



Institute for
European
Environmental
Policy

European Parliament COMAGRI Hearing on Conservation of agricultural biodiversity

Panel 2: What tools for the European Agriculture to achieve the
biodiversity strategy goals? 11 January 2021

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Outline

- State of play- facts and figures
- Current CAP performance vis-à-vis Biodiversity strategy 2020
- Tracking biodiversity expenditure from the CAP
- Recommendations
- Last thoughts- towards better alignment in 2030?

State of play- state of the environment



Land-use management is vital for sustainable resource use and delivery of ecosystem services.



Europe is at risk of not meeting the 7th EAP objective of managing land sustainably and reaching no net land take by 2050.



The impact of Europe's alarming rate of biodiversity loss is as catastrophic as climate change.



The pressures on and threats to all terrestrial species, habitats and ecosystems most frequently reported by Member States are associated with agriculture.

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Europe's environment is at a tipping point. We have a narrow window of opportunity in the next decade to scale up measures to protect nature, lessen the impacts of climate change and radically reduce our consumption of natural resources.

Land Policy Director, EEA Executive Director

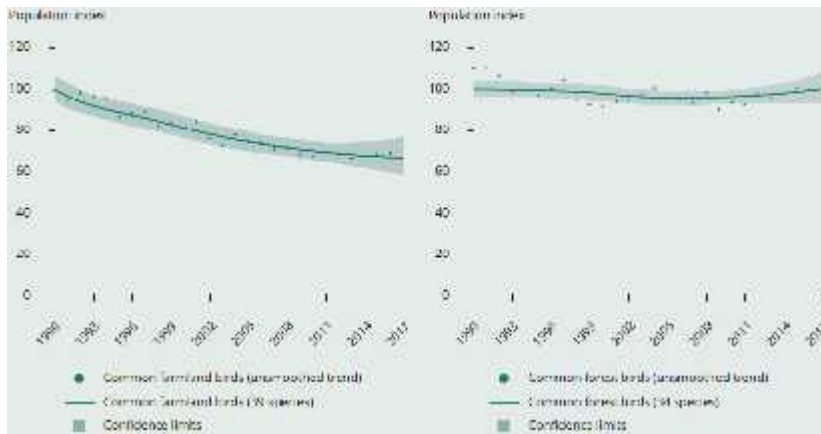
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- Current agricultural activities are having major negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems as well as climate change

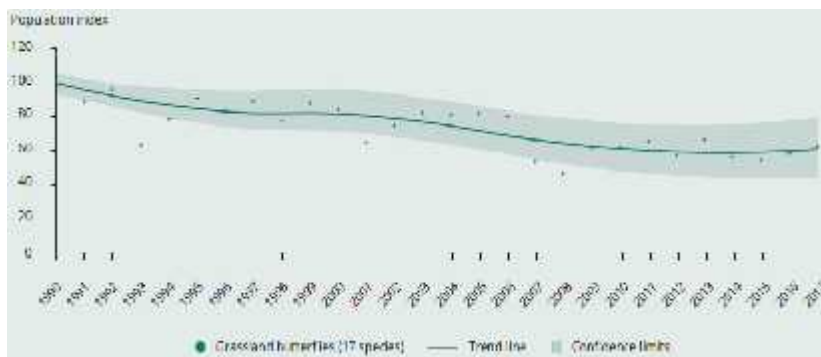
Source: EEA (2020) State of the Environment Report

State of play- Abundance and distribution of relevant species

Common Farmland Birds Index



Grassland butterflies Index



Key Trends 1990-2017

- 32% decline in common farmland bird numbers*
- Grassland butterflies have declined by 39%**

*Based on results of bird population monitoring schemes in 26 MS

**Based on results of butterfly populations in 15 MS

Source: EEA (2020)

State of play-agriculture and biodiversity

- Agricultural and forestry ecosystems are still declining at a rapid rate
- Agricultural intensification, land abandonment, and intensively managed forests continue to be key threats to biodiversity



Current CAP coherence with BHD and EU Biodiversity Strategy

Strategy

EU level

- Most of the CAP instruments and measures are potentially coherent with other related EU and national policies relevant for biodiversity
- Measures with the highest coherence are the ESPG measure, M10, M12, M15, M11 and M16
- Some other instruments and measures have the potential to be both coherent and incoherent with biodiversity needs, depending on how they are implemented, including direct payments, some RDP measures and most notably VCS

Member State level

- RDPs, and especially M10, are coherent with biodiversity priorities (taking into account PAFs and NBAPS to some extent) in most case study Member States
- Some decisions on Pillar 1 instruments, especially the very limited ESPG designation outside Natura 2000 areas, conflict with biodiversity needs*

*Source: Alliance Environnement (2019)

