in the PAFs? So, we do have a question about how well the PAFs are being monitored in terms of their implementation not only during this first phase of programming but really throughout the planning and the play out of the programming period. Of course we have questions about what will happen next in terms of looking way ahead 2020 and what we can expect maybe for much following programming period.

So, thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much indeed.

There are two flags raised but unfortunately because of my myopia I cannot read the names of the flags. So, the one next to WWF, first please.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BIRDLIFE: Thank you, that's Birdlife.

Thank you very much for the invitation and the opportunity to take part in this session.

Birdlife, is very engaged as we speak on the ongoing programming phase of the various funds often in very good cooperation with the Ministries of Environment. I would like to make two short points, one on the PAFs following up on the previous comments.

We are very happy to see that some PAFs are really excellent and have been done also in consultation with NGOs, using Life money and so on, so that's really encouraging. Unfortunately others PAFs are not really fit for purpose for the programming and here is the question. Does the Commission intend to give feedback to those countries where the PAF is not fit for purpose?

For example I don't name any countries but federal countries which have not done the PAF at the same level as where the Programs are developed where we would need the PAF because otherwise we can't use them for Programming. So will there be any update or improvement proposals made also in the light of the new Biodiversity data that we have now? That's one thing.

The other thing concerns the programming of the second pillar of the CAP as it was mentioned we have little money left there. But even this little money is at risk at the moment by a development that causes high concern to us and this relates to communications from Commission, agriculture side and member states agriculture side as well about the issue of controllability and reduction of aerial rates of agri – environmental measures.

As a consequence we see some Governments already withdrawing their most targeted, dark Green, let's say Agri – Environmental measures because they fear they will get into trouble with audits from the European Commission. This really puts at risk the credibility of the

second pillar as the delivery towards for Biodiversity. So, for a example, the Commission is interpreted a saying that schemes for the late mowing for example are so hard to control that you better don't do them. This is partly exaggerated and misinterpreted what the Commission is saying but it really causes a kind of very dangerous process between Agriculture Ministries, Paying Agencies and then Environment Ministries.

So, we as NGOs have Bildlife, WWF, EB have written to the DG Environment and DG Agri, copied to the European Court of Auditors, because all these came back to the Auditors Report saying that we urgently we need a signal from the Commission and I also think from the Nature Directors Meeting would be good to put the balance right again, to balance effectiveness and controllability because otherwise if you are only looking at controllability or perceived difficulties of controllability we loose the effects of the little money that we have left.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much. I think that the next flag is the Forest Owners.

You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FOREST OWNERS: Thank you very much Madame Chair.

The Forest Owners in Greece in non state forestry sector is preserving 30% of the Greek Biodiversity and they are getting in return, say, fines, prohibitions, restrictions, taxes, etc. We want to preserve the Biodiversity of the country and we are managing our forests sustainably. As Ms Giannakopoulou said sustainable development is our target of the ecosystems and you said that there is some economic value of these

forest ecosystems. Yes there is. According to conservative estimations we were providing around three hundred euros (300, 00 €) per hectare per year as social services. In return, just before what I said.

Now, we can provide some more. How? By moving to the actual world. Okay, the Seminars, the project, the scientific experiments are very good but some financing should be provided to the Forest Owners in order to preserve the Biodiversity.

An excellent example for this is I had a short consultation with the President of the Hunting Confederation of Greece. For instance we can plant instead of forest trees in the opening of our forests other species leguminose for instance which are very, very good for the preservation of Biodiversity. But those things need of course some money and we hope in the future perhaps through the Common Agricultural Policy or the other sources of money to get some of those just for improving the Biodiversity of the country.

Thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much as well.

France has now the floor please. Vous avez la parole.

REPRESENTATIVE O FRANCE: Thank you.

I was very impressed by the presentation made by Hungary and Slovakia. Also I think we face quite the same kind of problems. We are still negotiating our Partnership Agreement with the Commission and the feedback. It is not official feedback at the moment we've got by the Commission. Is a bit surprising because for instance last year comments showing that Commission thinks we project to put too much money for our TO6, it's watered likely since its not official paper. Most surprising

again its written or so that we should demonstrate that we really need money, your finding for the implementation of the Natura 2000. That's the added value of your finding of Natura 2000 should be demonstrated. Also the added value of the EU Funding for Green Infrastructure should be demonstrated.

It's surprising because for instance from Natura 2000 these comments tend to show that the PAF is ignored for instance. Because it is considered that your funding needs for Natura 2000 is not of use. It has to be established again. So the negotiation is not finished so the game is not over of course. But we are at risk, we are at risk to lose the partnership with the Local Authorities. Because the choice made by French Government is to give a lot of responsibilities to the Regional Authorities for the implementation of the EU funding. If they are discouraged in their negotiations with the Commission to finance Biodiversity, they will finance also politics. Finance and fragile children and so on. So there is to lose the partnerships with the Authorities so it is very high just now.

Second point we are definitely impressed by the initiative of the Commission about the Natural Capital Financing Capacity. I think we have ideas or projects which could be test, which could be used to test this new facility. So we will be very interested to be informed about the level of advancement of the implementation of this new facility. It is very interesting for us.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, thank you for putting the finger on some of the problems which exist in most of the countries.

Next is Slovenia please. You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVENIA: Thank you.

First, I really like to support colleagues from Birdlife. It will be really very fine if from the side of European Union can come some clear word about this controllability of our measures. He mentioned late moving or less number of moving or less fertilizing and such things is really not easy to find really every year control mechanism for these things, so it will be really necessary to have a clear word about these things. I know this problem because I worked before in Rural Development Department and I know that really we were always very angry on Biodiversity side, because we had there so many problems with control and these mistakes. So, if you can really clearly say some words about this it will be very helpful for us to bring through our measures. Who really are not easy to follow like some other. That's the first thing.

The second thing which I want to say I'm not so sure that we really welcome this new Financial Instrument from side of Nature, from side of Nature because I don't know. I would really like to have some good examples before I can say that I'm really happy with this Instrument. If I just say that in the year when state in our country didn't support Life projects with additional money no Nature Protection Program or Project came through because there were no money. In the EU (46.55, 2ⁿ ώρα) to find 5% or something like this is hard for us. So to find a private financier I don't really believe and I don't really welcome this in this moment. Of all other crises which we have also inside of business and especially on side of businesses. They are much more against nature conservation aw that they like to support our things.

I mean I talk here about Energy or something like this where in fact money is but they are not really convinced to take money in better

solutions. Even not in Green Infrastructure something like this what is in fact a part of their work and should be a part of their work.

The third thing, I didn't understand really good this tracking methodologies. I didn't understand really good now because in our papers is somehow in the conclusions that we underline the importance of the developing tracking methodologies of national level. I'm not sure if I understand enough good at that moment this object really to develop such a methodology.

So we really prefer if we have some example from European Union or for something like this and then maybe to improve this for national level. But of course this tracking is very important because it will show on the end of the day what we have really done and what effects we had from these money.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Germany please now has the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Thank you Madame Chair and Good morning everybody.

Yes Slovenia has already made my point because I also wanted to state, make a statement on the conclusions that I suggested here in that document I fully support the idea of having Nature Directors conclusions and I'm very happy that we already have a proposal on our table and I also have no comments on the first proposals.

But on the NCFE I have the same comment like Slovenia has. We have a lot of doubts and a lot of open questions how this new Financial Instrument shall work and like Slovenia said we still have no clear

picture about what kind of projects can be there and there are many questions about benchmarks and other technical things. How to... how this Instrument is going to be implemented and in that sense I also would not like to welcome the establishment at that point but also maybe take note at that point I would say. I think it is still too open to say that is that Germany would welcome this.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Belgium please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM: Thank you Chair and Good morning everyone.

I also thank the Presidency and the Commission for preparing a drafting of a type of conclusions. We have been requesting to have more structured and discussions, more discussions on the topics so I'm happy that we have some time allotted here that would make also some conclusions. They don't have to be strict wording as such but that we agree that with some of the discussions we have been dealing with here.

So, I will focus on those three conclusions.

On the first one we fully agree of course on the importance of integrating Biodiversity and Natura 2000 in the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programs so the new financial perspective now. We have to admit that from Belgium our Department on Biodiversity has not been involved in the Partnership Agreements.

We are now consulted on evaluating assessments of Operational Programs, Draft Operational Programs under the Regional Development Program so that's already a good step forward. But what is really stated

in the Partnership Agreements as such we are not aware from our Department. So, we hoped that from Commission's side some more stringent questions on integration can be put forward when evaluating the Partnership Agreements of countries where we felt that there is no real concrete reference to Biodiversity and Nature.

On the integration in specific Programs like in the CAP we are still struggling to find out how the 30% greening will be implemented. We have important sites of ecological interest which also under agri practices to say so, but they will not be included in our country under the possibilities of the first pillar. A question was now whether there is a list of types of sites of ecological interests that has been put forward when developing implementation of the first pillar and whether there is a kind of screening control by Commission when at the Agri Department they are submitting those specific implementation plans.

On the second pillar related to the Agri – Environment measures we had some open discussions we have Agri Department and then there are some positive outcomes on that. The only point that I wanted to raise here is our concern from our division that many of the measures that we have been having in the previous period are not taken up anymore maybe because of this problem of controllability. Some new measures have been possible to be integrated in the plan but the continuity is a bit difficult. And for Nature once you start developing or redeveloping Nature under agricultural sites you need some time that they have a good quality to bring out the Biodiversity that we are expecting through those measures.

Related to Life I wanted to mention here that I'm a bit concerned on the way that we say we have been prioritizing the thematic topics. I don't think so. I think we are less prioritizing than in the previous period because whole Environment Policy of Europe is in Life

Environment and we have a whole range of thematic priorities. So, it's an immense list of thematic priorities so to say. So, I don't know with the budget that we have which didn't change so much compared to the previous period, for Environment I mean, that it will be possible to have good focus projects on the different topics altogether.

On NCFE I agree that we have to find new financial instruments and new mechanisms and I can understand a way of developing Natural Capital Financing Funds. I can support the idea, I only don't understand very well which kind of projects maybe supported through it. It will be kind of grand system, a loan system that we are helping to set up? So Authorities, I don't think that Authorities can submit projects for a loan systems subsidy. I don't know very well but I didn't expect Authorities to be included in there.

So I think it is needed to have good criteria for the selections of the projects and good description of the topics for the kind of projects that can be submitted in the first place. And have some examples to see how it can work. It's a pity that part of our small Life budget will be used for this which will raise every time when we discussed this in the Working Groups. But let's see how the first projects can come out and that we if need be change the whole system, if it doesn't work very well and I hope that this will be possible in any case in this testing period.

Thank you.

Sorry, I wanted to add one point on the marking, at the tracking of Biodiversity Financing. At this stage Belgium has not submitted a report on this because we felt that the system, the methodology through using real markers was not very adequate at this moment and we are looking forward to the adjustment of the real markers or any other markers to have more comparable data. Because otherwise it will of less sense to do this reporting which asks a lot of investment of time of people.

Thank you.

A MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

United Kingdom now you have the floor.

SHIRLEY TRUNDLE (DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM): Thank you Madame Chair and hello everybody. My name is Shirley Trundle, I'm from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the UK. I'm very new into post, this is my third week so forgive me if I get some details wrong but it's a real pleasure to be here with all of you.

Many things I wanted to say really support things that other people have already said so we do recognize the importance of integration of Biodiversity issues into the partnership agreements and in the Operational Programs because a number of Life funded projects are under way in England and Wales. We are doing a lot of work to set out the plans for the management actions that we will need for our Natura 2000 Network.

I have this Life (58.50, 2^η ώρα) that actually do what detailed work is going to increase the size of the financial requirements and I would have to echo the Hungarian Representative's comments in saying that this is not realistic I think to believe that we are going to be able to finance the whole of the requirements of the PAFs.

We have also I think experienced some of the difficulties that others have in relation to flexibility and responsiveness on other funds that we have too experienced. Push back from DG Regional around inclusion of environmental elements in some of our proposals there.

We are, I think PAFs doing well better than some others in the proportion of our DP that we were able to devote to and real Biodiversity Projects but none the less we do find ourselves having to make difficult compromises between the sort of outcomes that we want to deliver and some of the auditing requirements.

On tracking spends we have done a lot of work on that, we are very happy with the idea that we should be doing tracking at national level.

In as far as international measures go we think that the best way forward is to work on improving the real markers. We are quite heavily involved with that and we prefer not to see different competing approaches to international measurements.

Then, perhaps slightly differently from some of the other interventions I want to say that we very much welcome the introduction of the Natural Capital Finance Facility. We are very happy to work with the Commission to try to identify suitable projects from the U.K.. But I think we have to recognize with anything that is new and relatively experimental that we will need to be an on going guidebook about expectations and a degree of flexibility in the initial stages as we work out into what actually you have to do to persuade National Financial Institutions to come on board for example.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Spain please now you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN: Thank you.



In Spain we had a lot of discussions with our colleagues from the CAP Sector and I'm sorry to tell you that we really not succeeded very much having good integration into agricultural policies. So I think that happens in many member states and some reference in the conclusions to this point and specifically to the Rural Development Programs I think will be nice to have it.

Concerning the last point of this proposal of conclusions we support all the delegates. It is too early to welcome this Natural Capital Financial Fund. We are preparing some projects in Spain. We hope that they could be developed through this Natural Capital Fund. But we understand that it is still too early to welcome and we support what was said before by Germany and to take note will be nicer for us.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank very much Spain.

Being honest among ourselves about our problems is important and maybe this is one of the most serious, most important characteristics of this informal meeting of Natura and Biodiversity Directors. So please any country that faces problems let us know, share it with us. We are facing problems as well, we are not hiding it and we would like each one to benefit from the experiences of the other and move all together towards implementation of this strategy which is the ultimate purpose.

Thank you, Netherlands please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF NETHERLANDS: Thank you, Chair. Good morning everybody. Thank you also Hungaria and Slovakia and Commission for the presentations. I have one question and two remarks about what discussed here earlier.

The question is about the proposed conclusions. I noticed that the text of the proposed conclusions about the marker something different that was on the paper. So I liked this one but I think it was slightly different so I'm curious what will be the conclusion we will discussing tomorrow.

About Nature Budget in CAP I've got a feeling that it depends a lot how Government is structured. Sometimes it is a disadvantage but for now it is an advantage that in the Netherlands Agriculture and Nature is one of the same Ministry and also the same Minister, Secretary of State. So, we are very lucky to have about 50% or 60% of the Rural Program is for Agri – Environmental measures, so Nature is very well integrated over there.

About the NCFE we very liked that idea. I support what United Kingdom just told us. We have a similar Program in the Netherlands for many years and especially perhaps well when there the economics the time is not very good then it is very important to have an Institute than can have loans for very low interest and really also supports projects on integrating Nature and other kind of sectors, Recreational sectors, Healthcare sectors. We have very good experience we are willing to join those experiences and perhaps tomorrow my Director will tell more about it but it's... we support the idea.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Ireland please now you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND: Thank very much Chair and thank you for putting together a very interesting agenda for us today.

I just want mention some things a lot of what I wanted to say has been said previously so I'll try keep it short. I just like to thank the Commission for the outline of developments on the state of play and various issues and to Hungary and Slovenia for the perspectives.

On the issue of tracking expenditure I think this is very much to be welcomed that the development of this work. I think the methodology is going to be key in terms of how expenditure is tracked. But one of the key issues is after we find a good way of measuring how much is being spent under the NATURA or Biodiversity, there is a whole qualitative aspect that also needs to be looked at. That is whether the expenditure is effective, whether it is appropriate, whether it is appropriately prioritized as well.

Just looking back on previous financial perspectives a lot of money have been spend on NATURA through the various Operational Programs, but one word have to question the value for a money that has been achieved and the actual results from the expenditure. So again this is another challenge for us.

I think listening to a number of member states around the table about the effectiveness at national level of getting Biodiversity and Nature and hoard within the Partnership Agreement discussions and within the drafting of the Operational Programs has been similar to Ireland's. I think we were at the Ministry with responsibility for which was brought late at the discussions. I think the voice of Nature Protection and Biodiversity has been relatively weak in the drafting of these. It a matter of concern not only at a national level but it has to be a matter of concern at the European Union level. If what we are hearing around the table is reflected in many countries I think there is a fundamental difficulty and a structural difficulty in achieving various aspects of the Biodiversity Strategy and achieving the legal

requirements in terms of Natura 2000. I think we have to look at that very seriously.

A couple of smaller issues Birdlife phrased the issue of agricultural illegibility, rules for payment and auditing rules. I think that there is another, there is a similar one that has risen in Ireland where it is to do with the illegibility of land for payment under pillar 1 of CAP. Because of the auditing rules that are being applied now from DG Agri, there exists a perverse incentive for land owners to maybe destroy areas of Biodiversity value to ensure that they are deemed for payment under the agricultural measures. I think that is something of concern as well.

I would agree with Poland that a message coming from this meeting and from our conclusions should be that the Operational Program for Rural Development is key and I think our recognition of that for meeting through the requirements that we have would be very useful coming from this meeting.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker let me say a few words on what the Netherlands said before just for organizational reasons.

At this moment I think the important thing is to exchange views. We will focus on conclusion to the extent we will wish tomorrow mostly. As regards some of the questions you had I think that at the end we could give the floor to the Commission and they will enlighten us on these points as well. Thank for the understating.

Next is EEB please. You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF EEB: Thank you Madame Chair.



I would like first of all to thank the Presidency for inviting us to this important meeting. We are quite honored to be here, it's always interesting to be among people who are in charge in member states to protect Nature and give support when ever we can, because we know we have problems a lot with our own other Ministries. I would also like to thank the Commission for excellent presentation as well as our colleagues from Slovakia and Hungary.

In addition to what has been said already by my colleague from Birdife on ERDF I just wanted to make a general comment on NCFE, similarly as Germany and Slovenia and I think Belgium as well to a certain extent. We have some concerns which regard to using SCAR

Life resources to finance these facilities especially because it is very unclear what it will actually contain. During negotiations on Life there were many member states that had big reservation on using SCAR Life money for such mechanism and at that point it was explain by the Commission that will be mostly be used for Climate Subprogram.

We are concerned as well with regard to the contenders propose in the document prepared for this meeting and in particular with the mechanism referred to as Biodiversity Offsetting. If you look at other possible mechanisms outlined in the paper and in the Multiannual Work Program more or less they are all mechanisms that are generally endorsed or welcomed by member states. For example Green Infrastructure I think everybody welcomed the strategy developed by the Commission as well where as with Biodiversity Offsets we are not at there yet. I mean they are very controversial criticized not only by Environment alone. NGOs, as well as by stake holders and some of the members states. We are worried in particular because such facility mechanisms are to be used to ensure replicability across the EU and if a mechanism which we are not very clear about is delivering is to be replicable.

We will be very much against and I think there is still opportunity as far as I understand, EIV is still deciding what projects they are going to finance. So if we are actually using very SCAR Life resources we should use them for something that we actually we are sure that will deliver on Biodiversity conservation.

Many thanks.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you as well.

Denmark please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you very much and Good morning to everyone.

First of all we have a common (13.50, 3^η ώρα) sense on all the three subjects which are being discussed this morning. Just shortcomings because we are not necessary to repeat what already have been said by member states around the table.

On the discussion on what is highlighted in the first conclusion, draft conclusion on the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programs. Yes, of course we have to discuss full integration of those and we of course supportive of having some sort of conclusion on this one. However the idea raised by some member o focusing on special parts of the financial instruments I'm not quite sure as we could see from one of the presentations in Hungary you have a big emphasis on Regional Programs and also on Agriculture.

But I think whether we should and then Denmark we also try to take our share of the EMFF on the Fisheries in order to improve the Nature and Biodiversity. So I think that we should keep conclusions at a level of not trying to specially point out Special Programs, just mention them in general.

This is sad we are behind in very hard wrestling as exercise if I may say so with our colleagues in Agricultural Ministry on the RDP and the Fisheries Program and we are still to see what the outcome will be. But of course it is as mentioned by others hard wrestling and we up against a tough opponent if I may say so.

In that sense it could be interesting to know what would be the follow up from the Commission. It has been mentioned before but I think that what could be interesting to know how the Commission will be able to be some of informal consultation with member states when you have done your screening exercise. That could be very interesting to know and how will you from the Commission side involved would that be, will involve member states will that be the persons form DG Region when it has to do with the Regional Programs all will that be. So, they will take that national counterparts or how we will be involved from some of the Biodiversity side. I think that it would be very interesting thing to know a bit more about.

Jumping to the other two issues which have been discussed here, we have on the discussion on tracking methodologies we just have to be very much much aware. We know that there are discussions both at the global level on this issue and on the EU level on whether to develop different methodologies or not.

One must take to consideration here that there, it is under the member states, it is for the member states to decide which methodology to choose in the end. So, we have to be very much aware on that and not beforehand saying that this should be a common methodology check tracking exercise.

When it comes to the NCFE discussion I think that we are somehow reluctantly supportive to this Instrument because it is quite still very difficult for us to see the shape of this Instrument what in fact,

what will be the essence of it. We fully support any initiative which can activate other money than we already have all for Biodiversity and Nature. But on the other hand, we should also be very much aware of that when you launch and new Facility like this, this maybe be an argument for cutting down other budgets which are more targeted and I think we all have the experience of trying to raise from private funding nationally and in many cases it's very, very good for Nature and Biodiversity and in some cases it also can be difficult in relation to State Budgets on Nature and Biodiversity as well. So, just saying that we need to see more shape on this initiative.

And there is one reservation which is I think was more or less clarified in the presentation from the Commission that we should not use this Funding Facility for instance paying or financing, offsetting of projects which... damage from projects which are already covered by existing legislation. I think that has to be and that could be perhaps be included in the conclusions as well.

Thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

We have two more countries in our list wising to speak. Then we will give the floor to the Commission for some responses, clarifications, etc. I will try to sum up quickly with some key words and then we will break for coffee and tea.

So Cyprus first please. You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF CYPRUS: Thank you very much.



I would like to thank you for inviting us here and also the three presenters the Commission, Hungary and Slovakia for their very interesting information.

What I would like to share with you is that being a small country, being in a place that it's easier to talk to people and to know people from other Agencies we have been in close contact and in discussions with the Agencies that prepared the Partnership Agreements but also the Operational Programs and we have been talking with them with the past some time now.

However, though it seems that translating these discussions into a considerable percentage of funding for Biodiversity was not very easy. So, basically one step is to really come in close contact but the others they would be really to having the will to put Biodiversity as a priority in the funding list. So, that's our experience. We hope we will somewhere, however things have not moved as much as we have expected. That is for the first part.

I have another comment on the Natural Capital Facility Fund. Of course any new way of funding is welcome to see you know taking place and you know become practice. However, as a small country again not having the economies of scale where it's a type of funding that worries us. We have some concerns. How easy would be to draft money from this funding? So we would like to see some examples and some more clearer view of what this funding would be before we feel very comfortable with it.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Sweden please. You have the floor.



REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN: Thank you Madame Chair, and thank you for the nice presentations done this morning.

Just to be brief, first we would like to support the Polish suggestion to have some kind of mentioning on the CAP in the conclusions of this meeting. It is one of the most important instruments when it comes to areas such as Grazing for example and Biodiversity and therefore I think it would be useful to have it in the minutes.

When it comes to the question on the Natural Capital Financing Facility we are positive on that from the Swedish side. However, we also understand the concerns from some member states that it might be a bit... and it is not that clear what it is supposed and it is supposed to work. The way I see it is more to my understanding is more...is not a Fund, is not for funding for example Green Infrastructure. It must be more for funding the process to reach a Green Infrastructure. That's the way I see it.

But I think it would be useful to have some clarification on that and maybe to mention some examples then to address the questions. Also on whether this means less funding from other Funds or is it additional funding or how much funding are we talking about, to have some more meat so to say on the issue. Would be helpful I would say.

The proposal from Spain to lighten the wording might be helpful when it comes to the conclusions. Maybe that could be a good solution too to settle the issue. But we support and welcome the Natural Capital Financing Facility.

When it comes to the last issue of the real markers, we support the use of the real markers and we are also glad to have a possibility to track the process in a national level.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

The Commission please now to clarify few points.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Well, thank you very much.

It was such a dense and thorough discussion on substance that I would say it is impossible to come back on everything just in few minutes and we all want to have coffee and we all want to have time also for the next item on the agenda. But I can provide some clarification at this point in time.

I guess that first of all on the conclusions what we can take already from today's discussion to tomorrow when we will discuss in depth the conclusions is that conclusions are welcome, that we need to look at what conclusions that it might be helpful to have some wording also on CAP and Regional Funding issues which were raised today.

On these issues, on the follow up I think that what I can say at this stage is that we are expecting between now and sometime end of summer all CAP Regional Programs to arrive in our table, which are several, several thousand pages and especially the CAP Programs are all coming in the national language and therefore we will need to find ways to address them.

Inside the Commission the system is very transparent. Because we will receive as DG Environment all CAP Operational Programs for scrutiny. There will be an interservice consultation, so not only we in Environment but also other interested Departments, maybe Research, maybe Enterprise, for sure Energy will be able to scrutinize the CAP Operational Programs and we will make our comments. Where we really

think that they are too low in terms of environmental expectations we will give also negative comments. So, we will do our job as well as we can.

But we and this was clearly mentioned by Francois and by Stefan in their initial presentation we would expect that you Nature Departments do a similar scrutiny on new Operational Programs which will be sent to the Commission Services. And that you tell your fellow Departments that this would not be acceptable from Biodiversity, from a Nature point of view. Especially on the side of what the Programs will contain it terms of, let's say Green Infrastructure, which may be detrimental to Biodiversity in some cases of new energy development.

We all know we should not hide behind words. Energy is priority possibly number one for all of us right now because of the present situation and in the years to come. We need to recognize and we need to acknowledge not only recognize but acknowledge that it is important to keep this priority very high and if it is our priority number one. The European Council end of March seemed to say that this is our priority number one but European Councils have very short memory I must confess, so I would not be surprised if by June or at the latest by October priority number one would have slightly shifted. But we need to work towards this priority. But this should not mean that everything else is just taken out.

So, we want you to do a similar job for your National Operational Programs as we will try to do for twenty eight (28) National Operational Programs. We will do the same on the Regional Partnership Agreements and then on the Operational Programs. The Regional ones will come later in the years because we are still discussing the Partnership Agreements.

Some are coming already Francois says so we will do a similar scrutiny from our Environment part perspective. To what extent it will succeed, that I can not foresee. You know that we are all struggling with very similar difficulties, but that we have the Commission somewhere in a better position because at least this consultation process is a matter of fact and it always takes place.

The fact that the CAP foresees more flexibility and that maybe less Environment can be done while still receiving CAP money is a fact of life. This is what you, Ministers have negotiated, what they have wanted, because the very final decisions are quite different from the Commission proposal. The Commission proposal was taking I would say better care of Biodiversity, Nature, Environment needs all in all.

Now, we have to work and I said it in my initial remarks “Let’s work with what we have and let’s make the best with what we have”. This is to answer this part of the discussion and we are happy to answer more in detail. But I think we are really short of time now.

I want to come back then on tracking. We are working hard on tracking, also because tracking will help us also in these discussions. If we are capable together with you to set up tracking systems which are well established, which are recognised and which allow all of us to show how much we are spending and then afterwards to monitor how effective our spending has been, how much it has achieved the target and how relevant the target was in terms of achieving our EU 2020 Green Economy objectives.

Overall, this will help us then in future negotiations. We are pretty sure that tracking was a weak point from our Nature and Biodiversity perspective in previous negotiation and we want not only to follow up on tracking because it is a global obligation. Yes it is a global obligation, but it is also helpful for us.

On NCFE we all agree that this is new. New means terra incognita per definition so none of us knows exactly where we are heading towards. What I heard and which is very promising is that at least two of you have mentioned that you have possibilities for projects in the pipeline at national level. It is important to start and to take stock and we can have NCFE at least at our Spring Nature's Directors Meeting regularly featuring in order to take stock of where we stand.

Here again I want to give just a very short update on the procedures. Now that we have adopted NCFE in our Life Program the EIB is adopting this NCFE instrument also and this should be done by July. They are already working towards June Advisory Board Meetings and I think that the Council of the EIB will make that final adoption by July. Before the end of the year the EIB considers that they will be able to look into at initial projects which are brought to them for financing.

Indeed these are loans and I would want to say that Local Authorities are fully entitled to access those loans. So, it is not only for private business. It is very much for Local Authorities and indeed from what we know EIB loans are always very attractive. Because de facto they are very cheap loans. They remain loans for the EIB contribution but it is cheap loan and the Life contribution is not a loan.

Second element we will reconsider the usefulness of if this Instrument by 2017 and that point in time of course we must be sufficiently honest as to recognize has it worked, is it satisfactory has it not work, is it not satisfactory and then draw conclusions.

And third element which is for us extremely important. If the Instrument is satisfactory and if it works well we will be then able to reduce and hopefully to fully withdraw the contribution from Life. Because the EIB wants this sort of guarantee from the Commission initially. You know that being a Bank they are risk averse in the first

place and risk averse in the second and in the third place also and only if they see that the financing is proving useful and that they get the money back so to speak they will then put more money and we as Commission, as Life Instrument will reduce our participation. But initially we had to contribute also for Life in order to persuade the EIB to put EIB money into it.

So I think that I have only given some elements but so far let's keep it at this.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Pia and thank you all, the three who made presentations but also all of you who took the floor and presented your views.

Trying to sum up quickly under the pressure of time we have. I would like just to say that we are noting down all the valuable comments and proposals made. We will try to make good use of them in the conclusions tomorrow and further on for the cooperation we will have.

I will try to recall five major points raised in our discussion and repeated by many among you. First the timing. It is a very good timing a very good momentum for having this discussion because there is a process under negotiation at this moment and we could, in theory at least, influence it in favor of Biodiversity. The point is that the process is rather complex and we would need on the one hand several clarifications as regards the process which explains some reasonable I think concerns raised. On the other hand we need absolutely more information about how these new Instruments are going to function.

Second point, integration. Most important for all us we all agree about this, yet it is not clear enough how this will be and how the

objectives will be achieved. Which means it is very good to have this multi sectoral and multi stake holders meetings like this one and to continue strengthen this kind of context. We would need to better understand some of the aspects related to integration. It is absolutely necessary to try and identify new actors and work with them and several among you have mentioned the importance of trying to promote integration in rural areas and the rural agricultural environment as well, the CAP in general. So this is most important for a many member states.

Third point. We all understand the key role of the PAFs in order to identify useful projects for funding. There again we would need to have some more work. Some countries are more advanced, others less advanced in this process and one point raised by some of you was the need for monitoring of the results and of the implementation of the objectives of such PAFs.

Fourth point, the tracking methodologies. Tracking methodologies for the Biodiversity related expenses is one of the new ideas and one of the new tools. It would need more elaboration and we should identify better which would be such methodologies. I mention it in plural because our feeling is that we could not have just a unique methodology for all of us and I think it was mentioned from some of the colleagues who intervened.

And then, fifth point, the identification of Biodiversity related projects. This wonderful as an idea but again we would need to work a little bit more about it. Try and highlight the benefits of such projects and persuade the other Agencies, Authorities, Organizations, etc. which are involved. Try and identify some criteria to be applied and again the big issue is how to persuade some other Ministries which are playing a much more decisive role than the Environment Ministries.

So, these are the major points we have discussed. We will try to reflect them as well as possible in the conclusions and we will come back to this again tomorrow.

Thank you very much for this discussion. Now we will break for coffee. I would like to invite you to be back in twenty minutes instead of thirty so that we will try to use better our time. Thanks a lot.

Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy.

Just to recall very briefly the Target 1 requires that EU member states fully implement the Bird and Habitats Directives in order to hold the deterioration in status of all species and habitats covered by EU Nature Legislation and achieve a significant and measurable improvement in their status.

The delay related to the network concerns mainly its marine component. As regards good management the main questions concern special areas of conservation, designation and setting of conservation objectives. Setting out conservation measures for species and habitats and especially establishment of management plans and/or equivalent instruments of Natura 2000.

To facilitate management of the sites the European Commission launched in 2011 the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process as you all know. The aim was to provide a framework for collaboration and information sharing on key conservation management issues that will lead to improved management of Natura 2000 and ultimately help achieving the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy goals of the targets.

This process has been improved and adjusted to the needs of Natura 2000 users and the first Seminar of the new approach will be convened in May for the Mediterranean Biogeographical Region as we mentioned at the beginning. For last carnivore conservation the EU Large Carnivore Initiative was launched by DG Environment in 2012.

The major goal was to reach an agreement signed by the key stakeholder organizations to join a structured debate. This will be done through the EU platform on coexistence between people and large carnivores that will be launched in June this year.

To improve awareness the European Commission established the new Natura 2000 award designed to celebrate and promote best practices in nature conservation in Europe. The award aims to demonstrate the strategic importance of Natura 2000 in protecting Biodiversity across Europe.

Today, we can exchange views on how efforts could be enhanced for the completion and good management of the network and of conservation of the protected species. Your comments on the updated approach of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical process which moves away from the concept of Seminars Cycles towards an ongoing process of cooperation are also welcome.

Another important issue for our discussion today is the new concept of Fitness Check, nice wording, of EU Nature Legislation. Yes it fits us well. Fitness checks are comprehensive policy evaluations accessing whether the regulatory framework for a policy sector is fit for purpose. Their findings will serve as a basis for drawing policy conclusions on how well EU policies have been performing and will be used for possible consideration of the future of the relevant regulatory framework.

So, the key questions we would like to propose for today's discussion are: how will all commit ourselves fully to exercise? Can we fully? And how we will ensure that the current level of ambition and integrity of the EU Nature Legislation will be maintained.

I don't know if the Commission would like to add something on this before moving to the presentations. No. Thank you.



So the first presentation which is not mentioned in the Program is about the status of Natura 2000 Marine Designations. We invite Miss Dominique Richard from the European Topic Centre for Biological Diversity.

Thanks for being with us.

Just to say something you see that there are some presentations. We intend to put them on the website of the meeting so everybody will have access to them. Maybe some photos if we find some nice photos of the event will be added also on the website.

You have the floor.

DOMINIQUE RICHARD (EUROPEAN TOPIC CENTRE ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY): Yes, thank you to the Greek Presidency to allow me to make this additional presentation which was suggested by the European Commission so that it would give you a broad overview of the current status of Marine Designation and this will introduce the next presentation by France on the situation in France.

So, most of the data that I'm going to show are those which are published into the Natura 2000 Barometer from January 2014 which in fact reflect the data and the proposals that were made by member states up to end 2012.

So, the situation is that out of twenty seven two thousand twenty one (27.2021) Natura 2000 sites about two hundred six hundred five (2605) are Marine and they cover two thousand four hundred sixteen (2.416) more kilometres square.

In fact from data that we received yesterday with proposals that were made by countries in 2013. So, fifteen (15) member states have made additional proposals for Marine sites so now we have in fact four thousand three hundred (4.300) kilometres square of marine which are

added. This makes if you remember the figure that Pia Bucella mentioned before that more than one million (1.000.000) now kilometres square for the whole network and in fact the Marine are covering a quarter of that.

The situation is of course different among countries. Here you can see the share of Marine Designation so in pink these are sites which are only proposed under the Habitats Directive, in blanc is only special protection areas under the Birds Directive and in sharp red are the overlap between the SCI and the SPAs. And the contribution, the biggest, highest contribution up to now is from U.K. that had made big proposal site of ...nine, ten sites were added in 2012 covering more than nine thousand (9.000) kilometres square.

So, now U.K, reaches seventy four thousand (74.000) kilometres square followed by France about forty one thousand (41.000), then Germany twenty five thousand five hundred (25.500), Denmark nineteen thousand (19.000) and so on.

You can see that the figure, I'm presenting you the absolute figures and not the percentage because this is due to the difficulty to define what the National Marine Area under national jurisdiction is. Particularly for the marine area an in fact in the European Environment Agency we never publish data related to the Marine as percentage of national territory but only with marine regions.

So the evolution over time here is a comparison since 2010 up to 2012 just adding Croatia from 2013 and here again you can see that there has been a deep increase in designation particularly by U.K.. Of course due to the scale you can not really identify but sometimes it's one hundred (100) kilometres square which are added and it's not so visible on the picture, on the graph.

As you may know every year the Topic Centre is doing an evaluation of the sufficiency of the proposal and we update what we call the conclusion database where we see what is the level of sufficiency of proposals of sites, for each species, each habitat per region. Until now the level of sufficiency is mainly, the highest level of sufficiency is reached in the Baltic region and with significant improvement since 2011. This is why it is in dark green.

But in general there are still some insufficiencies of proposals for mainly two types of habitats. This is valid for all Marine Region, the reefs and the sandbanks and for species as well still have a high level of insufficiency the harbour porpoise, the bottlenose dolphin and the common seal and the green seal. All those are new proposals were made in 2013 for the two latter species so that we will be able to upgrade the level of sufficiency.

Now if we look at the situation per marine region, so if we distinguish the big marine four regions, the Baltic Sea, Greater North Sea, including Kattegat and English Channel, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic and sorry and the Black Sea, these are with the circles so we reach 12.3% of coverage in the Baltic Sea, 3.7% in the North East Atlantic Ocean, 2.4% for the Mediterranean and 4.5% for the Black Sea. This overall for the EU Marine Territory is about 4% of the coverage by Marine Natura 2000. But, then, if we look at the detail of how this is covered in inshore, coastal inshore and offshore then you have to see in the first the 33% the fourth column so these represent the coverage of the coastal areas. So, between zero and one (0 - 1) nautical mile, then it's 11.3% for the inshore between one and twelve (1 – 12) nautical mile and only 1.7% for the offshore. So obviously, the figures are talking by themselves. One of the big efforts would be now for designation in the offshore area.

So this is what I wanted to present to you as elements for the debate.

So thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you, very much indeed.

Now I call Mr. Laurent Roy from the French Ministry to complete the picture I guess as regards to Natura 2000 designation, Marine Natura.

LAURENT ROY (FRENCH WATER AND BIODIVERSITY DIRECTOR): Thank you. Thank you Chair.

Effectively I will try to complete this presentation from the French point of view. Our Natura 2000 network consists of one thousand seven hundred and fifty eight (1.758) sites along coasts and around two hundred and ten (210) marine. So, terrestrial network covers six million and nine hundred (6.900.000) of hectares which means a bit more of than twelve thousand (12.000) of our terrestrial territory. Our marine network covers four point one (4.100.000) million of marine hectares. So you that the proportion of marine sites is a bit more important in France than it is at the level of the European Union.

So sufficiency of the network in France has been evaluated of course, especially during atlantic period geographical seminaring. In 2009 and during the Mediterranean Biogeographical seminaring in terms of turn up it was some we consider it sufficient for the tidal waters and it appeared clearly according to the figures we have just presented. It has been judged as needing to be extended policy for the other sites.

So, we are now dealing with two kinds of questions. First type of questions how to properly manage our marine sites which have already

been designed, which means mainly coastal sites. It's not just another question because of course the stakeholders are in the main sites, terrestrial sites. So the role of Local Authorities, Local Connectivities is not the same for marine sites and some assessment of the impact of activities it's also to be properly defined.

We have created in France marine protected areas and Agencies which is in know in charge of implementing Natura 2000 for all the marine sites. So this is helpful because we have a specialized Bureau, a specialized Agency which is responsible for this implementation.

Participatory approach has been installed to define the management objectives of each site. We are still facing difficulties with Fisheries Authorities to really define these management objectives but I'm more optimistic now that I would have been last year because our negotiations were official representatives, was official results. So, it is very good progressing now.

We are trying also to put forward some voluntary actions and were are creating also a special legal framework to assess the impacts, the efficient impacts also on marine sites, which this supposed to be gone through growth flow about Biodiversity issue which will be discussed by the Parliament beginning next June. On two other specific (00.53, 4ⁿ ώρα) for fishing impacts because we consider that our national legislation is not adopted to correct treatment of fishing impacts because from our point of view it can not be done efficiently case by case approach for every fishing activity which is undertaken. It's more efficient to do it on site by site approach. To define site by site what kind of impact for fishing activities has to be treated.

So these are our first questions. More efficient management of the sites, so more collaboration with officials, more participatory approach and more efficient treatment of fishing impacts which opposes changes of our national legislation.

So, second types of kind of questions are the extension of the Natura 2000 network for offshore sites. We have undertaken three Research Programs to correct necessary scientific data to be able to process to these extensions. One such Program is for Marine Bears and Mammals. One such Program for the raising in the Atlantic Sea and two joint such Programs for raising in the Mediterranean Sea. We got some last year's data from these Programs. We have been, we have analyzed them and we have about twenty five (25) large sectors of ecological interest, ten for the reefs and fifteen for the Marine Bears and Mammals. We are now beginning the consultation with the stake holders to be able to identify the right sites and units Natura 2000 Marine sites which could be proposed.

Our aim is to have stabilized a proposal next year to evaluate probable questions and call on of the sufficiency of the network with these extensions. A lot of proposals are concentrated on the continental showpiece so it is important to note this. There are also maps of the big sectors, the large sectors where we are now considering and we are beginning to discuss with the stake holders so you see that the continental showpiece is very concerned. So just the same for the Mediterranean.

So, the challenge we have to face is to succeed in this designation so that I'm thinking it is also the same for all member states. So the first problem is the lack of data. The lack of ecological data. We have dealt with facts with our Research Programs I mentioned. These Research Programs we are not sufficient to cover very important lack of data especially for deep seas. For deep seas we still lack ecological data to make the right proposals. But also now lack economic data, data about on economic activities. Consequences of fishing activities, consequences about other economic activities, such as extractions. Some military activities are also concern and they are not the easiest to be

informed about. So this is a first kind of problems to insufficient data about the economic activities offshore.

So, one kind of questions is to manage to define management measures appropriate to these offshore sites. Maybe the organization of some kind of specific Biogeographical Seminar about the management measures for offshore sites could be useful and we also need reinforcement of the collaboration with Official Authority, at International and at European level because some management measures will for some of them common, a New Common Fisheries Policy Regulation. So we really need to reinforce this cooperation if we want that some management measures for Natura 2000 sites are really relevant force on Natura 2000 sites and also a new Common Fisheries Policy alteration.

We will have our so on control questions. It is not easy to control already what is done for offshore sites. These are very big, the large sectors, where the consent, presence of Control Authority is not so strong in these sectors and we are trying to work about how to reinforce their current answer between control for them, Action Programs and those of Marine Strategy Framework Directive and control actions for the specific zones defined for Natura 2000.

Then, of course we will have the question of the financing of possibilities. It was them jointed the first part of the morning discussion. We have a few financing possibilities and also European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, better than nothing and its lamentation (7.30, 4^η ώρα). But thinking that at the beginning it will be enough because it is the beginning. But when we will progress about the definition of the management measures for these offshore sites probably the financing possibilities will be difficult, touchy topic because the

financing possibilities under this European Maritime and Fisheries Fund are from our point of view quite limited.

Thank you for your attention.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much as well.

Now colleagues please oblige to kindly ask the next speakers not to exceed the ten minutes. We have some time pressure because of the afternoon visit. I hope that you understand this and that you will all cooperate.

So, now, I'm inviting Miss or Mr? Mr Christian Ploessnig from Austria to present the Alpine Biogeographical Process.

You have the floor.

CHRISTIAN PLOESSNIG (AUSTRIAN AMT DER TIROLER LANDESREGIERUNG, ABTEILUNG UMWELTSCHUTZ):

Thank you very much.

Presidency, Ladies and Sirs, I was asked by the Greek Presidency to speak about my experience on the Biogeographical Process on the Alpine Region and I'll try to be short although I think I know that I can not be so short as Greece will be when Greece is reporting on the kick off Seminar. Because I've heard that you will have to do everything that we have to do in five steps and one Workshop and one Seminar in one kick off Seminar.

So, the beginning was in 2012. We were asked by Frank Vassen from the European Commission if we would like to be the host country. I went back to my region, we have nine (9) regions, Federalistic country and we agreed in the Habitats Committee in April 2012 to be the hosting country for this seminar process. We didn't know by then that it was



quite a large, what large organization plan this was. We had five (5) steering groups, one other a talk group for organizational plans, we had three and and half day Workshop and we had a Seminar in 2013.

The first Steering Group we got the introduction by Mr. Francois Kremer who is very good supporter who was very good supporter from the Commission during the whole process, adviser and supporter, I thank him very much. We were told that we should take the initiative and we should coordinate the cooperation between the member states. We also got report from the boreal process from our colleagues from Finland and we got the background introduction to the background document by Marita Arvela from the European Topic Centre. She had already put together the most important habitats and the prioritization and we also got the introduction by Mr. Lawrence Jones Walters which was the contractor of the ECNC.

Second Steering Group was in October 2012. We got a report from Erik Van Sommen from the Netherlands. It was very good advices on the Atlantic Process. We decided on four different groups, on forest, wet and dry grasslands, fresh water habitats and wetlands and then we got invitation for the Atlantic Seminar in the Netherlands to look at how Netherlands is organizing this process. We participated, got good advice for example for the knowledge market and also that we should have the field trip at the beginning of the Workshop to have very good possibility to speak with the local stake holders and the owners in the Natura 2000 sites on the problems they have. This was a very good advice to have the field trip just prior to the meeting.

Third Steering Group was already in the year 2013. We expected a two ten (210) experts for the Workshop. We were told that we have to have the venue around ten (10) experts for eleven (11) member states,

Croatia was the 12th member state, but it was not member of the Union by then. Only meeting in 2013.

Then we had a talk meeting of our Organization Team in Gratz where we had the Workshop and the Meeting in one of the regions in Austria and the member of ECNC in Gratz.

At the fourth Steering Group in Brussels we were presented, the Commission presented a communication platform and the Circa sites on the internet. This was very useful for us because all the member states could put their information on this communication platform and we could also put our background document on this communication platform. Sorry I don't know if it is me it's up to me I'm not aware of that.

We changing the advisor, the European Commission was changing the advisor in the ECNC. Max Netlarger came and he was good supporter for us. By that time we still had no chair for the Wetlands Group but we were hoping to find one.

This was the information just very shortly before the Workshop. It was in May 2013. We had the chapters, four different chapters on the background document and the invitation for the Workshop. This Workshop was then in June 2013, from 12th to 14th June, three whole days long. The meeting place was Gratz and Gratz is at the border between the Alpine region and the Continental Region but we decided to have it in Gratz because it's a large town. It's the capital town of Styria of one of our nine regions with an airport and good meeting venues. During the field trip we went up to the north into the middle of the Alps. So we really were in the Alpine Region.

This is the Workshop Agenda. I just wanted to say that this first day we had the on site Workshops. The field trips from eight in the morning till eight to the evening this was very useful resource and

advice from Netherlands. For example a field trip with the relics (15.25, 4ⁿ ώρα) and lakes maybe some of you can recognize themselves on the pictures if you can see. And the field trip with the wet and dry grasslands to the north of Gratz, fifty (50) kilometres to the north where we learned from the owners and the users that sometimes they just don't want to mow their wetland anymore because it's not useful for them and they want more money of course.

The field trip to one of our (15.45, 4ⁿ ώρα) forests near the (;;;;). This is a group in our forest, forest group around twenty two (22) people and our Workshop report was then ready shortly after this Workshop. It was in 8th July. The Workshop was on 12th June and we send it out to all of the members, of all of the participants via the Circa and via the communication platform.

The fifth Steering Group then was to prepare the Seminar. It was in late August 2013. We changed the chairs a little bit. For example for the Forest Group and the outcome of the Workshop the background document was sent to all the participants of the Workshop. Although I would have to say the Workshop participants were nearly the same as the Seminar participants.

We were also presented the new Life Program by Anne Buriel. This was then the invitation for the Seminar. Two weeks before the Seminar, the Seminar was in November so we couldn't have any fieldtrip because in the Alpine Region at this time it's always snowing. At least at the high altitude and we presented that we should have a key milestone, this should not be the end the Seminar should not be the end, but it should not be a key milestone in a continuing process.

The overall aim of the two day Alpine Seminar was is written down here. We had to seek for development of synergies and co operations. We should build up the network. We were, we thought that

we could answer some special questions that were raised in the Workshop but we knew that we would not answer all of them.

It was opened by Mr. Coachman our Political Representative of Styria and Mr. Stefan Leiner who is also here from the Commission and the day one was that we were planning for the outcomes and defining objectives in the four Habitats Groups and we had this already mentioned knowledge market. And the knowledge market was also for the NGOs to present their ideas on protection of Nature and of achieving a favourable conservation status. It was in the afternoon that they could present it on posters and could have a short presentation that we learned from the Atlantic Seminar.

The day two was also, before lunch it was organized into four groups to organize recommendations to be proposed and in afternoon we came together in the plenary room and we discussed that. This is just some examples of the proposed activities. In the Forest Habitat Group we proposed to have sustainable forest management options and improved of course our financing schemes for protection and restore.

Our Group of the Wetlands were just very precise on the habitats that they we talking about. As you see they would organize or they would propose to organize a Workshop on right and wrong management of the different habitats and what seemed to be very important was this Grassland Habitat Group and the proposal of organizing an ad hoc meeting on favourable conservation status. Because as we were talking among the member states not all of them or not all of us were speaking of the same when we were speaking of favourable conservation status. So we decided to organize a cross border meeting to have a good decision of this favourable conservation status.

We think that was very important and we are ongoing doing that. At the beginning of May we have such a Seminar in Austria. It's a

National Seminar on the favourable conservation status but we try to have international with other member states. This plan is also just to mention who were the Chairs of these Groups. Peter Skoberne who might already miss he is now in the Tree Graff National Park. He decided very shortly before the Workshop and the Seminar to be Chair in the Wetland Groups than Jana Durkošová, Andrzej Langowski from Poland for the Dry and wet Grasslands and to Workshops we changed from Gerald Plattner at the Workshop to Georg Frank at the Seminar Gerald Platt and there were also the other advisors for the ECNC George Lammerand, Max Netlarger, Lawrence Jones Walters and of course our best advisor was from the Commission and we always had good support from him, from Francois.

This is the last picture. When I was a kid I hated this picture because anytime I had to go to bed after that Pink Panther this was the end but to me it's not the end concerning this Alpine Biogeographical Process because we have to go on with Seminars and Workshops and Habitat Groups. We already had one Workshop on Natura 2000 and forests in Austria in December an as I already mentioned we have the next one at the beginning of May at the favourable conservation status.

I wish all the best to Greece for the kick off meeting in May in Thessaloniki.

Thank you.

A MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, thank you.

You are inspiring us for the next meeting we will organize.

Now Miss Charlotte Simon from FACE please and Marie - Alice Budniok from the European Landowners Organization, I don't know how you will divide your time.



Please try not to exceed the ten minutes I repeat but nobody listens.

CHARLOTTE SIMON (FACE): In fact it's going to be me making the presentation.

Good afternoon everybody I'm Charlotte Simon from FACE the European Hunting Federation.

I would first like to thank the Commission and the Greek Presidency for giving me the opportunity of presenting how it is possible to cooperate with Europe's land owners, managers and users to achieve the targets of the Biodiversity Strategy.

So doing this presentation I'm going to do a comparison out of the Natura 2000 Users Forum which gathers the European Organization of the Landowners, Foresters, Farmers, Anglers and Hunters. In this context we represent the environmental actions that are conducted together with the social economic and the social cultural aspects. Those activities are linked to the rural areas and also to renewable natural resources.

Through our work we assist our members in the implementation and understanding of the Nature Directive. More specifically link to Natura 2000. We also liaise with policy makers so that the opinion of the local actors is taken into account when developing new policy. We can also provide some clarification on the local environmental and social economic situation while at the same time communicating with the rural stakeholders.

Local owners, managers and users representatives are a big proportion of the European population. Here there are some numbers. As you can see in Europe there are sixteen million (16.000.000) of forest owners, twelve million (12.000.000) of farmers, seven million (7.000.000) of hunters and twenty five million (25.000.000) of Anglers. Here there is also a list of numbers that demonstrate the importance of the activities

of those people and at the management work they could do on the land. As one or two example 18% of the EU of (25.00, 4th ορα) lands (;;;;) come from farming and forest land. You have over 65% of the countryside that receives some management contribution from the Hunters and the Anglers. And most of the territory on Natura 2000 site comes from forest and agricultural land. So as you have probably understood all main features are farming, forestry and tourism activities but also hunting, angling activities as well as wildlife management.

Now more specifically speaking about the Target 1 of the Strategy and a whole is it possible to cooperate with the land users there are several opportunities, challenges and possible solutions.

Concerning the Action 1 there are several opportunities coming from the land users. The first one is their practical knowledge of the field and their experience in working on the ground. They will be also the people that will be concretely implement actions that would help to achieve the conservation objectives. At the same time organizations and all members are facing some challenges as for example we need concrete views on what would be the outcomes of the management processes. We also need good contact and communication with the member states. For that I can give an example as the Biogeographical process.

We all agreed that this process is useful to share different opinions coming from different sides. But sometimes we have difficulties to see what would be the consequences of such processes. We also have some times difficulties to get our members involved at national level in the meetings. Because there is a lack of communication with the member states.

We also need some time frame so that we can give perspective on a long term basis. Indeed when planting tree or planting some hedges it

is important to have long term idea of what would be the objectives that we can make the good choice.

So what would be the solution? First enhancing communication would be really helpful so that we can give clear messages and good visibility to all constituencies. Also when talking about insuring good management within it is important to acknowledge the ownership rights. And it is crucial to make stake holders being involved as early as possible into processes.

Concerning Action 2 which call for adequate financing of the Natura 200 site it is important to emphasize that a lot of work is already contacted on a voluntary basis by the different land users. And if there is a good financial support this voluntary work can become more targeted in order to achieve the different conservation objectives.

At the same time the land users have a lack of human resources and a lack of capacity to manage big skill programs and big skill projects. So, one solution would be to provide funding instrument that are more linked to small grand system that would also minimize the administrative burden because the land users doesn't have the particular capacities to facing this burden.

Concerning Action 3 there are also several opportunities coming from the land users. They represent a really broad network of people in the rural areas including a lot of volunteer people an if they are seen as equal partners an if there are some good incentive there is a good potential for broad awareness raising and more concrete involvement of those people.

As you probably know the problems that some conflicts may appear when implementing restrictive measures that are not always in line with the human activities. Another difficulty that we phase is that we have difficulties to translate sometime the EU guidelines and briefs

to the local level in order to get the actors involved because those guidelines does not always correspond to the realities of the ground work. What would be the solution?

Enhancing the recognition on what the managers already can do or to achieve would probably improve their acceptance of new conservation measures. We also think it is important to find compromise between human activities and the conservation requirements to an integrative approach where the conservation actions are integrated within the management actions contacted by those people.

On Action 4 which calls for an improvement and streamline monitoring and reporting through their broad network the land users can provide efficient data and valuable information on the population status for some species. And this can be used as direct input for different monitoring and reporting process as for example the article 12, article 17 reporting.

We really welcome the assessment and reporting process and for now I have to say that the transparency is really good and we just would like to ask continue have this good transparency into the reporting process. We would also need a concrete view of what would be the implication of such processes. For that enhancing the communications and the results and the consequences would be really helpful. That was an overview for Target 1.

Now concerning the other targets that will be discussed today the challenges are often quite the same and there also some opportunities that can come from the land users. For Target 2 they can identify the degraded habitat and the suitable habitat for Green Infrastructure. They can also mending the different import habitats.

For Target 5 they are really partners for the monitoring and identification of invasive species. Concerning Fisheries check we really

welcome the process of evaluating the legislation and we will be really happy to contribute to that and also welcome the fact that it will increase the coherence with the other EU policing.

As last slide this is a summary of all what will be possible to cooperate with the different land users. As I already said they have the practical knowledge and they have the experience of the field work. They are also the people that will implement concrete action that will have helped to achieve the conservation objectives. At the same time it happens that they are excluded from decision making. They also have negative view of the EU policy and they have a lack of resources.

Now we are not claiming that this is the miracle solution. Of course the situation is quite complicate and different from a country to another but this would be all advised to improve cooperation with the different stake Holders. First consulting them as early as possible in the different stages so that it s possible to find trade off between their activities and conservation measures. This would have as consequences minimization of the conflicts and improvement of their acceptance. A better recognition of what they already do as conservation action could be also helpful to not reinvent the wheel. Sometimes is not necessary to always add new actions, conservation actions because they already contacted a lot of things. Third for the lack of resources simplified access to funding and give more incentives. For example have more small grads minimizing the administrative burden

That's it from my side. I hope it was short enough.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.



Thank you not only for respecting the time schedule but also for giving us very good example of what the role could be for the stakeholders and how we could cooperate together in following a win - win approach. I think that we have both to benefit from such cooperation and you bridged also this agenda item with the afternoon ones. So, thanks for this.

Now, the available time for discussion before breaking for lunch is twenty minute maximum. I turn to the Commission to ask if you would like to add something. After, all right thank you.

I open the floor for interventions, comments, etc, thank you. Who starts first? I didn't say that we didn't discuss at all. You see somebody?

Birdlife, yes. Please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BIRDLIFE: Thank you.

I have a few questions and comments. One is quite specific on the management planning for Marine Natura 2000 sites regarding Fisheries restrictions. We hear that especially in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea some Groupings are emerging that are discussing Fisheries restrictions in the Natura 20000 sites under following the new rules of the Fisheries Policy. We are afraid however that these Groupings consist only of Fisheries Authorities and NGOs are not invited there as it normally good practice in management planning. Neither it seems the Nature Authorities responsible for Natura participating. So the question is how does DG Environment can ensure that the measures meet the conservation objectives in the sites and that the key stake holders and Authorities are involved? That's one question.

Then a comment or a suggestion for the Head of the Council for the Nature's Directive conclusions on the fitness check. We think that the text is quite good. It would be maybe an idea to add something about the urgent need to implement the Directives, the existing framework of

the Directives as the time is ticking for 2020. Something about this. Better implementation as urgent priority for Nature Directors.

A question on the Environmental Inspections Directive, where this stands. Because we see this Directive as a big opportunity to improve enforcement both in species and sites protection.

The last comment is on communication. I just want to inform that Birdlife is in eighteen (18) member states starting next week the communication campaign on the Natura 2000 Day. This a Life Project of our Spanish Birdlife partner, but seventeen (17) other Birdlife Partners participate to making Natura 2000 more well known and to engage many people. So you will probably hear and see about it.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Finland has the floor now.

ILKKA HEIKKINEN (REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND): Hello everybody, I'm Ilkka Heikkinen from Finland.

I just want to thank Christian for very nice presentation of alpine process and it seems that you have been doing it even better than when we started. It only has one small question maybe for our colleague from Sweden or Norway because we also have Alpine Region in northern countries. Believe or not but we have a small area in Finland which is which has been seen as Alpine Nature. During this process our colleagues were involved in some meetings but quite soon we understood that Alpine process in the rear Alpine area are a bit different than ours and it was not used to use others time maybe for our discussions.

I think that we should somehow fill this gap now in future. Maybe start some kind of trilateral discussions about our alpine habitats and maybe species too. Maybe this exercise is not need to take as serious as you have been done it because the area is quite small and we have only three countries. But maybe a good start discussions about this on the corridors of this meeting or something.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you as well.

I don't see any other flags raised but you would still like ask for the floor. If this is not the case then I turn to the Commission.

You have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Right.

Thank you, Athena.

First of all let me comment a little bit on the two presentations and I want to thank not only the three presentations now after the coffee break, the colleagues who made the presentations. I want to thank also the colleagues who made the first presentations.

I thought that it is of big value that you really involved, are making these presentations because you give a much better picture of what the situation is on the ground. Be from the users perspective, be from member states perspective, on what works well, what works less well what still can be improved and also on avenues on how to improve it. I think there is a lot to take back from all these presentations and I'm happy that we all will be able to share and to look at them when we go back to our desks, to our normal life.

Now, what struck me on the presentation made by Laurent Roy was that to some extent you were matching what Dominique had shown us at the very start of the meeting on the designation process. Because I think that the designation process to some extent works well onshore is far more difficult when it comes to the offshore designation of our marine protected sites.

In your presentation you were addressing what the issues in management of offshore marine sites could be and would be and this is something where of course work is still ahead of us because we have not yet finalized this aspect of our big implementation work and we will need to move towards finalizing but it is clearly an aspect where we will need to sit together and find ways on how management can take place.

On this Biogeographical Process I would want to say that personally I'm very glad for all the compliments Christian you made from Francois Kremer and I will pass them on I myself. Also because I'm not always happy. I find that Francois Kremer devotes such 200% of his time to the process. From time to time I just call him in and "I say but Francois we are short of staff you need to look at other things" and every time he tells me "Pia you don't realize how important this is" and he walks out of my office. At least now today I did realized how important it is. It was launched I think by Finland, hosted the first Boreal Biogeographic Seminar and I want to make a collective thank you because this process I very much a member states process. It is not a Commission led process. So it works as well you want to make it work well.

I'm very happy that we are moving now also into the Mediterranean Biogeographical Seminars. I want to thank Greece, I want to thank France who has accepted to take also the lead on this and Greece who will host the first meeting very soon. I understand

immediately after the European elections so I hope that you will not comment only on the outcome of the elections but there will good time also to work on the process itself.

I think that it is equally important to listen to what the users have to tell us. Because at the end of the day when it comes down all the cascade it is the end users who are responsible for implementing our legislation and it is good that we have at European level a Users Forum, I think that we meet regularly, once, twice a year with the different end users of our Nature legislation and our last implementing Authorities even if each Authority is one family or one farmer, or one forester.

I would say that from our perspective we think that this part of the business is on board, you are participating to our main expert group meetings the most important of those being the CGBN, which really prediscusses what will come on the table in the coming month or year and contributions are always welcome.

Personally I'm working very closely on the Large Carnivores Initiative where we hope to will able to launch this platform in June. In order to prepare for this platform, because it is a platform where stake holders are the main element, it is not a platform where our member states, our Authorities are the main element. We felt that on this discussion on Large Carnivores it was important to have really the stake holders, the ones who are on the ground to experience difficulties on one hand and the others who are to the ground to protect and to ensure conservation of these species.

It has not been an easy process. It's now more that two years that we have launched this activity to move and both sides were extremely important. On the users side I hope I will say nothing because I don't want to preempt and say something and then at the end somebody will not sign up to the platform. But I do hope that practically all

participants to the Users Forum who are interested by the Large Carnivores issue which have not really all participants will be able to sign up to this process and there was a strong commitment. The commitment from the NGO side I would say was somehow from us expected, welcome, but predictable I could say.

The commitment from the hunters, from the land owners, from the forest owners, from the farmers, from the sheep herders and from the reindeer herders was not foreseen to the extent to which we were able really to work together. So, this is really a tangible element where we can say that this part of our business is equally important of the rest.

To finish I would want only to answer some question raised by Birdlife. I think that we need to set up just a meeting because I see that you have a number of questions to the Commission.

Now, on the Marine Natura 2000 sites and how are they to be discussed within the restrictions on Fisheries. Let me first say that we are all very happy that the Common Fisheries Regulation and the new Fisheries Platform is as forthcoming as it is in protecting the Environment. This is really a very important element. So we are happy to work together with our colleagues in DG Mare on this and we are working together and because again it is a new territory on which we are working together we need both to explore how best to work and how best to implement and how best to make sure that's why clearly the Fisheries Community is in the lead when it comes to fishing issues. Only because they consider to be an economic element which is very important.

The Conservation Community in this concept, the Environment Community needs also to be on board there and on this we are really looking and discussing and I think that tomorrow there will also be more discussion on this issue.

Then, you want to know where we are on the Inspection Directive. The Inspection Directive together with another piece of legislation which is accessed to Justice which is maybe apparently less relevant here but still it is very relevant in general for Environment are in the make and I would say that from our perspective impact assessment and preparation of the legal text takes always much longer than we had expected and takes much longer than at the end of the day drafting the legal text itself.

On the Inspection Directive we are as far ready to be in interservice consultation. Now, with the elections with the end of mandate I don't know to what extend this piece of legislation will be proposed and adopted by the Commission still under this Commission. Because in any case it would be discussed by the next Commission. It is not to be expected that the Parliament would look into such and important piece of legislation as from the 1st of June.

My personal guess but this is really just chit chatting at this stage is that we should look at it as from early next year on. But who knows? I don't want to say anything firm on this because I have no more news than what you have.

I think that's it for the time being.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much for all this Pia.

Let me say on behalf of the Presidency that we are really very grateful to all those colleagues who accepted to make presentations during this meeting. Sharing experiences is most valuable for us. I think that it is I hope that it is for everybody.

Now I will not repeat the main points trying to sum up very, very quickly. I think that we all welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the Commission. There are some questions raised which are more related to the implementation. And these questions are normal because the ideas are new, some of them.

From my side this is the intriguing part and this is... how the points on which we need to reflect more. For instance our French colleague said that “for the marine areas there is a lack of data”. You can imagine if there is a lack of data, environmental data in France there is certainly lack of data in countries like mine with the length of the coastline and the extent of the marine area which is under our jurisdiction. Not to mention the open seas.

There was a reference made to appropriate management measures. Trying to identify which are such appropriate measures and for which cases is something very important as well. Making the link with the monitoring which is under the framework of the Marine Strategic Framework Directive is something important as well. This is how we could avoid wasting time and money.

Then, cooperation with the stake holders, with end users. This becomes must. It was important in the past as well but as the time goes on it becomes a must and we need to try and identify proper ways for this cooperation as well as ways to mobilize the private sector which would be useful to be involved if we want to have additional funding possibilities.

With these words I can conclude this session and give you just the necessary logistic information for the lunch. The light lunch will take place exactly at the room where we had the coffee. If you could try to be back, is it realistic, try to be back at two thirty (14.30') please. Try to be back at two thirty (14.30') so that we could reconvene and we would

need to be very, very punctual for the Acropolis Museum visit. We were told that the buses will leave at five (17.00') sharp. So we will not have the possibility to be more... five thirty (17.30')? Five thirty (17.30'), excuse me. No, no I'm not so sure, because five thirty (17.30') is the time we are leaving from here or the time we have to be there? We will check and we will let you know. Okay?

So, at two thirty (14.30') please be back and enjoy your very light lunch. And thank very much for your participation in the discussions.

(Break for lunch)

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Could you please take your sits?

All right. Commission, will you join us please?

Colleagues, welcome back, more or less.

Now, we come to Agenda Item 3, the implementation of Target 2, which states that by the year 2020 ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing Green Infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of the degraded ecosystems.

Green Infrastructure puts emphasis on natural solutions that are often cheaper and more sustainable while they may also create local job opportunities. Green Infrastructure is based on the principal that nature and natural processes can be protected and enhanced when consciously integrated into spatial planning and regional territorial development. Development and elaboration of better data and information is encouraged to this end. We all know that there are some new tools, the monitoring and assessment of ecosystems and their services, the international classification of ecosystems services. I will not enter to details given the limited time.

The interesting thing also is that that the Commission is expected to launch a public consultation before summer on the future EU initiative on No Net loss. A last important issue in our agenda concerns the Biodiversity proofing of the EU Budget. So this is an issue for discussion as well. If you are interested and I guess that since we are invited to implement we are interested to know how to do it in a better manner.

Possible question for discussion is if and how this proofing could be applied also at member state level. Maybe some of you have already some experience and you could express your views. May I ask if the Commission would like to add something on this? Otherwise I will give the floor to three colleagues who are expected to make presentations.

No intervention from the Commission, thank you.

So I call Mr? Mr Hanno Zingel from the Estonian Ministry to present the Estonian experience on Green Infrastructure.

Thank you.

HANNO ZINGEL (ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT): Some help maybe. Mike is on. It is. Thank you.

First I would like to thank our Greek colleagues of course to give me the opportunity for this presentation. I work nowadays as a ministerial advisor in Nature Conservation matters and in History. I had the honor to lead the preparation of Estonia's Natura for closure and we see the name of Professor Kalev Sepp. He is leading expert in Green Infrastructure Nature's in Estonia.

To start Green Infrastructure is a very complex thing and the core areas are of course protected areas. So, briefly I will introduce our protected areas system. Okay. In 1910 first protected area was created in Estonia. It was bird sanctuary, small islands near Raikars (01.14, 5^η ώρα) and Vilsandi island and it was created by scientific NGO and local



activists. Actually it was so successful that very soon all top people of Estonian Republic visited it in summer this bird sanctuary. Ministers, Presidents, Poets, Painters and it became very popular. It was of course not very good for birds, but as PR it was enormous. And much thanks to it by 1940 there were already forty seven (47) different protected areas among other valuable objects under protection.

Then came different obligations and I wanted to stress the so called process in the early 70s when there was public discussion about the ecological damage drainage for wetlands would cause and the outcome almost ninety (90) wetlands, port areas actually were excluded from the Drainage Fund and actually there are many protected areas today. This is very important of course. For Estonia these are the really wilderness areas we have and when Republic was re-established then very important political decision was that all protected areas remained under protection even land reform against the land owners.

So the continuum has carried today and today we have a 10% of Estonian territory, I'm not including sea here under protection and by the latest dates about 16.8% of it is Natura territories also, Natura network. So these are the core areas for our ecological network. But to the history of Green Infrastructure the concept of course is not new, it's about forty (40) years old at least and in 1995 Pan - European, Biological Landscape Diversity Strategy was adopted and Network was established. So we can say that this is the date when ecological networking became part of nature conservation of Europe.

Goals. We know today's goals we have targets and tasks from Nagoya, from CPD and of course our own. Biodiversity Strategy Target 2 what I have written here but I will not read it.

Back to Estonia. We have forty five (45) square kilometers and here we see Estonian National Park (04.25, 5^η ώρα) barn swallow and cornflower

is our national flower and this is port area. As is mentioned ports are very important to us, when usually mountains are the corridors where wilderness and animals, wild animals can live and spread. Estonia is very wet country and very flat country. We don't have any mountains at all, but all these port areas major work as refuel rooms for wilderness. And so they really are the main base of our ecosystems.

We have fifteen (15) counties and actually almost two hundred (200) rural Municipalities, this is important number that I will explain later on and of course half of Estonia is covered in forest actually. Now when we go back in history the first ecological corridors we created in Estonia in the early 60s and they were actually on military purpose. Because at that time plans to invade Europe were quite fresh and around big, bigger cities, forest corridors wilderness about twenty (20) kilometres were created. But still they were military objects but still they functioned at ecological networks for that time too.

In 1973 the first plan of the future, of perspective protected areas was created by Geographers and nature conservation people and based on that in 1983 a network of compensating areas was created and it was actually real ecological landscape planning for using of different resources as areas what should be kept in peace when Mining and developing Forestry and Agriculture. Of course in that time all land was state owned and it was quite easy to plan. I remember that Lithuania had like us this kind of plan Green Frame and Czechoslovakia had such and other. Other countries too from that time. Of course we became independent very soon but the knowledge and the plan was there in our people.

In 1999 we started the designing of Legal Green Network by the county planning named, defining environmental conditions for the development of land use and certain instructions. What consisted of two

parts Green Network and Valuable Cultural Historical Landscapes. Our hierarchy of spatial planning is three level, county, municipality and country. The Greek Network is of course addressed in all the three levels of planning.

According to Planning Act by 2002 each our counties had to prepare official ecological networks. I think that not all managed it and the last was set up in 2007. But still and we had quit good methodology for this.

So, from 1990s we have little pace for green networking and last not least our new Nature Conservation Strategy and Development Plan also sets target to analyse the functioning of Green Network and plan additional measures if necessary. Actually, this is also the question how well does it functions ecologically. And the purpose objective of planning Green Network is not only to define a large scale green surface and leave out of use but to guarantee environmentally grounded space structure of course and to complete the functionality of the Network of Protected Areas.

Green Network. More, I see more definitions. Green Network is a coherent system of extensively used areas in a good natural state that helps to maintain the Biodiversity and stability of the Environment. The main purpose is to promote Biodiversity outside protected areas, to buy certain land and land use and to minimize conflicts in future.

Here we have it and I think the green one is Green Network and protected areas are marked in red and they well up quit nicely. On this picture we see the large wilderness forest and wetland corridors across Estonia. In criteria their way of course environmental, protection values, then landscape peculiarities and species and habitats also.

What about outcomes? We have a National Ecological Network and County Ecological Networks. I have to say that all these fifteen (15)

County level Networks had to be adopted in Local Municipality level and we have them about two hundred (200). Of course there has to be specifications to the real Nature, to the real Environment. Of course this kind of process is doesn't go without conflicts. But when we have to discuss these plans with so many different Municipalities but of course the advantage is that they are all there and people can always discuss it openly.

Still people have tended to understand it is source of additional restrictions. The advantage is of course as obvious Green and Green Infrastructure are planned together with equal priority. We get all the stake holders around the table and different implementation mechanisms are developed all the processed time.

I think I'm not doing this. Okay.

Of course lessons learned the classical ones and one needs that you must be flexible and to have to involve as much as stake holders as you can. This is consequence in red for Estonia Network and Natura Network. I think the blue ones are succinct, red ones are SPAs. There is good overlap but of course we know that when we see our wildlife we have two hundred (200) wolfs, six hundred (600) bears, five hundred (500) lynxes, fifteen thousand (15.000) beavers and about twelve thousand (12.000) moose in Estonia. These are our large animal and they need space and only our protected areas system what it is it is almost one fifth but is not enough for all of these.

There is the question. Is this Network ecologically functional? Can the species move freely and disperse? Are we doing the right thing actually? We are doing different studies now about the connectivity. Our quite capable people are own it actually and there are different subprograms going about different key species like flying squirrel, like

wolf, bear and lynx and also about the connectivity of forest habitats for woodpeckers and alvar plants and alvar butterflies.

Of course we are making things better. Restoration of habitats is important in Estonia. We have aim to restore at least ten thousand (10.000) hectares of miles that have been affected by drainage. Also seminatural grasslands are managed. Our task keys by 2020 is to get forty five thousand (45.000) hectares managed. Now we have twenty five (25.000) thousand. It is good number but it's not good enough I think. We create of course strategical plans for restoration. We have completed seminatural Grassland Management Plan Networking and many Habitats plan now.

About the Funds. In the end of March we submitted the Partnership Agreement and in the February also the Operational Program if I remember to the Commission and we are quite happy, we have fifty four millions (54.000.000,00 €) and a lot of it is going to restoration of habitats actually. Also management routes for salmons and investments for management of seminatural grasslands and now here I have finally some picture of real concrete infrastructures like bridges, a way how we can manage to these areas. Also Agricultural Fund we are quite happy for different subsidies where we can manage areas.

So it is knowledge, involvement and funds. This is a picture of our way we (16.00 5^η ώρα) in Estonia.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Now I call Miss Christiane Paulus from Germany to present their positions on No Net Loss and their experiences.

CHRISTIANE PAULUS (GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ENVIRONMENT, NATURE CONSERVATION, BUILDING AND NUCLEAR SAFETY): So, first of all I have to try to find my presentation. Can somebody help me here?

I found it now I think. Okay.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain to you the German system of Intervention Regulation. This Intervention Regulation is seen as a contribution to the overall discussion on the No Net Loss Initiative and I would like to try to explain to you the system that we have in place in Germany for quite a long time and give some experience that we have with this instrument and maybe that can feed in one or the other way on the discussion on the further development of the No Net Loss Initiative.

Ja, at start was big words that is the article 28 of our Federal Constitution and I'm mentioning this constitutional call for the protection of Nature and Biodiversity to let you know that it's a very important value for us to safeguard our Nature and our Landscape and to make sure that the Landscape and the Biodiversity in kept in good function not only for us today but also for future generations.

To implement this constitutional call we have the following instruments in Germany which are more or less the same I think in other member states. First of all we have the instrument of site protection, the Natura 2000 as well as a number of national site protection categories. Then of course we have the species protection, like all of you again on EU Regulation and National Regulations. Then we have our landscape planning system, terrestrial and offshore planning, onshore and offshore and the third and the most important one of the core elements to protect Biodiversity and Nature is the Intervention Regulation.

The Intervention Regulation was put already in place in 1967. That means that in two years it is forty year old. We have long standing and good tradition to work with this instrument. It I part of the German Federal Nature Conservation Act and it aims to prevent any loss in Nature and Landscape. It aims to prevent any loss means that it is targeted to any Landscape and Nature in Germany and not only inside protected area. In fact it is mainly applied outside protected areas. It for the normal Landscape, it's for the whole territory of Germany the Intervention Regulation has to be applied. That makes sure that the principal that there should be no deterioration of Nature and Landscape is followed strictly.

So, how do we do this and how do we work with this Intervention Regulation? First of all I would like to mention the protected assets that are firstly the Biological Diversity, plants, animals and all other species. Then the performance and functioning of the natural balance including the ability of resources to regenerate and land themselves to sustainable use. I think this is quite an important feature that it is not only the species that are protected but all other assets, like soil water, climate, air and landscape appearance are part of this Intervention Regulation.

So, finally that relates more to the landscape features that is the diversity, the characteristic features and the beauty of Nature and Landscape as well as their recreational value. You see that there is a very broad range of protected assets and that has in reality it impacted, nearly everybody who was planning something has to go through this Intervention Regulation. What is an intervention that is defined in a lot a legal texts and in a lot of court speaking. I don't to give lengthy discussions on that. There are a lot of definitions because every intervention is from a different sector. All targets, Intervention Regulation targets at all significant interventions such as road

construction, railway, dyke relocation, commercial development, on and offshore wind turbines.

Of interest maybe is that Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are not considered to be interventions as long as the objectives of Nature Conservation and Landscapes Managements are taken into account. That means that the normal agricultural practice that a farmer is doing every day on his land is no intervention but of course this normal agricultural practice has to follow also good practice. So in our National Nature Conservation Act we have a definition what is good practice and any farmer cannot, has to comply with good definition that is given that is given by the Nature Conservation Act.

But on the other hand if a farmer is planning a substantial different land use for his land, or he is planning construction or he wants to build something then of course he or she has to follow the Intervention Regulation. So that means normal practices non intervention but any other activity follows, has to follow the rule of the Intervention Regulation. Okay.

Then when applying this Regulation the following mitigation hierarchy has to be followed and this is the copies and the whole procedure of proceeding that first and overall prevention of negative impact have to be the rule. Let me say, in a normal landscape every intervention is possible and accepted. In a protected area we don't to have interventions but in the normal landscape in the not protected areas an intervention is possible but you always have to follow the rule of preventing any negative effect as much as possible.

So that means if you are planning a road you have to see is this trail better than the other, what is doing less damage to the Nature and Landscape and you can also go through planning of green bridges like we have seen before to reduce the dissection effects and so on. So this

prevention principal is the first check that you have to do and if you cannot prevent you have to state why you cannot prevent as part of the permission procedure.

Then, if you have checked that level of impact then you come, you move into the real compensation and real compensation means ecosystems functions affected by the intervention must be compensated for in an equivalent way an to an equivalent value in special context as quickly as possible and have to be protected legally for the long term. That means whenever you do something that you, your are planning something before you start your intervention or your construction or whatsoever you have to demonstrate and you have to give all documents on what kind of compensation are you planning, where are you doing it, is it enough and so on. This is part of the permission procedure and the Administrative Authority goes very deep in this issue and can also ask additional questions and additional expert opinion and so on.

Only in the very last case and only in the individual cases monetary substitution is possible. So this is only possible when real compensation cannot be provided when adverse ill effects cannot be prevented and that can occur due to the nature of the geography or the landscape and also if it's extremely expensive to compensate or to prevent the negative impacts. So it is possible but it is only, it is and should and is only the exception and all money that comes in from the monetary substitution must go to Nature Conservation Purposes. So it can not be used to fill gaps somewhere else in the budget it has to go to the Nature Conservation purpose.

So this mitigation hierarchy once again is for us the most important preservation, the most important factor for the preservation and again one more additional information it follows the Polluters Pay Principle. That means that the intervening party that is planning on

implementing the construction has to pay for the entire compensation process. They have to state to the responsible Authority what they are going to do and how they are going to compensate and they also have to pay for any measure that comes out from the permission process. Because it is part of the permission process everything that is then agreed by the Administrative Authority becomes also legally binding. So the intervening party has the duty to fulfill all its compensation, all its mitigation and usually it is also fixed in the Land Title Registry that these areas for a Nature conservation on a longer term.

That all sounds very difficult and very complicate but on the other hand I can really say that in Germany we have good experience with this instrument and we have positive results because I think it is such a long tradition and history of the almost forty years we have any kind of handbooks, manuals, guidelines, every sector has checklists how to proceed so the intervening parties really know what they are dealing with and they got used to it, they accept it and from the discussions that are going on. I understand that they prefer to have the system in place because it gives good security also in terms of legal impacts of construction.

But you have to be aware that this is also an experience that the system can not be implemented from one day to the other. It's a complicated system, it needs a lot of resources personally and also financially and I think it also needs good Governments because many Authorities have to work together and have to find solutions together.

Having said that I really want to share this experience with you because any discussion on the No Net Loss Initiative should bare in mind what additional burden comes to the respective Authority or to the respective member state who are not so familiar with such a system and

maybe it's worth to think about having it at a subsidiary level regulated like we have done so in Germany.

Thank you very much and I'm most happy to answer any question on this system.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much as well.

Now I would like to give the floor to Mr. Alberto Arroyo Schnell from the European Habitat Forum and WWF to present the NGO views on Target 2.

ALBERTO ARROYO SCHNELL (EHF): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon everybody I have a strong voice and that's a good thing in the afternoon when the years reduce the volume as I see. It was a good way to keep you awake when there is a third presentation in the afternoon.

So, I'm here as the Chair of the European Habitats Forum. I think you are familiar with it, it is an Organization, an umbrella Organization that assembles twenty two (22) Environmental Organizations at EU level working mainly on EU Biodiversity Policy but in particular with the focus on the Birds and Habitats Directive.

However, I'm not going to speak today about the Birds and Habitats Directive rather about Target 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy. I will present a little bit our views in this direction. And to start with of course EHF members are happy to support any actions to ensure the achievement of the 2020 headline target. Just remember that they had targets to halt the loss of Biodiversity and to initiate its restoration. Actually this target in particular, Target 2 has a special focus on restoration.

It is good to remember also that Target 2 of the Strategy adds on to the existing Directive by Biodiversity Conservation Activity, namely the Nature Directives. Which by the way already include some specific provisions on restoration in particular for habitats and species of community interest. Therefore in principle you can expect Target 2 to be additional, to what Natura 2000 is already providing.

This said now I will go briefly over the key elements of the Target 2. I will present as I said a little bit our views on it. To start with the famous MAES Action 5 of the Biodiversity Strategy. The mapping and assessment exercises of course are welcome from the EHF members as well as the efforts that the member states are putting into exercise. In any case here we would like to encourage all member states to increase such efforts so as to ensure that this exercise takes place with adequate quality and speed.

Anyway we think it is important to keep in mind that the ultimate goal of Action 5 goes in the direction of ecosystems valuation and accounting to promote the integration of the real value of ecosystems under services into national accounting and reporting systems by 2020. Therefore the MAES is just a starting point. The starting point yes but a crucial task anyway as the knowledge base needs to advance. Here probably as I said there is probably a need to increase the efforts as we mentioned just a minute ago.

Here we also see the relevance of or better I would say the need to involve relevant actors like Eurostat and the national and statistic officers at early stages. Actually I would say that starting right now they are obviously fundamental actors in this process and we need them on board from the very start.

Finally, also on the MAES we understand that the process will benefit from enhanced coordination among different related

processes. The MAES is one but we have also the be joined DTP discussion, the waves, the natural capital declaration leaders by the UNEP, simply exploration of synergies and coordination will probably help the process.

About Action 6 which is Green Infrastructure and Restorations again obviously all efforts made are welcome from the EHF specifically for example the new Working Group on the issue. However, we see that the process still needs to take off, let's say. We need to ensure that it can deliver added value for the 2020 target. And therefore here again we will encourage all actors to try to have more proactive approach. For example there is a need to move ahead with the preparation and the use of the national restoration privatization frameworks. They are needed to clarify what we want and what we can do.

Also as we know there is an opportunity now to mobilize EU Confinement for Green Infrastructure and Restoration through the national or regional Operational Programs under various EU funds. Ideally still in the current programming is possible but in any case we need to think because the coming midterm review.

Let me go now to the last point of Target 2 which is Action & on No Net Loss. Again let me remind you here that the EHF members are fully supportive to any extra efforts than can bring us closer to the 2020 headline target. If you want a second reminder here also the Nature Directives and such as well as several other pieces of EU legislation already include certain elements of the No Net Loss and Restoration Agenda.

Therefore, by implementing them adequately one could already go a long way and I'm thinking in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, in the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, in the Environmental Liability Directive, which by the way now the

Commission is about to propose some improvements to it, we expect very soon.

This said and taking into account that probably is one of the difficult issues in the discussion what you have seen for now is that a good part of the debate has been somehow focused on Biodiversity Offsetting. Which is an issue that raises some concerns among EHF members. Scientific evidence suggests that some of the existing attempts to establish Biodiversity Offsetting Policies have not delivered really on their objectives. In particular, the EHF members believe that in the development of the No Net Loss Initiative there are some critical issues that we should have taken care of.

To start with there are important concerns about the prospect of introducing at the EU level Habitat Bankings or to say it more general market based instruments targeted in Biodiversity. I think that is no surprise that Environmental Organizations are concerned about such prospect. We also believe that this initiative should not be seen as an innovative funding mechanism for already existing commitments. In a specific and in principle should not be seen as a system to generate funding for Natura 2000. It is surely easy to see that this could generate some conflicts of interest and challenging cases.

In simple words conservation financing should not depend on the destruction of Nature as we are. That sounds that not the best way forward. I will say that we also need to avoid here the risk of undermining existing National and European legislation. It's not completely clear that EU legislation focused exclusively of Biodiversity Offsets will really substantially contribute to halting the loss of Biodiversity.

Finally we are also worried about the potential use of the SCAR Life funds as it has already mentioned this morning by Biodiversity

Offsetting at this stage. It sounds early as we have already discussed this morning.

Now, this said we would like to say that the focus of No Net Loss Initiative Policy will be primarily on avoiding harm to Biodiversity. Outside of the scope of the EU Nature Directives Target 2 as I said at the beginning is additional to Natura 2000. The No Net Loss should take an holistic approach, looking at all relevant tools such as liability, inspections, improved land planning, restoration, better implementation of existing legislation of course and of course also integration specifically with Agriculture, Transport, Fisheries.

As said the main focus will be an avoidance of harm to Biodiversity. If you want we could say that in case a compensation system is in place it's seems logic to follow the approach set out on Article 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 of the Directive. Maybe we can imagine something like this for the whole territory beyond Natura 2000.

Let me conclude here reminding the crucial time we are now living now with the new EU Funding Regulations in place and there fore the opportunity to get the best out of the National and Regional Operational Programs. Also for Target 2, also the opportunity to strengthen our efforts through the upcoming midterm review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

I will finish anyway how I started, highlighting the obvious commitment of the EHF members to the headline target 2020 and its support to ensure the delivery of the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Thank you very much.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much as well.



Would the Commission would like to add something at this stage or at the end of this discussion? As you please. At the end of the discussion.

All right, the floor is open now for comments if you wish.

The Netherlands have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF NETHERLANDS: Thank you, Chair.

No comments. I have got some questions about. First to thank our speakers for introduction and it was very good to hear.

I've had a question about the first one of, about Estonia. I was very keen about the study there were undertaking about connectivity and I was just wandering when the results will be presented because I think it is very good to have some evidence about Green Infrastructure and Connectivity. So it is just a question.

Another question is about, that the German example about the mitigation hierarchy. I was very curious how does it work for instance on wind turbines on lands and especially to relation in landscape. How to prevent or mitigate or compensate landscape. That could be very difficult I guess. But at least in Netherlands we have quite a discussion about wind turbines and also affecting landscape. So I was wondering how does it work in Germany.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much,

I will give the floor to Estonia for a quick response and I will give the floor also to Germany but a little bit later because maybe their response will be longer.

Please Estonia.



HANNO ZINGEL (ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT): Thank you.

Yes this is an ongoing project and it will be finalized into 2015. But there are already some outcomes and things. In that slide, there is also the address where you can find additional materials about these studies. So it is in internet and you can follow it. I think it is in English too there.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

I give to floor to IUCN.

REPRESENTATIVE OF IUCN: Thank you Madame Chair.

I just wanted to remind the group of one of the hundred and sixty (160) resolutions voted at the Congress in 2012 initiated by IUCN and its consistency and that's that we have to come with policy recommendations and there is actually including the No Net Loss discussion but also on Bio Offsetting.

So, IUCN is working on it as we speak, we hope to have those post recommendations presented to Council mid next year and obviously we will work very closely with our state members and with our NGO members to kind of come up with some sensible recommendations for the Bio Offsetting challenge.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much,

Slovakia, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVAKIA: Thank you and thank you to all three presenters for very interesting inputs.

I would like to ask our German colleague what is the difference between the EIA Process because to some extent it recalled me that very similar stages are also in accessing the environmental impact assessment so it is somehow done together in procedures or how it works in reality as regards this offsetting, not offsetting, the compensation mechanisms and if there perhaps would also interesting if this measure works already for so many years if there are any kind of analyses so in terms of how many hectares have been compensated or what amount of money it was worth that something was built somewhere and what has been done from these money? What is generated? That will be really interesting. Perhaps there is literature about it and we are not aware about it.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you Slovakia.

I see Belgium asking for the floor. You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM: Thank you Chair and like the previous speakers I also want to thank our speakers on the different subjects.

I also had similar question to Germany, thank you for explaining this intervention procedure. Is it being requested an all types of land use? Is it included in the land use planning or is it for certain land use, uses only that it has to be followed? That was one concrete question.

Similar to Slovakian colleague I also I also wondered about the relation about the with the EIA procedure. Is there a difference in level or detail that has to be presented? As well as who is evaluating the

assessment reports. Is it being done by some specific Departments in the Länder or is it on national levels? Also, there was a kind of similar request to evaluation after so many years as well as enforcement? Is for example compensation being controlled in the field?

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very Belgium.

Sweden please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN: Thank you, thank you for the presentations.

I have a question for Germany. When it comes to the monetary substitution how is that measured? How do you short of deal with the...how much something is worth in monetary value?

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Thank you very much Germany for your presentation. It raised a lot of questions. Let us see if there are some more and then we will give the floor.

Anybody else who would like to intervene either for questions or for expressing views, comments, etc? It seems not. So Germany you have the floor.

Thanks in advance.

CHRISTIANE PAULUS (GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ENVIRONMENT, NATURE CONSERVATION, BUILDING AND

NUCLEAR SAFETY): Thank you for these questions. I hope I don't forget to answer one so then please come back to me.

First of all my apologies I'm not the expert on this issue but I hope I can answer all the questions and if not I will be most willing to take it home and get you literature and things like that you asked for.

The mitigation for wind mills was the first question from the Netherlands. Ja, this is something difficult in Germany. For the offshore wind mill the Intervention Regulation is not to be applied for a certain starting phase until 2016. So, the first Wind Parks can be installed without Intervention Regulation that is to bring it up to a certain economic state, because all these wind parks that are constructed at the moment are more or less in a research phase. Ja, they are the first ones so this is why they decided not to burden it with additional compensation measures. But from 2016 onwards compensation has to be provided and we are really discussing how interventions on offshore can be compensated properly and in an equivalent way. So a lot of research is going on on that.

On Länder some regulations, there are distances that needs to be kept to villages and also to specific sites. So there is a full bunch of regulations already on that. There is one which is very good from the state of North Rhine Westphalia, maybe I can provide that to you because that does this assessment of different interests in a very good way and its come to very good solutions and practical solutions and the experiences its working there. Is enough space for wind mills and also for a nature conservation so this is what I can offer on that.

The relation to EIA has been asked by several members. So this is of course a question and there is some overlap but there are also parts which do not overlap. Because the intervention regulation also applies to very small interventions like build something inside the city or also

outside so this is not mainly, usually not part of overall environmental impact assessment but of course any bigger construction is not only the intervention regulation and also the EIA and of course also the impact assessment according to the Habitat Directive. So, this is all done in one procedure, it is one application process where all the different steps have to be checked. Ja?

For example, I don't go into detail, I think this is enough for the time being. Ja, because the asset is not always the same. The Intervention Regulation is directed to Nature conservation and the ecosystem but in the environmental impact assessment you also have, health public, human health and thing like that that you have to check.

After forty years the experiences I'm sure that there is literature on how many hectares we are compensated, how many hectares we are bought and how much money was invested but I have to be... I have to admit that I don't have the figures with me but this is one question which I'm most willing to provide you. I can even circulate it through the Nature Directors Network if everybody is interested in hearing something about that and not only Slovakia.

Land use planning is it different that was the question by Belgium. Land use planning is a different level. The Intervention Regulation only comes in place when somebody is planning an intervention. So the intervening party is planning something and comes up with a proposal and then they have to give all kind of documents and papers to the responsible Authority and this is if it is a road construction then it is the Road Authority and they work closely together with the Nature Conservation Authority in the respective federal land. Ja? So, this Traffic Authority or Road Authority I don't know what is the English name has the duty to involve the Nature Conservation Authority and they have to come to a common understanding. This is how it works.

If it's only, if it is an intervention that only deals with impact on Nature then they can go directly to the Nature Conservation Authority. Ja? It depends on the impact. But always Nature Conservation Authority is involved and they evaluate it and they come to the conclusions. So they have a lot of specialists and they have planning and engineers officers working for that and can contract companies and everything has to be paid by the intervention party. Ja? This is how it works.

Finally, the financial value. Ja, this is also somehow a matter of experience and negotiations. We have it we call it Fach Convention that is good practice conventions that means that we have catalogues on what is worth what. This has been discussed with all stake holders and it is really a list where where you can go through and see what you have to pay if you destroy an river or something like that. Ja?

Of course there is always a lot of discussion on that and there is a lot of legal procedures and there is a lot of... Always it is an individual case so people bring expertise from this side and that side and finally we end somehow in the middle according to these lists.

So, I hope that was enough. So I give information on the wind mills and also on the evaluation what has been achieved in forty years.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, indeed. Very helpful I think for most of us.

Would the Commission like to say a few words before closing this session as well?

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Yes, thank you.

Let me take the main interventions in the order they were presented. On the Estonian experience on Green Infrastructure I think what I, myself will take home from your presentation is firstly that what you present here today which looks as very good practice and very good case is something on which you are working since a number of decades, not of years. So, it takes time to develop such a good practice and this always is important when we start developing something new that the good effects will only come in a number of years. In the first years mainly we say we see the difficult issues to be overcome.

Then, a second element which I want to take back for our own reflection on how to take forward Green Infrastructure is and that applies also to the Germany Intervention Regulation the need to involve stake holders and how best stake holders can be part of the whole project. Because especially on Green Infrastructure looking at how green your Estonia was looking on screen there must be a number of this Green Infrastructure which is privately owned. It could not only all be only public owned. Therefore you need to make sure that the private owners are fully on board in this adventure or in this way of protecting the Environment. This is something which again is very important for our future work on Green Infrastructure.

On the German presentation, Christiane, I listened very carefully and with a lot of attention because as you know we are embarking in studies, in stake holders consultation in work to see what would be a good way of implementing a No Net Loss model at European level.

I heard that at the end of your presentation you were saying that this is quite an administrative burden I thought I heard from you “that it is not something that you put on paper and off it goes”. But you were also saying that “this is very much worthwhile because once it has come into the habit, into the way of considering new projects, new

developments, new uses of land, then it's something which makes the new way of doing things not detrimental to conservation of Nature of Biodiversity". This is extremely important because we will face a number of changes at European level.

I would see as a major difficulty the land use change and how you address the soil change and on this maybe we can rediscuss because we have a land take every year at European level which is enormous. How can this be compensated and how is it mitigated this land take.

So these are quite important elements and I'm pretty sure that the German experience because it is something which works well but which works in some time will be extremely important in whatever comes out also at our level.

So, so far thank you for this.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Pia, thank you very much all.

The Netherlands would like to take the floor again. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE OF NETHERLANDS: With a question to the Commission If I may.

Good morning or good afternoon to you all I just arrived so for me it is morning. Having heard the presentation of Christiane which was very interesting indeed I have a question to the Commission because when we speak in the Netherlands about No Net loss we do not only speak about physical planning and land use planning but also about companies and economy. When you ask companies to be transparent about external effects and what their business plan is doing for the Environment and for the tropical woods, etc. and when they want to

combine external effects in their business plan you have something more fundamental in your hands to invest in Nature.

My question is, is that besides the more physical planning enough on the European agenda yet?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Commission please. There is somebody else?

Excuse me, yes EEB. All right. You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF EEB: Thank you so much for the floor Madame Chair. I just want to react to some of the statements made by the Commission. At the same time I would very much like to thank Germany for their presentation of their system.

I mean, first of all thank to the Commission as well for the new report you have released. I think that is great that you have actually assessed other things beside the Biodiversity Offsetting and there is something missing for example Water Frame Directive we think it is a good opportunity in fact because of then non deterioration principal as the new river base management planning that should be in place till the end of next year.

I would also like to endorse what you have said on the soil ceiling. We think that if an No Net Loss Initiative is introduced this should focus mainly on the soil ceiling because the Soil Framework Directives probably going to be withdrawn but during the discussion soil ceiling provisions we very strong and nobody really challenged, maybe one or two member states challenging them but others we quite positive.

So, we believe that politically it is acceptable to introduce something on soil ceiling. However, we have reservation on Biodiversity

Offsetting Legislation being introduced at the EU level and we have if you check the OECD studies that was released on the scaling up of financing mechanisms they also assessed the systems around the world and they are doing an in depth study which will be released this year.

I mean they don't really deliver. Even in Germany some of the studies from 2010 they showed that 67% of the objectives that were set they have not been reached or have been reached only partially. So, I think we have to be really careful when we introduce something that requires a lot of administrative burden that might not work for every member state. So, we would really, I mean we would caution you against this mechanism also from financial perspective if you look at the OECD report.

For example Fiscal Policies change, Fiscal Policies deliver huge amount of money whereas Biodiversity Offsetting has not really delivered a lot of money. So we are quite reserved about and we would urge the Commission as well as member states when you are thinking about it really on what is already there. What we can do with what we have there and introduce a very strong legislation on soil ceiling.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Finland, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: Thank you Chair.

I noticed that there is some suggestion about possible Directors conclusion about priority session frameworks and in the background the commentaries showed, sentenced that the Commission in the near future will provide guidance about this issue and I understood that something

had come yesterday in our emails but I had no possibility to read it because we were in airplane.

Now, if it is possible that the Commission would tell us what are your views about this guidance and what does it mean because it seems to me that we are waiting you are waiting for us that we encouraging completion of Restoration Prioritization Frameworks but we are...we lack the knowledge. But what do they wait us to do exactly? This is a bit new thing for me.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Is there anybody else who would like to take the floor before the Commission responds some of the points raised. No.

So, Commission please you have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you.

Let me answer first the two No Less Loss questions. The first coming from the Netherlands. I think that what you were mentioning were somehow all environmental externalities of sort of business of activity. If you look at all externalities you need to have some holistic way of approaching externalities, so you look at SEAL 2 (6.00, 6^η ώρα) for instance, you look to Transport, you look at Health externalities, you look at Biodiversity externalities, but also you look at Water, you look at Waste externalities.

This is something which is very important and this has started a number of years ago on the first tip study and now several member states and know that the Netherlands are very active on national tip

activities and this I would say for the time being beyond what we are considering under our Biodiversity Strategy in terms of what ever it will materialize and No Net Loss initiative. A No Net Loss initiative would somehow be more similar to what Christiane presented under their Intervention Regulation to look at the Biodiversity externalities of whatever new use of Biodiversity of Nature, of land, of activity.

So I would put a word of caution don't expect too much from this initiative because it may not go the whole way down that you were mentioning. As to what you were seeing from the EEB perspective I know that you have presented to us of the Commission, to our services at different level your concerns on especially Biodiversity Offsetting mechanisms and also on this No Net Loss. I think that right now there is no one best option. We have just commissioned a study and I'm very happy that you welcome that study. It was put on our website I think a couple of days or last week. So this is one element.

On No Net Loss we will have now a stake holder consultation. We want to hear from all member states what are their views and their experiences, what are the pros, what are the cons and we will need to setup also a Working Group to look into it and to look at possible avenues and Christiane was very clear. She said "maybe the avenue could be to leave it to subsidiarity". I think you said that very clearly. So, this is one avenue. You seem to go in the same direction, leave it to subsidiarity.

From our Commission perspective we always need to look at it there and advantage of looking at one issue from an EU perspective compared to looking at it from a national perspective. What could be the advantage? The advantage could be where the consequences affect many member states. Then, you need to look at the consequences for the many member states affected for instance. The advantage could also be where

some member states are more advanced than others let's take the Green Infrastructure, Estonian experience. I'm pretty sure that Estonia is leading way ahead compared to many of us other member states on Green Infrastructure.

So, on No Net Loss some member states could be extremely advanced and the value of being together in the EU is to try to establish the highest common denominator for all member states in order as far as possible to achieve a comparable degree of conservation and of protection in all member states. This is also an objective which we need to look. But there is no predecided possibility or best option at his point in time.

As concerns Ilka's your comments on this note. Indeed this note which was send to all member states to Nature Directors yesterday is note which presents where we stand on ecosystem, on restoration activities, what have we done. It is a note which prepares also our midterm review for next year and I just to reassure you at the end of the note it was said that I asked to have a last sentence where I say, because I have signed to note so I should know, where I say that "I look forward to discussing it with you at an upcoming, at the next Nature Directors Meeting". Because it would not be possible to send a note at eighteen hundred (18.00') yesterday and to expect to have a discussion at fourteen hundred (14.00') today. This would be not sensible. It would be nobody's interest.

So, yes it is a note which has come because we are also preparing for the Biodiversity midterm review and will discuss it in expert groups and we could already make a date for the next Nature Directors Meeting to discuss this issue if that was then agreeable to everybody.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY



AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Did you finish? You finished, Pia? It seems that you finished. Okay.

All right Finland please I didn't see the flag.

Yes, Finland please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: The reason why I asked this was actually that we are preparing our national strategy just now and we have found some new ideas which can be interesting for colleagues and we have some very keen experts who are ready to do something forward, from what we started from the Commission Expert Group Papers and I was worried that we are losing some how the momentum but if we are doing it during the next Presidency that's okay we are coming with our papers there.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Commission asks for the floor again. Yes, you have the floor.

COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you very much Madame Chair. To introduce very briefly because we are aware of the work that is being done in Finland on restoration and we are actually quite impressed by it on the 15% and on restoration prioritization. So, I think that you will see in the note a lot of commonalities with the approach you are developing. So we are very keen to also value that work in the context of the forthcoming discussions.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.



Yes, please. I can not read the flag unfortunately. IUCN, yes.

You have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF IUCN: It's just a quick question not only to the Commission but also to member states on what affects a European policy that might be developed, I'm sure it's not in acceleration but maybe also not in enough cross collaboration with Governments where it is already happening and what affects could have on movement of activity globally. I don't want to overcomplicate and it's the other side of the subsidiarity, is how do you make sure Europe fits in what is actually globally also being discussed and developed.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Please Commission, you have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): I would say that whenever there is a new initiative which is presented by the Commission there are always a number of member states which already have similar initiatives which have already initiatives which go far beyond what the Commission is proposing. This is also happening and in that case all member states may go beyond in Environmental legislation, beyond EU legislation, the only limit to that is that the internal market should not be hampered by going beyond. Where member states have less developed national legislation in that specific field well EU legislation takes over once member states have adopted EU Legislation. Because at the end of the day it is for member states and the Parliament to make sure that they adopt what they consider sensible to adopt. Then this takes primacy over national legislation.

This applies also to global commitment where at EU level legislation is adopted which is implementing a global commitment. Then, that global commitment is valid for the EU as such.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Now with your permission I will try to sum up very, very briefly.

First, sincere thanks to all of you those who made the presentations those who made the questions because they clarified further the issues and of course the Commission for providing us additional information.

As regards the note maybe we would need it at another moment to check which was the mailing list used because maybe some people who should receive it have not received and it might be needed to send it again to some additional people. But this is something to do later on.

Second point, I think that we all understand and it was underlined also by Pia that for these kind of policies we need to be patient and perseverant. Because it is only after a lot of efforts and a lot of time that we can achieve goals. So, let us feel strong enough in our joined venture to try and work together in order to achieve the goals at the end.

Third, I think that we all share a common concern. It is how to implement. How to implement it is easy to say. It is not that easy always in all countries to do. We had some good examples presented. We know also several cases of difficulties we are facing. Personally I have noted down from what was presented a few points which would be of usefulness and interest for us but maybe also for other members states. So, as a Presidency allow me to mention these points.

Identify the assets needing protection. It was mentioned by Germany, by our German colleague and I was thinking that if we clarify which are the assets to protect then we have concrete arguments to go and negotiate about priorities as well. It is not just protecting Nature, conserving Nature, maintaining, lalala, generalities. We become more specific and this can be a tool for the implementation.

Then she mentioned checklists. Well, yew it is very useful to offer, to provide checklists or something specific as a tool to those competent Authorities which are meant to implement. And I'm not referring only to the Central Government competent Authorities. I'm referring mostly to the decentralized ones. Regions, smaller areas, etc, So, if we want them to be allies in implementation we should also give them the possibility to know what exactly they are supposed to do.

Something else, which is of concern for us, trying to simplify some procedures is the idea about the one application process. So, we are trying to modify some of our national legislation to this direction. I was interested to hear that you are using it. I know that some other countries are using it as well and exchanging experience about such issues and about such processes would be very, very useful for us all.

I'm not mentioning it as a Representative of a county. I'm just identifying elements used or processes used by other countries which could be useful for some of us as well.

With these words we will break for coffee or tea, whatever you prefer. Please again try to be back at four thirty (16.30') please. Which means twenty (20) minutes instead of thirty (30).

Thank you very much.

So we have checked about the visit. We are supposed to finish by five o' clock (17.00') our discussions and the buses will leave at five thirty (17.30') sharp and our appointment is in front of the hotel where

the buses will wait for us. So, this is one of our appointments and try please to be punctual. The other appointment is tomorrow morning eight o' clock (08.00') the buses will leave we were told again so please to be punctual at that case as well.

As regards the dinner the guides at the Museum will tell us exactly where the buses will wait for us to take us uphill. Thank you very much, enjoy your coffee and please be back at four thirty (16.30').

Thank you.

(BREAK FOR COFFEE)

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Take a set please.

Some logistics to start with. Please pay attention to avoid misunderstandings.

So, I repeat about this afternoon. Please, please, please, could you all follow, please, if you don't mind could you all follow please? So some logistics about this afternoon.

We created a small confusion about what time the bus is leaving. I repeat the bus I leaving confirmation at five thirty (17.30') so please be punctual in front of the hotel. Not inside, in front of the hotel outside where the buses will be. Five thirty (17.30'). We will go to the Museum and then we will go directly to the Hill, Lycabettus Hill for the dinner. Which means that we will have not time to come, leave things change or whatever. You should be ready when we leave at five thirty (17.30') from the hotel.

Since the weather is nice and there was a proposal that we have our tables outside, open air, hopefully with good weather we would like to suggest just to be on the safe side, have a jacket with you, you never

know. We are not expecting rain but it might be some windy. I don't know, hopefully not, but have a jacket with you. This is as regards the appointment of this afternoon at five thirty (17.30') in front of the hotel to take the buses.

Second, about tomorrow. Tomorrow morning the buses will leave at eight (08.00') in the morning and they say that we should to be punctual as well. So if there are not people ready in the bus the bus will leave without those who would come late and they will miss the visit to one of these protected areas and that will be... and then there is a small change a regards the dinner of tomorrow.

The dinner of tomorrow in the agenda is mentioned that will start at eight thirty (20.30') in this hotel. Since hopefully we will have finished by six (18.00') or six thirty (18.30') the idea was to modify the schedule and start the dinner at seven thirty (19.30'). So, seven thirty (19.30') for the dinner tomorrow which is a dinner for everybody. It is not only for the people who will participate in the closed session. It is a dinner for everybody and we will be happy to meet everybody again after the closed session.

With these clarifications we move to the 4th agenda item which is related to Target 5 of Biodiversity Strategy.

I'm very happy to give the floor to the Commission to give us some information about the process as regards the Invasive Alien Species. We repeated a number of times that a Regulation there was agreement on the Regulation, etc. Now maybe people would like to know at which stage of the process we are and which will be the next steps.

The Commission, please.

Thank you.

You all have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you. As we all know we were very happy that in March we had a final successful trilogue between the Presidency, the Rapporteur and the Commission and that final deal was achieved. After the trilogue the Presidency came back to COREPER to your Ambassadors Meeting where the outcome of the trilogue and of the negotiations was endorsed by all Ambassadors and everybody congratulated the Presidency for the good result.

On the 15th of April the plenary assembly Transport it was at the very last plenary week so the Parliament had some two hundred (200) votes during a few days but our Invasive Alien Species Regulation went forth with a very, very impressive majority of votes. It was really an excellent... yes it was more than six hundred (600) votes in favor.

The next steps. Now it will go back to a Council formation for final adoption by the Council. It will not be an Environment Council because it is made point it is not for discussion. The last discussion took place at Ambassadors level and the text has not changed. So there is no need for further discussion and as soon as the Council has also adopted it is always the procedure that the Parliament adopts when it is a first reading adoption and then the Council adopts. If it is was a second reading it would be the other way round.

As soon as a Council formation has adopted it then it will go back to the lawyers. I would say to the cleaning, because all lawyers have to look at the text and these are lawyers form the Council Services, from the Parliament Services and from the Commission Services just to make sure that the legal wording is correct and can stand in Court. Then it is published in all languages in the Official Journal. At the earliest this publication could take place some time in July.

The Official Journal continues publication in August. There is no need then to have a break. But it is the work by the lawyers which will define when it will be published and once it is published this is something which is very important because in our Nature Sector it is the first time that we adopt a Regulation, so far we have Directives, the day it is published it is implemented by all member states. There is no need for a Regulation to adopt a National Law which transposes implementing this EU Law. This EU Law you have it in your own national language because it is published in all languages and this is the law which is applicable in all member states as from day one.

At that point in time the first practical step in implementation which we will take is that we write to your permanent representation that you, the member states designate your representative in the Committee and that we then convene a first Committee meeting which hopefully will take place some time in autumn I would expect, Francois.

FRANCOIS WAKENHUT (HEAD OF THE BIO – DIVERSITY UNIT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG ENVIRONMENT): Well, we have to see how quickly the process is going to be finalized as you said Pia, but indeed we will do it as soon as we possibly can after that.

In the mean time we have also initiated now our work on the next steps which obviously brings us back to the issue of the initial list and that is something that is also will be dully to be discussed ahead of the formal adoption process which will take place at the least, at the latest, I'm sorry one year after the entering to force that is that we have agreed to in the finalized text and that would be the next big step.

Not to forget the Consultative Forum that is also established and which we will convene at some point, the Scientific Forum which will indeed convene also in due course.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Many thanks, for all these procedural explanations.

So, we will start thinking about our Representatives. Are there any questions for clarification? Otherwise we will move to the next issue. All right.

The next issue is a very short one I guess, Other Business. We have a request Mr. Luc Bas from IUCN would like to make a small presentation and update us on the IUCN – World Parks Conference, which is scheduled to take place in the course of this year.

Please you have the floor.

LUC BAS (IUCN REPRESENTATIVE): Now I fully realize than between the meeting and the visit at the Museum so that's a challenge. I'm not going to shout louder than Alberto to get your attention but in exchange I have prepared a few slides that I'm trying to get on the screen as we speak. There we go.

So I'm sure that most of you are aware of the fact that we are again after ten years organizing a World Parks Congress, this is a bit of history that is called Parks Congress. It should actually be called Protected Areas Congress but that would be maybe to long so we kept it on IUCN World Parks Congress. Because we have had so many at the past and I will give just you a bit update where it stands, where the preparation stands. We had a call for content input, we had one thousand seven hundred (1700) contributions from all over the world, many also from Europe, many from Governments, from different Constituencies.

I will show you a few graphs of what participation on the run up looks like. This is a picture from ten years ago. This is what we called now the Promise of Sydney. This is not just a high mess to join and then

go home and do nothing. This is really whole processes to achieve some next steps, commitments and we figured it around parks, people and planet. To schematize around those three major issues but then we have splited up in different workstreams for which the member but also partners so it was not exclusive to members but also partners could propose contributions in these eight (8) workstreams.

Maybe to mention a few concrete outcomes that we envisioned and I will not go through all eight again for the sake of time. But for example on the regional and conservation goals we want to conclude the Conference, the Congress with an agreement on a standard for green list, a green listing of protected areas for a standard to do so at a global level. We will also agree or try to agree with the Congress on the first definitions of what we call these key Biodiversity areas.

I think that is absolutely crucial that Europe, the Commission and the member states and of course the NGOs in Europe all contribute to make sure that this is, that the lessons from Europe can be learned when this tool outcomes and there are more outcomes I'm just focusing on these that are very specific and maybe over media concern can be shaped and to be as much in line as possible but with what already exists in Europe. But the main call again as I did last time in Vilnius is to make sure that there is a good European participation and that it sort of happens in a kind of joint way. That it is not dispersed too much so we can at least some effort to coordinate the input both on the content but also logistically in what pavilions are in Sydney.

We are aware of the vast distance to travel there which also involves a high cost. So we are aware of maybe a bit less European participation and for example Asian participation but we are still...it looks already good with what we have seen of interest from Europe. But

it is also called with the member states to become still involved and it is still possible.

Maybe I should go to these Workstreams back because many or at least colleagues of you of whoever is involved have proposed subjects to put on the agenda within their streams and we will be coming back to all that proposed with some proposals for clustering for some adaptation on what was proposed by the end of May. That's the deadline that was set now.

So apart from the Streams are four cross cutting issues that we identified, we see them on the screen and they will be figured though out those Streams. As this needs political attention we are also preparing for some world leaders dialogue, so we aiming really at the highest possible level from all different Constituencies to be entering into a discussion that we have figured around those other themes but they also feed into the other, to the old content of the Conference of the Congress. Again this is a challenging act because we have to get that attention at the high level and will be obviously positive for the work on Protected Areas if we will also achieve to do so.

Sometimes we are obviously challenged with the political realities in some countries that it is not as easy to get that level of participation. Some changes of Governments are sometimes and this is off the record, that some changes in Government can also make it a bit more difficult. And we know we are fully aware of the change of Government in Australia but it doesn't have any effect on the International Conference. So the commitments are all kept, there is not doubt. Just if any doubt would exist about the new Government in Australia being maybe a little bit less proactive than the previous one.

This is how we want to structure them. Again I'm not going to read this out. I'm sure the presentation will shared with you and if there

is any questions I will leave you also with a contact address with the Executive Director of the Conference and her team if you have any questions and if you want to accelerate your involvement.

Apart from the content outcomes these are kind of the criteria that we have put forward for what they should look like so that is definitely have to do with the past development. It also has to do with really trying to I use this as a tool fortune. We call now this new social compact which in fact what you can see as an attempt for some (39.35, 6^η ώρα) armshift. Obviously that leadership and implementation and we aim at having this at a transformative level.

So, if you want to get involved there is still possibility so the call for content was only to shape the Conference. We wanted to have a real bottom up approach. Once this is now defined with the input we have received then of course there is still possibility to be involved at many levels. It can be with the delegation, it can be with one of your Agencies, it can be one of your Parks and there also still sponsoring opportunities. Although I think we look quite good with a bit sponsoring from the Global Environment Facility so I'm not going to emphasize the call for sponsoring of financial support that is not, we are looking good at logistics at the moment.

Then, to conclude on the overall presentation, this is what we have received by region so Europe is kind of in the middle there. You see a lot of ventures obviously from Oceania that's the geographical advantage but also from South America and from Southern East Asia. So there is a lot of activity in this field those who are in Asia now lately and that has been reflected. The global pillar means there are proposals with a global character.

This is how it should be diverted over to themes. No surprise to see that reaching conservation goals is still the top priority according to

what we have received as proposals and again these two outcomes are crucial and not in the least to mention that this year nicely coincides with the fifty years of the red lists that IUCN has developed. It's been there for fifty years. So this will be also one of these important festivities at the Conference.

This is how the submissions from Europe look. U.K. is very high up. There are a lot of NGOs and Research Institutes that have provided input. Then you see another few another countries that are very active and at this point what we are aware of is the high interest and the already quite developed discussions. I believe and we will discuss further from the European Commission itself and then from France and Spain who are very much involved and I would hope that you want to share in a few words what would there in visiting as their contribution. I will leave that to them.

So this is in brief, this is the distribution around Research Institutions and Government Agencies and NGOs. That was to expect. This is the distribution in Europe by the way. This is not a global one. So we have a good participation from Governments and of course the National Parks is a bit more difficult to define and in some cases is fully government run an some other cases maybe less. It was difficult to define from the information we got.

These are the most prominent participating EU member states. And with this I will leave it maybe in Spain or France to maybe add a few words on their envisage to contribution and I will go back to my place and if there is any question I'm happy to answer. But this lady Helen Nowell she knows it all. Because there is lot to know. There is lot of logistic, questions are already coming up I don't know about those logistic so much but she will be helping and if you can reach her out make her aware that you are trying.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

May I ask if Spain and France would like to add something? It seems so.

Spain, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN: Thank you, just few words. We think that this World Congress is going to be a very unique opportunity to present the results of the last ten years and mainly focusing on Natura 2000 both in terrestrial land and in marine areas. Because we think that this project is unique in the world. So, our interest is both presenting our policies on National Protected Areas but also in the participation of Spain in this EU initiative. We are foreseeing to have some side events focusing in the Mares Project and Marine Declaration of sites of Marina of Natura 2000 sites in the sea. We want also to present some projects dealing with conservation of endangered species within the National Park Network and to have a review of century of managing Spanish National Parks. Because the first National Park in Spain was declared in 1916.

We are preparing also a pavilion. We want to support as we did in the past Congress our colleagues in South America and we hope that this pavilion will be room for meeting and exchange of view with our colleagues in South America. We hope also to be in position to support for traveling of some of these countries and that's all.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

France please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE: We also support this important event. Of course and the French delegation will be of a reasonable size because it is far away and expensive but it's an exceptional opportunity for French National and Regional Parks to share their experience.

We have identified already about among the eight Streams which have been presented, notified among these eight Streams about which we could have significant input and of course reaching conservation goals, improve earth and wellbeing and Biodiversity and governance. But I will insist on the Stream respond to climate change. Because I think nowadays one of the most important one, one of the most challenging items at Protected National Parks and Protected Areas have to give answer and it would be very important for us to share the initiative these Parks can take. Parks can be laboratories, experimentation sites to an answer protection strategies taking into account climate change. I think it would be important to talk about this in Sydney.

As France we will host for only Wing GR in 2015, Chapter 21 of Convention for Climate Change will also be most important for us.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much and thank you all for your contributions.

I give the floor to the Commission now.



PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you.

Luc has already mentioned that we will of present. It is an important event for Nature conservation overall, this World Park Congress so we would not want to miss. We are still exploring whether we will be able to present a Natura 2000 exhibition which would be our preferred idea. We are trying to see whether we could first present it in CBD - COP which is a couple of weeks before the World Parks Congress and to move it directly from Korea to Sydney. There we do not have the financing yet so I can not say that yes we will do but this is what we hope to get.

Stefan, maybe you who will be there on our behalf you can say what else you expect.

STEFAN LEINER (HEAD OF THE NATURE UNIT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG ENVIRONMENT): Yes, thank you.

Well we are still discussing with the other services but we know for example the colleagues involved in Development Cooperation and the Joint Research Council that have projects like BioPama and other that are quite important and promoting Protected Areas, monitoring and work. They also want to be present and to showcase these activities we do also outside Europe as a contribution from Europe to the global agenda.

We have made in one bit in this call for content. There was general, just general description of Natura 2000 in the framework of our Biodiversity Strategy so just to have a place holder and this to be an issue and will of course be happy to participate in any side events that will deal with issues related to that.

But I think one thing is to have specific side events on those issues the other is really to have these issues on the main agenda item.

So I would hope that our experience will not just be sidelined in some specific side events but will really be part of the real main agenda, so that if you have Ministers or high level people going like Spain said we very much welcome then, not only to say what is happening at your national level but also to mention that this is also in the context of our Common European Project and we count on all European participants also from NGOs, some IUCN Organizations themselves as most of EU or your Organizations are at the one or another National IUCN part of IUCN at national levels.

So, when all those National IUCN Organizations prepare their involvement in the World Parks Congress this should be our common goal that what we have achieved in Europe is also part of that work.

Then I think we are also in discussion with wishful parts and others to see how once we know a bit more clearly what the individual contributions and participation will be, if maybe we can put some things together when we all say we can have a small stand maybe we can together have a bigger stand and things like that we should look into the coming month but it's not for the Commission to organize these things because this is really an IUCN Congress but we are ready to take part in these discussions in order to make sure that what of we can be really proud of in Europe that we have achieved is also well reflected at this global scene of protected areas than happens only every ten years.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much indeed.

Now I think that you all understand that the time is pressing. In a way I have to conclude the session of today.



Thank you very much all of you for your contributions. They were valuable to us. You will have time to go to your rooms, leave your things, etc. Prepare yourselves properly and try to be at the buses at five thirty (17.30') please.

Thank you very much.

See you there.

SECOND DAY

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): After we returned from our visit to Parnitha we are ready to start the meeting.

We could even make very, very small adaptations to what was said yesterday. If you trust us we can do it without losing time, wasting time by opening discussions on wordings. If you feel that you are covered by the texts then they can be the conclusions of the Group. If you feel that you need long discussions about the text then it will be conclusions of the Presidency and will send these conclusions to you a little bit later trying to take on board some of the points which were made yesterday when discussing.

So just a general feeling, please. Let us take the agenda Item 1, meaning Financing only. You remember that there were three bullet points proposed for conclusions. Are these three bullet points more or less satisfactory to you?

I remember that there were two points which were raised and we are ready to take them on board. One was as regards the methodologies. I think that several member states wanted to have some flexibility there and the possibility each one of the member states to select the proper methodology. So, we will find a good wording for this. We are not

proposing the wording, we are not negotiating the wording now. This was one point.

And another point I think was that...the other thing that caused some discussion was the Natural Capital Financing Facility. And there it was not very clear if the support was full or not and maybe we would need to mention also the pilot phase and something a little bit more flexible. We will see what the good wording is.

So if these three bullet points and the adaptations seem to be more or less satisfactory we could prepare the texts and send them to you as conclusions. Can I take it that you could go along with such a proposal?

Commission; excuse me there is some behind you and I don't see very well.

Yes, okay, you have the floor Commission.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): I was just wondering but without really wanting to open the floor.

I think that on the third bullet point of these conclusions which concerns the NCFE the new financing instrument. Nature Directors here, preferred to take note rather than to welcome. This was my understanding yesterday. So, if this could be settled and then this bullet point agreed by everybody it could be easy and Stefan mentions here that there was also an interest which was shown yesterday on having bullet point underlining the need for Rural Development to be more constructively taken on board at all stages.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you Commission.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Would be wanted that this would be new wording so I don't know whether for seek of speedy adoption we want to express it.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, Pia.

Actually, I forgot to mention it because I have noted as well and my idea was to make a small addition in the first bullet point, last line, where the instruments are mentioned we could say with special emphasis on CAP, ERDF, and EMFF, because Fisheries was mentioned as well and the Regional Cohesion and Development was mentioned as well. So this would give the message without extending very much the conclusions.

Could I have an indication of satisfaction or not satisfaction please? Because if there is let's say more or less some kind of agreement it could even go as conclusions of the Group. If you think that you would like to negotiate wording then we don't have the time of course and then it will be conclusions of the Presidency. We are ready to take on board some of the points from yesterday just gives us the indication what you prefer. Can you accept the general conclusions from the Group? It seems that yes.

Thank you very much.

As regards the first agenda item of course. Denmark yes please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you, Chair.

We would be very happy to support your general line, it's just that we are quite sensitive on some of the issues. For instance that its full

flexibility for the member states to choose the methodology when it comes to the essence, sorry, the real markers at the countries. It's just says encouraged further exchanges on the approaches where as we would have major difficulties if there was a narrowing down of the full flexibility of the member states when it actually comes to the choice and that was what we wanted to have underlined.

Now while I support your general approach perhaps a way of doing it was to we support the idea that you are doing here and we would very much like to have Nature Directive Conclusions. However, they can be stumbling block that we can not support the conclusions if there is a specific wording. We would be sensitive to that.

So my suggestion, Chair, would simply be to conclude as you are doing now but perhaps having a small recent circulation of the text and if there are major difficulties from some delegations we have a short deadline to get back to you. Because depending on how you do these specific wordings we would have major difficulties when it comes to the real markers. But that could be a way out but I will leave it in your hands.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Okay, thank you very much,

We note this possibility as well. Let us check the other text as well and we will see how we move finally.

I had... okay, I will not go beyond this.

If we do something similar quickly as regards the agenda Item 3, Target 1 where we didn't have long discussions about the text and maybe there would be a need for addition of a couple of points only which were mentioned yesterday.

One on how we could, let's say, deal with the prerequisites for implementation because everybody wants implementation but there are some needs and we rarely speak about the needs and about the problems.

We would need to find a smooth wording for this. And what was the other thing? The need for synergies, commitment, etc, because it was proposed to have synergy for instance with the MSFD as regards the monitoring or give possibilities to those who will do the implementation for instance, decentralized bodies by providing them some tools. So maybe these points could also be reflected by adding one or two bullets.

Otherwise we have not noted some difficulty of the members states with the proposed, Bullet points proposed, conclusions and recommendations for this Agenda item.

Yes, Germany please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Sorry, Madame Chair, we are some all lost where are we at the moment.

Which Agenda item, which bullet point?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Okay.

We spoke about the first Agenda item. You can see your Agenda, okay, second page. So the first part which was related to Financing I think that more or less I said what we can do. Then I moved to Target 1.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Okay.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): For Target 1 we had, you had everybody had received a note and also some proposed recommendations.

On these recommendations I don't remember having heard great opposition yesterday. There were a couple of points which I tried to mention quickly which could be added in order to facilitate, to show our intention to facilitate implementation.

So, if we could add one or two bullet points of this nature which we can provide to you would you be ready to accept also this text or even without these additions. Would you be ready having seen the text you have seen to accept it? I try to see if we can go quickly towards a text of the Group or if we should switch to Presidency conclusions which will be a different procedure.

I see two flags Germany and Denmark.

Germany you have the floor first please.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: I fully support your idea of having Nature Directors Conclusions and I also can agree of adding a few bullet points in the sense that you have said.

The only thing is that I have a minor technical comment on bullet point number 9, on bullet point number 9 on the reporting on which I haven't raised yesterday because I thought this is nothing for the open session this is something more of a technical nature and this is something that I would like just like, that I would like to have some rephrasing there. Shall I read now or you first finish your additional bullet points?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): We note that you would have something on the reporting.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Yes.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Just a moment.

Let us see what Denmark has to say if it is procedural and we come to your point.

Thank you.

Denmark you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you very much, Chair. One proposal which concerns the one Financing Natura 2000 the questions is whether we should merge this one into the one on financing Biodiversity in general which was under the first point 9. The bullet point number 3. Okay. It's just a consideration because there is something of integrating process related to Natura 2000 Financing also which could... just a consideration. We have no problem with it.

The other thing is that which I think we didn't discuss very much yesterday or that is the NGOs discussed yesterday that is the fitness check bullet point. I think that there could be a need for just having some reflections in this room between member states on this issue because we didn't and we didn't take the floor because we thought that was indeed an issue for the closed session and not for the open session.

So, either we have some problem as well, concerns about the current text and would either have a discussion here first and then have discussion on the bullet point afterwards. I think that it would be suitable for discussion. At least the current text we have some proposals for changes but I think in general we should decide whether we will have a discussion on it first.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): All right, thank you.

Are there any other bullets or points you would like to comment on? If not we take one issue in reporting and issue on this mentioned by Denmark and we try to clarify them before concluding. Is there any other issue?

Okay, then Germany please, has the floor on reporting.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Yes I hope it's not such a difficult one.

The bullet point on reporting is quite long and I think is somehow connecting or mixing up the political assessment or the strategic assessment of the Articles 17 and 12 reports and in the second part of the bullet point it comes to more technical questions like what on data flow and data management and so on.

My suggestion was to put it into two sentences, that means that the first sentence ends after the relevant to the Nature fitness check. Full stop. Not full stop, goes on and asks the Reporting Group to examine whether lessons learned from this reporting round could be drawn to improve the data flow and its practicabilities and making data more coherent and comparable. Full stop. Favorite reference values, need for that discussion.

I'm also saying that because my colleagues from the Reporting Group said that certain things have not been discussed already in the Reporting Group and should be discussed there first and then a decision should be taken with the Nature Directors and not vice versa. Ja?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

We would appreciate if you give us the proposal in writing as well. From the first hearing are there reactions from the Group or from the Commission, please? Commission?

Yes you have the floor. This means okay, tie means okay. Fine. Great, all right, thank you very much. So please give us in a while the text.

Thank you.

So one point settled. Second point from the Danish side please. What would be your proposal?

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: I think somehow we have seen the draft mandate for the fitness check which has been briefly discussed at the CBGN last month and we have not, we think that this conclusion may go a bit too fine in relation to having taking conclusions in advance on what would be the process.

We would certainly prefer that we bring the conclusion a bit level up, saying that for instance emphasizing the support to the fitness check including the need to consider the effectiveness and efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value and will contribute to the fitness check. Having a more brief, a more short version with out these, some these conclusions before head.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Please repeat the phrase.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Emphasizing the support to the fitness check including the need to consider the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value and will contribute to the fitness check.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): We would need the text of course but from the first hearing I think that the Commission would like to say something.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you.

Indeed I think that maybe the fitness check would deserve first an exchange among us. Also because we have never had the chance to discuss openly here in this setting what the fitness check is about. We have presented it and we have I would say never heard your views on how you would want to support it, to what extent you would want to be engaged in contributing to it. What are your expectations now that this fitness check has been put on the table by the Commission and now that it is here what I can say on our behalf is that “we want to make the best out of it”. And in order to make the best out of it we definitely will need your constructive contribution to whatever you feel you want to contribute.

In order that at the end of the day we have a good picture what has worked and how this has contributed to EU Nature Conservation, our Nature Legislation. We have our own aegis but your contribution will be essential in order also either to underpin or to justify whatever conclusions the fitness check will come.

So, I don't know, Madame President, if we could have a tour de table on this now or whether you prefer to start with something else and

then have a tour de table on the Fitness Check. We are fully in your hands the fact that Francois and myself would have to leave at five o' clock (17.00') shouldn't undermine the rest of the meeting. Stefan is here and he can fully present our views also afterwards.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Let's say my first preference would be to conclude each one of the issues so maybe conclude with this point as well. But if you feel that there would be a long discussion I wouldn't like to risk it. I would like also to see with the other issues and with the famous issue which goes the reason for having this closed session. So let us keep it and we will come back to this later on.

Let me check now the three bullet points related to Target 2, agenda Item 4. Forget the agenda Item number because the final text you have it has a different numbering.

Target 2. For the Target 2 we had three bullet points. There again we didn't have special comments. I would only feel that maybe we could add at the end of the second bullet point something related to tools for implementation. So, my idea was to add at the end after for restoring priorities, we could add as well as of developing and using appropriate tools facilitating the implementation. Otherwise from our side we could leave with the three points you have in front of you. Is it possible for you to accept it as well and have these three conclusions as well?

Denmark please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you.

We just have one comment for the second bullet point and the appropriate financial provisions. Now we assume that we are referring

back to the Action 3 6P in the Biodiversity Strategy and that has to do with the EU funding streams. I think that it would be appropriate to refer it back to just to avoid any confusion from other parts of Government that would look as potential National Funding.

So, I would suggest in the end simply adding though better targeted use of EU funding streams. That's the wording taken from Action 6P in the EU Biodiversity Strategy text, so that should be agreed language. Of course I will be happy to provide that for you in writing.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Sorry, maybe there is a small confusion.

I think that we tried to separate the issues and this is not Funding anymore. So if you have something on the Funding, then we discuss it in the first pack of the recommendations as we had said before. Now we are not talking about the Funding. We are talking about the restoration we are talking about the completion of prioritization frameworks, etc.

So, I wouldn't consider it very appropriate to add something on Funding here.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Okay, thank you, Chair.

But maybe just to clarify then what is meant by appropriate financial provisions. In second bullet point, I suppose it is the Agenda Item 3, Target 2. In the second bullet point.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Yes I see it.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: What are the financial provisions then?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): I guess that it is something general.

We could try and find appropriate financial provisions ever from other sources. It is general it doesn't say how. It doesn't say it doesn't give details. If we start giving details maybe we will need negotiations on this and we had already long discussions on Funding under the first agenda item, but again it is as you prefer.

I will not give you the floor now please excuse me, because there are others who have raised their flags and we will come to this in a while. I have first France and then Finland please.

France you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE: We've got also some difficulties with the second bullet point. Because we didn't really discuss about restoration prioritization frameworks yesterday. We received the later form to Commission just the day before our meeting and what we understood it was a discussion point for our next meeting, for the next semester. So, we think it is a bit premature to mention that. We all encourage the timely completion of the restoration prioritization frameworks, we don't really know what it is just now because we haven't discuss it really.

So, for us the second bullet point is premature.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Finland, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: Thank you, Chair, I support the proposal of France because as yesterday we heard we are going to

discuss about this thoroughly in the next meeting and this is now quite text about projects which we don't know very well. I'm not saying that this is very important and crucial thing to do but it's too early to say anything.

Then, I have another small question I'm a bit worried about the last bullet point. Its ending as a message for responsible Authorities and member states to engage in further promotion of Green Infrastructure when nowadays our colleagues are reading our documents and they might ask me "did I had any mandate to send them this kind of messages?". So, I would like to see this a bit in a softened form if it is possible. Because it is first time I have to say it, first time that we are accepting conclusion in Directors Meeting. If we are going to do this also later so I hope that the text should be very accurate in some cases where we have to explain our decisions in home.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Commission please, you have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you.

As to the second bullet point we think that while we naturally would have like to have conclusions on restoration or... I get this stage it is very true that is maybe premature to reach conclusions to day on this and therefore the best thing would be just to drop the second bullet point and maybe at the next Nature Directors Meeting we will have further discussion on the restoration and at that point in time we would decide what conclusions we could come up to.

In that context I would just want to remark that Council conclusion on ensuring also financing are already taken so I don't think that the Danish comments were right on that.

On the third bullet point there maybe what we could say here in order to go along with the idea presented I think that we should not preempt what others Services in other Departments will have to do. We could say "Nature Directors support the work carried out on the implementation of the Strategy for the Deployment of Green Infrastructure and encourage the further promotion of Green Infrastructure. I think that that we safely say ourselves.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much Pia.

Thank you very much Commission.

I think that this give us ways out and it is very, very helpful, both proposals so we drop for the moment being the second bullet point so it will not be part of the conclusions of this Group, maybe in the future. As regards the third bullet point that becomes second the phrase would read "and encourage the further promotion of the Green Infrastructure".

I think that now people can accept it. All right, thank you very much.

So for this point we have concluded. For the first one we will send the text, for the Financing I mean and you will see it and have the possibility to make comments if the phrasing is as you prefer with a deadline. We will mention the deadline later on.

We have left one point which was related to the Nature fitness check for which we said that we would need a first round table, expressing of views, if you have some which could be taken on board as regards the last bullet point of Target 1.

Who would like to take the floor and express views on the Nature fitness check please? And how these views could be reflected in the conclusions? This is the purpose more or less. No to reopen all discussions on the issue.

United Kingdom, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you very much.

Just to pick up the point made earlier. I think the risk in the paragraph that we were given here is effectively it's preempting what the questions that the fitness check itself will need to address. So, I think perhaps if we could not have concluding three lines of that, but I think that we do want to fully commit to engaging with the process and we very clearly want to do that. But I think there is a risk that the final wording suggests a particular outcome about Fitness Check which we are in just about entering to.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

The Netherlands, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS: Thank you.

I would like to make a few points. When I read the conclusions now I pull out two of them that I agree fully with. The major one is that we say something about the need to ensure that the current level of invasion is fully maintained. That's in one of the lines. I think we should at the beginning of this process say something like this, because it gives direction.

The second is also in the bullet before that we have to draw lessons from the reporting experiences. Maybe we can make them more efficient or...etc. So, I agree with those major points from the points in

this paper. I would like to add two others because in practice sometimes good Nature is the enemy of better Nature and Biodiversity.

We all know practices that we have to keep what we have. At the same time we know solutions where better Nature and Biodiversity is also possible. And I spoke a lot of you these days and I think that it is possible within the current Directives but I would like to exchange best practices about these issues. Because it can inform people about what we want and we don't want.

My last point is about scale in which we operate. Because when you operate on a larger scale you find sometimes better solutions than when you work on a smaller scale. Also in that point I would like to exchange good practices so we give direction in we want and don't want.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Who is next?

Finland please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: Thank you, Chair.

I would like only to say that I support the proposal by the U.K., because these three last lines can be read in many ways. I believe that at least in my country the process to take part in a fitness check will be coordinated with other Ministries and so it is a very demanding process for us. We are not alone saying what is, how well the legislation is working or not. So, I would like to keep it a bit short and just say that "we are committed to engage fully in the exercise". Because it is very important, every member state is involved. Maybe the three last lines is

too much saying beforehand what we are going to say, if you understand it.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you Finland.

Germany, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Thank you, I would like to support the proposal made by The Netherlands saying something about setting the scheme and saying that “the current level of ambition need to be fully maintained” and I don’t think this is precluding the check itself because we know from our Article 17 and 12 reporting that we have to maintain fully our level of ambition or even have to increase our level of ambition and somehow similar wording taking into account the level of protection for the Environment has also been part of an European Council where our Head of States have discussed the refit issue in a very general way, so I don’t think we take something before the check has been done.

Secondly, I think it’s very much to draw the lessons. It’s very much necessary to draw lessons from the reporting because we see that there are many, many things that are not in a good favor of good status and we have to improve our ambition as I said before.

Finally, I would also say that “Germany very much wants to commit is very much committed to the process” and I also think we have some good practice examples which we can share with you in showing that certain things can very well be solved with the Directive.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Denmark, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you.

This is not to repeat our remarks from before but we are just supporting the proposal made by the U.K. and some of the reasons also said by Finland. We don't have the mandate to support the wording as it is today. So, it will not be possibility for us to support unless you take it that out at a more general level as we proposed in the beginning of this discussion.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM: Thank you Chair.

Listening at the various statements here I think we feel that we have to go, to keep our level of ambition looking at the results that we have reached with all the measures that we are starting now. I think that we can have in near future better results with better monitoring, better knowledge that we are compiling, better exchange of implementation and different practices. We are learning very quickly but Nature need some time to restore and needs sometime to get its quality back.

So, the level of ambition should not be left out as Netherlands and Germany indicated. Improving our sharing of good practices can be done also true and the results that we have got with it can be done true with the different steps of consultation to do the fitness check. Maybe we

should get some more information in next meeting, more information what is meant by each of the steps that have been described in the mandate to have clearer and concrete information how we can concretely contribute from the member states. We are like many others said already convinced to give that support as well.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

France, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE: Thank you.

I would like to support what The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium have just said. I think it is important that we affirm our commitment to maintain the level of ambition. It doesn't mean nothing has to be changed so we can be more efficient, so the process can be more relevant. We have of course to learn from the monitoring and from the reporting. But it is important to say at the beginning of the process of prefit that our aim is not to lower the level of ambition. So, from that point of view I support the current (41.00 δεύτερη μέρα 1^η ώρα) about this point.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Spain, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN: Thank you.

I will be very brief because other already said what I'm trying to say myself. We would like very much to retain this level of ambition. We think that it is important to give a clear message about the final result of this fitness check. As France said we can be more efficient but

we have to maintain what we are trying to do and it still has not ended at that time.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Cyprus, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF CYPRUS: Yes, thank you.

I will also be very brief. I would like also to support the retainment of the current level of ambition in integrity of the EU Nature legislation supporting Netherlands, Denmark and the others. Okay.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

I don't see other flags. May I ask the Commission if you would like to add something?

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Well, we are slightly surprised by this initial reaction.

We are surprised because we could have expected that you, our member states, our most concerned member states, on the two Nature Directives would have commented that indeed this refit might be welcome because there are under no redundancies, because you feel that something could be done better, because you have some elements which could be improved.

But we would never have expected that you tell us that “you don’t want to keep the level of ambition”. This, frankly, is a total surprise and I would want to understand better what this implies.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you, Commission.

I think that Finland wants the floor again. Yes, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: I’m afraid there is somehow some kind of misunderstanding now because I have not been saying that “we should not keep the current level of ambition”. Maybe by my side, personally the level is not enough now as colleagues have said. But as I told you I have to coordinate the Finnish opinions of this fitness check.

At home somebody would like to read this text like we would have conclusion report, evaluation and it is not a very fruitful basis for discussions in home. We are going to try to prove our colleagues in other Ministries that EU Nature legislation is very good and it can be even better and it can be... we have these possibilities of use, best practices and so on. This is only a consistorial question whether we are trying to put these let’s say conclusions before evaluation. I hope you understand this I said. Process also.

I know that some Ministries are already interested about this fitness check. It is possible that there will be quite heavy struggle before Finland says anything about this question and I’m afraid that some other countries may have this problem also.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Let me make a small comment and a procedural proposal because the time is really very, very limited and some of you have to leave and we have also to discuss the other issue which is an issue of substance, the Fisheries.

I think that it would be a pity not to have conclusions of the Group, but conclusions of the Presidency only because of this phrase. I think also that if we all accept the first lines saying “commit to engaging fully in the exercise, etc ”, then it is strange not to accept also the continuation of the phrase about the level of ambition. But if this is an issue for which you need consultations I would propose the following: We could keep in brackets the phrase “emphasizing ... fully maintained”.

We will send you anyway the text to have the look before finalizing it in a short deadline and if you respond with some arguments that you can not leave with this, etc, then we will take it out if people agree all we will make Presidency conclusions. But I wouldn't like to continue for long discussing this issue please.

Can you accept my procedural proposal? That we put it in brackets and that you will have the opportunity to comment on this when we will send you the entire conclusions text for finalization. You still want the floor for the procedure, Denmark?

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: I'm sorry to come back, just because...

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): No, no, no.

I want only to know if it is in the procedure. Because there was somebody else who asked before you. Is it on the procedure? No. Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: No. I don't think and distinguish between the procedural and the concept of this.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Excuse me.

Okay, U.K has the floor first please and then Denmark.

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: I wonder if that would be helpful.

I mean none of us as colleagues have pointed out, none of us is saying we want to go back on the level of ambition or to undermine where we are. I think that the issue is that this is free text that doesn't have a root in anything. I wonder if we said something about recognizing the commitments made in the EU Biodiversity Strategy as the preamble so that we've got something where we as Governments have already sign up to a commitment and have a clarity rather than having a broader phrase like general "ambition and integrity". I think that might allow us to be positive about commitment we are trying to achieve without introducing fresh wording.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Denmark, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you and if the proposal from our U.K. colleague is generally supported we will support it as well because I think that is a good way out.

I think we ca not expect that we will be able to have a discussion with our colleagues like our Finnish colleague said just discussing back home about the text of the level of ambition within two weeks or

whatever you set up as deadline for this one. So, if we could rephrase it in the way that proposed but the U.K I think that would be the optimal.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Could I ask the British colleague to give us a phrase please as soon as possible and in the meantime if our German colleague could also give the phrase on the reporting the previous bullet point, that would be very helpful because we would have clarity on what we are agreeing upon.

Are the others ready to accept the proposal of U.K or you would like to hear it again? Hear it again, so.

Yes, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: It was along the lines of recognizing the important commitments to the level of the EU Biodiversity Strategy or made by Biodiversity Strategy about the Commission in terms and views on how we phrase that.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Where exactly would it be put, what exactly what will it replace.

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: It would go with the very beginning and it would then replace the final three sentences. So, effectively it would be a statement of our level of ambition in the context of the fitness check.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Can you read the entire bullet point?

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: Recognizing the commitment to delivery the Biodiversity Strategy, welcome the mandate on the EU fitness check which is initiated by the Commission and commit to engaging fully in the exercising of pulling it together the necessary evidence to respond to the questions being addressed by the fitness check. Full stop.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much for this. You will give us the text please.

What about the Commission? Could we have some comments from the Commission's side please?

Yes Pia, please you have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): In fact I think that what is coming out is that we all want to have further discussions and this point for sure will be on the table of our next meetings until this fitness check is finalized day. I hope so.

Maybe that today we have just launched this debate and it premature to make any conclusions. I find that even with the somehow helpful adding made by our U.K. colleague it sounds very weak and for that reason I would suggest that we make no conclusions today. We prepare and we engage with other Ministries in order to have a full discussion next time on supporting the level of ambition or not supporting. Because if what is needed is to make sure that at member state level all Departments will agree, we say nothing today so we have

no conclusion on the fitness check and we decide to come back at the next Directors meeting for a full discussion.

If this would be acceptable to you I think that it might be the best way.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, Commission for this proposal.

This is a possibility. Should I understand that we drop only the last bullet point not the previous one mentioning also the fitness check but also the reporting part.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Yes.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): The proposal, your proposal was to drop only the last bullet point.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Only the last.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Only the last.

Thank you.

Is it a relief to the colleagues? As I understand, yes.

Thank you very much.

This doesn't mean that we don't want the idea. We need to explore more the idea and see how it will work in the future. So, at this moment in our conclusions we don't keep the last bullet point.

Thank you very much.

Now with this we have concluded on the recommendations. We have agreed on the process as I understand. The bullet points on the third issue were easily accepted, on the second issue the last we were discussing we found a way out. On the first point there is a couple of adaptations, wording adaptations but on issues discussed and agreed yesterday.

So, we will draft it in the new form and send it to you to have the last look. Two weeks you mentioned as a deadline. Is it two weeks you would need? Or it could be even less than that? Okay.

So, we will give more or less two weeks deadline and after your comments, hopefully they will not be much, after your comments it will be the conclusions of the Group. All right? Hopefully. If something goes wrong it will be conclusions of the Presidency, but we are trying all of us to have conclusions of the Group.

Thank you very, very much for this. You were all very, very helpful and we appreciate it very, very much.

Now a small amendment of the agenda. Allow me to give the floor first to our Italian colleague who is going to take a plane and he will be the next Presidency. He has to say something about the next Nature Directors Group and we are ready to hear him.

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY: Thank you, thank you Presidency.

It is only a very short announcement. I have already told to many of you that we are going to prepare the next Nature Directors Meeting



and we will be happy to see you all, you are all invited to Rome during the last week of November. I hope we will be able to manage to maintain the very high level of this meeting organized by Greece and I really thank Greece for the perfect organization of the interesting meeting.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very, very much for your good words and we are sure that everybody will be keen to participate in your meeting as well.

Thank you.

Now the remaining point which is a point of importance as we understood from the notes circulated. I'm talking about the Fisheries. The inclusion of this item has been requested by some member states, however the issue is of concern for many other member states too that expect to use the CFP reform and the associated new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund as well as the opportunities they provide for the management of Natura 2000 and other Marine Protected Areas.

In the last Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting in Vilnius there was a common agreement that efforts should be putting in order to have joint implementation of Nature Directives and Marine Strategy Framework Directive and coherent implementation of Fisheries and Environment legislation. To achieve this collaboration and joint efforts should be strengthened between Environment and Fisheries Authorities at a national level but also at the EU level.

The Commission has prepared a note on the issue which was distributed by us as a basis for discussion. And we also received all of

us, we have distributed it yesterday a note cosigned by Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden on the same issue with slightly different views.

I would like to give the floor to the Commission first please for further briefing and then I will open the floor for exchange of views.

Commission, please you have the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you very much.

We have put on the table a note which we drafted together with our colleagues from DG Mare. So, the note it is simply a factual note serving as background and giving the various elements why this joint recommendation will be put forward if they are to put forward in case there is no joint recommendation from a regional group the Commission will act as usual. This is the bottom line but of course the Commission would be happy to receive joint recommendations on which then the body in any case be a committee decision and then Commission decision acting on it. But it would serve as a very good basis for any commitment decision taken by the Commission.

Now one other element is that article 18 of the Common Fishery Policy Regulation establishes in the (1.35, δεύτερη μέρα, δεύτερη ώρα) paragraph 2 that for the purpose of paragraph 1 which concerns regional cooperation member states having a direct management interest affected by the measures referred to in paragraph 1 shall cooperate with one another in formulating joint recommendations. So, this is what the Council and Parliament Regulation says.

They shall also consult the relevant Advisory Councils. The Commission shall facilitate the cooperation between member states including when necessary by ensuring that the scientific contribution is obtained from the relevant scientific bodies. I have read this paragraph 2

article 18 simply to say that indeed the basis regulation establishes the possibility and somehow the shell that the Commission contributes and facilitates the joint recommendation.

This is simply as far as we Commission can and should go. Because it is the will of the legislator that a joint recommendation is presented by the regional group of member states.

Therefore I really think that at this point our role today should finish because it is for you, this is really for you member states to discuss.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you, Commission.

Who would like to take the floor now please?

Germany, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: I don't know whether there is a discussion on the paper of the Commission now but if there is no discussion I would like to take the floor and would like to ask whether it's possible for Germany representing the four countries that has been drafting the paper to give a short presentation on our ideas too. Yes?

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Excuse me you have a presentation you mean to show?

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Just oral presentation, just guide you through this document that we have been circulated.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY

AND CLIMATE CHANGE): You prefer to go to the podium or you can speak from your seat?

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Okay.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): As you prefer, we are ready to listen.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: I think it is easier and it goes a bit faster if I stay here.

Dear colleagues, we had this joint proposal from Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden, I hope these all are available to all of you. I would like first to explain a bit the background of this.

As has been said before we in the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation are two articles that are articles 11 and 18 which describe the procedure for the adoption of Fisheries Regulations which are deemed necessary for the protection of the Natura 2000 sites or other Marine Protected Areas. In the Nature the procedure is as follows. The member states which consider that Fisheries restrictions are necessary in Natura 2000 sites. No?

They are necessary at the beginning I'm trying to explain the procedure. The member state which considers that Fisheries restrictions are necessary in a Natura 2000 site would propose such measure to the Commission and all member states having a direct fishing interest in the area. Then member states can then within a period of six month come to an agreement regarding the measures which is called as joint recommendation and in this case the Commission will adopt such measures by means of delegated acts.

If the member states do not agree the Commission itself may submit a proposal in accordance with the Treaty. That's the procedure it

is quite simple. But the directive, sorry, the regulation does not describe how member states come to a joint recommendation. What happened in the last month is that on the one hand at the first joint meeting in Vilnius the Nature and Marine Directors welcomed the initiatives to work together on Marine Protected Areas with the strengthened Marine Expert Group as of coordinating Working Group for MPAs also for Fisheries Management. They also urged the Directors to join forces and to involve the counterparts dealing with Fisheries Policy to ensure a coherent and ambitious implementation of Fisheries and Environment Regulation.

On the other hand in a parallel process the Fisheries Directors expressed the willingness to develop joint recommendations within the scope of article 18 on their regional levels. They had a memorandum of understanding in the Chevening Group which is a Group representing the states around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea Fisheries Forum (BALTFISH) which are the member states bordering the Baltic Sea. They agreed to establish a Working Group to develop these joint recommendations we need for preparing Fisheries regulations in these areas.

So what we can see here from our perspectives that we have two processes running on EU level, two parallel processed in a way, one by the Fisheries Directors and the Chevening Group and the BALTFISH Group and one by Nature Directors. From our view parallel independent processes for the implementation of Environment, Nature and Fisheries Policies should be avoided.

Therefore we believe that there is a need to strengthen the collaboration and the joint efforts between Environment, Nature and Fisheries Authorities not only at national level but also obviously it is necessary to do it at an EU level.

So, considering the role of Environment, Nature Authorities for the implementation of the EU Environmental Policies and the role we have in it we believe that it would be very useful to do mainly two things. To have, that's the proposal that we make, to have joint meetings between Nature and Fisheries Directors and particular of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea to develop a joint common approach. How to develop Fisheries measures for Natura 2000 areas and other protected areas.

Secondly I would like to ask the Commission to provide guidance to member states so to ensure a level playing field in the process. This is quite important from our perspective. A level playing field in the process does results in common recommendations.

So, the main idea of this common proposal is to bring the two activities in line, secure consistency between these policy areas and to ask the Commission for Support and we hope we can find your support for this proposal.

I think that is from me so far, if my colleagues from the other supporting member countries would like to add something I think they could.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Belgium please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM: Thank you Chair.

Indeed as Germany well described in his presentation we fully support the two actions that we are asked by Germany. We also do see the need of level playing field and we also do see a need of a more facilitating or maybe proactive role, if I can say so, from the

Commission, also DG Mare and DG Environment to guide us in coherence, implementation over Fishery measures for Natura 2000 and for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

I have to tell you also, Chair, I have to leave the room in five, ten minutes because my plane is leaving so I will not be able to assist in the further discussions of this important point.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

I'm not so sure how far we can go with this discussion. In particular if some of the member states leave. But anyway are there other requests for the floor?

Denmark you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you very much.

There should be no doubt that we of course fully support that we have any sort of coordination of the Fisheries Policy and Natura 2000 aspects. But what our impression is that the proposal it seems as you have not emptied the possibilities which are exactly already established before taking new initiatives.

I think that we should just have to see how this the work on the Chevening Group and other similar Groups and the Marine Group how that will proceed. It is only initiated this way and I think this proposal is going to shortcut, what has already been considered by legislators and by ourselves.

So, my...I think also it has to do a lot with the level of national coordination. I think that we all have to go back home and grab our Fisheries colleagues by their jackets and say "we would like to speak with you" and go on that way, which I think will be much more

convenient than having establishing at this even a new Forum or whatever we are speaking of.

So, I think that we should, we have no problems with supporting conclusions on further strengthening of the work that is raised and then whatever. But I think we have, it is a bit contradictory that we do not use the already existing feasibilities before we go on to something new.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Poland please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND: Thank you, because I'm in a quite similar situation like Belgium, I will have to leave in few minutes.

I would just like support the proposal. I think that this is not already about establishing...

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Of the four countries?

REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND: Yes, of course.

It is no already establishing a new Forum. It is just raising the voice that we all would like to have also our say and we would like to collaborate with Marine Directors in this issue. So, I think that this is words to raise this voice and we support it.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

U.K. please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you.

I would like actually to very much associate myself with the comments made Denmark. We are absolutely up for coordination and collaboration. I think we didn't really recognize what was described as a lack of a level playing field. But we think that we need to allow the coming arrangements to work through as they are intended to. We particularly have reservations, I'm not sure whether there is a common understanding whether the proposition is but extra parallel mechanisms or just changes the existing ones but we certainly could not be supporting creation of additional parallel meetings.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

France, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE: Thank you.

We can understand of course there is a need to use them as well as possible their existing possibilities. The reason why the proposal we supported with Spain Germany and Sweden we mentioned the possibility to advice there is non paper from 2008 which is existing on paper and a lot of changes have been done since 2008 and new CFP, Common Fisheries Policy, a new Directive, the Framework Marine Directive so it could be a good way for us as Nature Directors to be sure about our efficiency (15.25 2^η ώρα δεύτερη μέρα) the goals of protecting Nature and Natura 2000 are quickly taken into account to revise this non paper, to introduce clear ways of (15.30 2^η ώρα δεύτερη μέρα), whales sufficiency policy, and Whales Marine Strategy from Whale Directive.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

I have Finland and the Commission.

Finland, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: Thank you, Chair.

This is one interesting initiative from our colleagues from Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden. For us Fisheries problems are not very difficult and we don't see the process very problematic. Of course we are going to be along on the process but we hope that it will be organized in a simple and efficient way so that we won't put on new prophecies and new foras, but we prefer to use that existing Experts Groups procedures already.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

The Commission, please, has the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Thank you.

I just want to come back on what France has just mentioned and which is mentioned as first bullet point by the paper put forward by a number of member states asked the Commission first bullet point to revise the non paper from 2008. This non paper is what we call in our jargon guidance document on Fisheries measures for Marine and Natura 2000 sites. We are presently working on the revision of this guidance document in order to take on board the new Common Fisheries Policy.

We expect to come back to the two Committees because as happens with all our guidance documents we present them to the Committees before we put them on the website. They do not have legal status per se but they have such legal importance that the Court in Luxembourg the ICJ very often refers to guidance document in order to make its final judgment.

So, I would say that it is a good guidance document and for this reason we want to put it to the Committee. We will put it to both Committees of course because it is a guidance document which concerns Fisheries and Environment. We hope to finalize it before the summer which could mean that we come back to the Committee after the summer with our draft. This is simply an information.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

I see a couple of flags. Sweden and Germany and then I will try to conclude please because people start leaving and it would be nice if we continue like that.

So, Sweden, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN: Yes, thank you.

As we understand that some member countries have problems with the proposal, but I would like to stress still that this process will be going on and the Fisheries Directors and the Chevening Group will draft the terms of reference concerning the Fishery in Natura 2000 and Marine Protected Areas. I don't know how many in this room have seen these terms of reference or how we involved your...I understand that U.K. and the Denmark are but I'm a bit sure... I was at least a bit surprised when I saw those terms of reference.

I think that it is important that we as Nature Directors and the environmental side in these discussions are involved to a large extent. That is why we put this proposal on the table. It is not always that the competence and the understanding of the targets on Natura 2000 and Marine Protected Areas are the best in the Fishery Directors. I think we have better understanding of those issues and therefore I would like to have a good discussion on this and we also wanted to raise the issue in this meeting to give you a better view on that is on the table. However, we would like to in some way have the Nature Directors to take note on this document.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Germany please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Thank you.

I would like to give some more explanation maybe we haven't been clear enough in our document.

First of all I think we are not creating extra structures, we already have parallel structures. We have a Marine Expert Group, we have documents on the Fisheries in the Natura 2000 or guidance documents. We have decisions from the Nature Directors together with Marine and Water Directors from Vilnius saying that we want to play a lead role in implementing ambitious Regulations for our Natura 2000 areas.

Secondly, we have the same line of Expert Groups in the Fishery section. So, what we like is to bring these two lines together. We will make sure that the discussion is involving everybody that the discussion

is on equal footing and that not sector is taking the lead and excluding the other one or not cooperating properly.

So, our only suggestion is that we would like to welcome any initiative to have a joint meeting. We are not going, we are not proposing to set up new Working Groups or whatsoever. Because we feel that the issue is so important that we need a joint meeting between the two Groups so that they can discuss how is this Chevening Subgroup operating. Is there a Co – chair system or is there another system who is going to decide finally on what is going to happen in the Natura 2000 areas and so on and so on.

We are totally open to everything. It is just that we feel that we need more time to discuss properly what other procedures to come up with Fishery managements that fulfill the requirements of our Directive.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you, Germany.

The feeling I have from the discussion is that everybody would be in favor of co - operational coordination of the processes. We understand the importance of both Natura and Biodiversity commitments and also the Fisheries Policies. We understand that some policies can be better promoted if there is cooperation and that this moment we know that the two processes go more or less in a parallel way.

Maybe the big question is from which side we should start the initiative. Should it be the Commission giving some encouragement or guidance to the member states? Or it should be initiative of each one of the member states inside among its Authorities?

Allow me to say something since this is the closed session and we are among us. I think that we face the same nature of problems all of us as regards the cooperation with our colleagues from the Fisheries side. We have some problems in most of the countries to find solution with our Fishery colleagues and maybe and I say maybe there are some difficulties sometimes within the Commission as well for co operational coordination among DGs.

Now if this is the point and if this is the problem I think that we could try both sides. We could try our side, the member states to have better cooperation with our colleagues. It would help in some cases if we had also some encouragement from the Commission. I guess that the Commission will do as usually efforts towards the other DGs.

I can mention a good example we had recently. Recently means the last year. The coastal zone issues. Coastal zone issues regarding planning and maritime spatial planning as well. Maybe you are aware that there had been efforts from the DG Environment and DG Mare had it's own policy and at the certain moment the two processes were going in a parallel way. We managed and our colleagues in the Commission managed to cooperate very, very well. At the end we had the joint process the two Groups, the two Experts Groups were meeting together, not back to back but together and we managed to have a common and joint approach as regards the Draft Directive which finally became a Directive because it was concluded.

It was no an easy task at the beginning but we manage to have this cooperation and I'm sure that we can manage to have a good cooperation with our Fishery colleagues even if at the beginning they are not ready to discuss with us, at national level for instance, if we go and suggest some kind of joint benefits from funding possibilities.

This is a problem for some of our Authorities and maybe if a kind of encouragement comes also from the Commission this will help us. Maybe such ideas were behind the paper of the four countries, I'm not aware and this is not my issue. This is not my issue.

The only thing I was ready to suggest to you as a conclusion the same way as we were trying to do for the other issues was to try and to reflect these ideas of a need for cooperation with a few bullet points as well, as part of our conclusions. We will not commit ourselves to do very important things or things for which we will need a mandate, but at least the basic things we are mentioning ourselves when taking the floor could be reflected in a short paper.

Fisheries is a policy of a slightly different nature compared to what we are discussing here in the sense of being a community competence. Please, correct me if something has changed during the years I'm not dealing with this gives an argument I think also for us to ask for some kind of support, some kind of initiative for coordination from the Commission side.

I don't know how the situation is in other countries. But for instance in some of our countries the Nature Authorities and the Environment people play a role of don't quick shot. Now they are alone in their efforts. The other sectors although we are discussing about integration for so many years now the other sectors are not so ready to accept this integration very easily.

So, if we manage to have some points which are our common understanding and some encouragement from the Commission's side this would be helpful for some of us. Maybe for others if they have resolved the problems it wouldn't be a big deal.

But I would like to invite you as a follow up of what was said to accept as kind of summing up or conclusions of this discussion the

following points and we are ready of course to adapt them if you feel that there is such a need.

We could include in our conclusions for instance the need to strengthen collaboration and joint efforts between Environment and Fisheries Authorities at national level but also at the EU level. Nobody said something against this I think.

Then, we could also ask to avoid parallel independent processes under the implementation of Environment and Fisheries Policies. We could have a reference to the need to reduce the number of meetings and share the burden of the preparation of the Fisheries measures. Make effective use of the Working Groups or meetings organised by DG Mare and DG Environment. We are open to find wordings which would be more appropriate if you feel like but we are just giving the ideas which are not our own ideas, there are ideas expressed already by the Group.

Also avoid that processes under one policy would prejudice or jeopardise decisions taken under another policy. Again it is a question of synergies. We can put it in a slightly different way. Or in a simpler way. I'm just mentioning a few points.

Then, we could invite DG Mare and DG Environment to facilitate in a proactive manner the joint approach. We could also propose to convene a joint meeting of Nature and Fisheries Directors to develop a joint approach to Fisheries measures and to guarantee such a level playing field.

I don't think that these are very difficult points to take, so could we have some reactions maybe or even nodding if you can agree more or less and this text will be also drafted in a more, let's say elegant way or shorter way and send to you as part of the conclusions with the same procedure we have mentioned before.

Anybody who would like to say something on this?



Germany, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY: Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

I fully support your proposals and I would like to take up to the very last point from your conclusion that is to encourage common meeting of the Nature and Fishery Directors as Germany is one of the first countries which have been listing the sites and we are really in time pressure to finalize our Fisheries Management we would offer, we would announce that we would check to invite to a meeting in Germany, in Berlin or elsewhere and ask the members of the North Sea Region and the Fishery Directors and Nature Directors.

It is seven or eight countries or so to come to joint meeting in Germany and really figure out how this Chevening Group could be working and how we could manage to come to good conclusion in developing the Fishery Management Plan for the Natura 2000.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Denmark, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK: Thank you, Chair.

We all respect I will try to run on the point I'm not sure I've got all the points you have just mentioned. But they more or less reflect the followed setting proposal from Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden if I go down along the line.

So I think I would prefer that we have a more general approach than than the one taken here. It's not, I don't have problems with Germany's proposal of arranging a joint meeting between Nature and Fisheries Directors. That's an initiative which could mean, could give

good sense but when we are speaking about this EU competence area, how we just should consider whether we turn around have a precedent of, making a precedent of opening up for having meeting with all kinds of other sectors. By the way why not having meetings with the Transport Directors or other Directors, Road Directors or whatever because they are also very important fields in raising as also reflected in doing so.

So, it's just also a consideration for not opening up a Pandora's Box of different situations which we can not overcome. Because we have big load of work already at a national coordination and we certainly hope that member states don't forget that in that sense.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Well, we try to make it broad but anyway. As regards one of your comments why opening to, why starting a process of cooperation with all fields. It would be too broad, too big, too difficult maybe. In fact I think that this process has started and it is part of the integration, of the efforts for implementation of the integration ideas.

Only last week there was a big meeting in Paris on Transport, Environment and Health so there is an effort to bring together the different fields. It is not something very, very strange. I'm not saying that the Nature Directors should meet with all the sectors. But at least Fisheries is something important so we are trying to find the solution acceptable by all.

I see Sweden and Belgium.

Sweden, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN: Thank you.



Yes, just a short remark on Denmark's comment. It is actually that the fact that in the new Fisheries Directive it says explicitly that it should be cooperation within the Natura 2000 and other Marine Protected Areas. So it is not out of the blue when I think it's pretty, it's no sort of a surprise that we need to do it in some way or another.

I agree and I fully support the suggestions made by the Presidency. I will also like to add that we will look into the possibility to arrange a meeting together with the Fishing Directorates in the Baltfish region that is the region for the Baltic Sea. We will look into the possibility if we can arrange that from the Swedish side.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Belgium, please you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM: Thank you Chair.

Trying to catch up at the points of few of my colleagues of the Marine Department who had to leave unfortunately. But I can tell that he can support the proposals that you made on the main points that can be taken up in a kind of concluding remarks.

On this, on why it is this kind of integrated approaches are now as Denmark is saying so needed, I feel that we have to take up the urgency from both sides. In Fisheries we have realized that the fish stocks are going down. And from Nature view we have realized that there is a need at proper management of the fish populations of the Marine Protected Areas.

So, if we do that together to bring up one the natural values of our Marines Areas and secondly to bring up again restore a bit the fish

populations for their economic values I think that we will have benefit from both sides. I think it is the earlier we do it together the better. So I can support Germany as well for organizing this meeting, hosting this meeting and we will convey that message to our colleague.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

The Netherlands please have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS: Thank you, Chair.

Just to be brief I support your proposal and I accept the invitation done by Germany very much. The funny thing is that the Fisheries Director, the Water Director in the Netherlands will be my colleague in a few months, because we in a few months in the same Directorate General. So we will come as colleagues together to Germany.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

Finland, please, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Regarding to conclusions the possible bullet points you have mentioned seem quite okay but I think that one or two concise conclusions recognizing the importance to enhance the collaboration between Nature Conservation and Fisheries would be enough. No to prolong the discussion too much on the conclusions.

Then, regarding this possible meeting between Nature Directors and Fisheries Directors if Sweden is really going to organize such kind

of meeting on Baltic Sea we should only participate on that. We would be happy to receive that kind of invitation.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you.

May I ask the Commission since there are no other flags if there are some comments on this?

Thank you.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Yes, thank you.

Well I think that this discussion has led to very good conclusions, Chairman.

First of all there not one but already two meetings which will be organized, one for the North Sea, for this Chevening Group and one for the Baltic Sea bringing together both sides Fisheries and Nature Directors and this is extremely good to hear. Of course if these meeting decide to invite the Commission, the Commission will participate but as I mentioned before these are member states meetings in the first place and whatever conclusion will be written down we will of course take them on board with our colleagues in Mare in order to reflect the as speedily as possible in the guidelines.

However, just one word of caution. The guidelines will no be finalized at least for the Chevening Group Action, joint resolution because this will come within six months, maybe six months having started already sometime ago when the first meeting took place. So it could be that we are late for that one before presenting draft guidance but we can in any case share whatever will in this draft guidance.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

Personally I think that the discussion was very, very positive even if we had two initially different notes as a basis for discussion. I think that we have a common understanding about the need for cooperation. I think that the need for cooperation exists at all levels.

So, we will try, we will make the maximum out of the existing structures. Nobody wants a separate structure that was clarified and will try to draft in a shorter way, more operational way if possible the points I mentioned as conclusions. We will add them at the end of the document, we will send to you for your comments, with the deadline of the two weeks and hopefully at the end we will have a document agreeable by all of us at the level of the Nature Directors and this will help us to make the step forward for the next meetings and for the implementation at home which is the major objective of course of all these commitments. We are not just piling up commitments or papers. The important thing is to facilitate ourselves and our colleagues in implementation.

So, I think that with this more or less we can conclude this agenda item as well and since we proceeded in a quick manner as regards to the other points, Target 1, Target 2 we have already discussed the coffee it is outside but I think that we don't need to break for coffee. We can conclude the meeting and then have our coffee relax a little bit and of course meet again for the dinner.

So, I you agree I will proceed with the... yes, of course. Go ahead Netherlands, you have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS: Just one small announcement.

My Government established last week a Nature Vision for the Netherlands with relations to European and World Issues and I suggested to my colleague from Italy to put it on the Agenda for our next meeting to discuss with each other some of the issues raised in this Nature Vision. It's now only in Dutch so I won't give to you except some neighbor countries maybe, but I will send it to you in a few weeks in English.

Thank you.

A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much.

We are glad to share the experience of the other member states,

Thank you.

The Commission please has the floor.

PIA BUCELLA (DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE B NATURAL CAPITAL (ENVB), EUROPEAN COMMISSION): Well, thank you.

That is a very good initiative also because I want to thank you, Chairman, I'm leaving right now I fear I might be late otherwise. This was very positive, very constructive meeting for us. We are taking back a lot from to the Commission, to Brussels to work on.

We would want to thank everybody. Personally I want to share with you that I don't mind having different views from time to time and I want to share only the good, the common views to the outside world and where we have divergences I prefer that we wait until we can reach common views.

So, thank you very much again.



A. MOURMOURI (DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE): Thank you very much, Pia.

Have a nice trip back you and Francois. There are two colleagues from the Commission remaining with us until the end. Have a nice trip too Eugenio. Untill the next time. All right.

Now, to conclude very, very briefly I would also like to thank you all very, very much for these fruitful discussions and very interesting and I would say positive also meeting. We think that we have contributed a little bit to building the process and we would like to thank you all, for your participation, for your presentations, for your comments. In particular our colleagues from the Commission. They are very, very helpful always and I would like to thank them for this.

We are looking forward to receive from your side, your comments and final approval on the conclusions which will be the outcome of us all. What would be our wish is to manage at a certain moment to attain the objectives of this famous Biodiversity Strategy and all the commitments we have made.

Negotiations are one thing. When we manage to conclude negotiations we are happy but what is most important is what follows. How we will implement what we are committing ourselves in.

So, hopefully with the help of everybody an with the efforts we are doing inside each one of our countries with our colleagues who are not present around this table sometimes and very often from other Authorities, other Ministries hopefully one day will manage to implement what we are discussing and committing ourselves in.

I would like and allow me to do so to express my personal thanks to my team. You have seen some of them, you have not seen the others. I had actually two teams. One team was the special service for



coordination of environmental projects as we call it and they were the colleagues who have helped us very, very much with the logistics. Without them we wouldn't have managed to have this meeting. We wouldn't have the excursions, we wouldn't have the dinner of yesterday evening, etc. They managed to do all the practical things for us and I'm really grateful to them. Unfortunately today they are not present.

Then I have the other team which is the Nature team and you have four Representatives here. I think that you all know that the champion behind this meeting was Eleni. So, Eleni is as you know our Natura and Habitat Representative. She is assisted and is cooperating with Christina and you have met her maybe or you will meet her because she is dealing with the CBD. So, behind the scenes of the tables they are cooperating. Of course they have the support of the Head of Unit Monica Skaltsa and the support of their Director who was sitting here yesterday, Rebecca Batmanoglou.

So, this is the team dealing with the Nature issues. I wanted you to know that they are working in this field because I'm in this post today net time I don't know in which post I will be or where I will be. I have chaired the meeting all right but let's say I'm giving the moral support and maybe some guidance, but they are doing the work and I would like to express my appreciation for their work they are doing.

So many, many thanks to my colleagues and to all of you. Thank you and I hope to see you also in the next meeting. In particular I hope that we will do a good job together as Representatives and inside our countries.

Enjoy the coffee, enjoy the dinner and if I do not see some of you have a nice trip back. Please do not forget to send us your replies to the draft conclusions we will send.

Thanks again.



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