Measure	Birds & Habitats Directives	EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020				
		Target 3a (Agriculture)			Target 3b (Forests)	
		Action 8: Enhance CAP direct payments	Action 9: Better target Rural Development	Action 10: genetic diversity	Action 11: Encourage forest conservation	Action 12: Biodiversity measures in forest plans
FAS	M	M		+1	+1	+1
XC	+1	+1	+1	0	NA	NA
BPS/SAPS	M	M	0	+1	NA	NA
CD	M	+1	0	NA	NA	NA
PG	+1	+1	0	0	NA	NA
ESPG	+1	+1	0	+1	NA	NA
EFA	M	+1	0	0	NA	NA
VCS	M	M	0	+1	NA	NA
SFS	M	M	0	+1	NA	NA
M1	M	M	M	+1	+1	+1
M2	M	M	M	+1	+1	+1
M4	M	0	M	+1	NA	NA
M8	M	NA	M	NA	M	M
M10	+1	0	+1	+1	NA	NA
M11	+1	0	+1	+1	NA	NA
M13	M	M	0	+1	NA	NA
M12	+1	0	+1	+1	+1	+1
M15	+1	NA	NA	NA	+1	+1
M16	+1	0	+1	+1	+1	+1

Source: Own compilation based on expert judgement

Legend: -1 (red) = contradicts or competes; 0 (blue) = neutral or no particular association; +1 (green) = positive or synergistic; M (amber) = mixed; (white) = inconclusive assessment; NA (white) = not applicable. XC=cross compliance referring to SMRs 2 and 3 and GAEC 7, E2= eligibility rules, PC permanent crop

Current CAP performance- expenditures (P2)

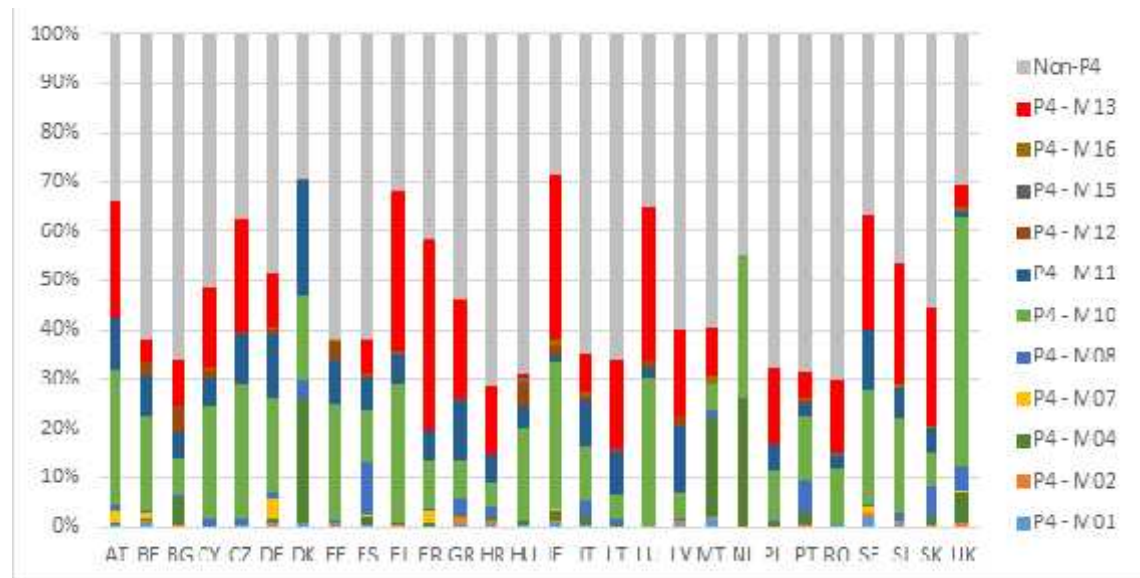
- Member States allocated almost 47% of their Pillar 2 budget to Priority 4 on average
- Greatest proportion of the P4 spending was allocated to the AECM (M10)- more than a third to ANCs (35,2%)
- Since 2016 MS have increased the amount programmed to P4 by about 3% *

Pitfalls:

- monitoring not broken down per sub priorities
- ANCs: can have indirect environmental/biodiversity benefits but also perverse ones
- No clear idea about the actual impact/quality of the spending

* Source: Alliance Environnement (2019)

Planned Priority 4 expenditure broken down by measure per MS



Source: European Commission, European Structural and Investment Funds, ESIF 2014-2020 Finance planned details. Notes: Proportion of spending allocated to Priority 4 under Pillar 2 gives an indication of the biodiversity focussed expenditure in each MS. However, Priority 4 can also relate to expenditure on other ecosystem services, such as water and soils

Tracking biodiversity expenditures from the CAP

Rules:

- 14.8% of CAP Direct Payments (over 36 million) assumed to be contributing to biodiversity
- Pillar 2: 100% rio marker to area 4 expenditures in Pillar 2
- 40% rio marker to area 5E
- ANCs: 0% rio marker

Pitfalls:

- Tracking ignores any potential negative impacts on biodiversity from **some Direct payments (VCS..)**.
- Current tracking method does not distinguish between the different measures within the greening payment, despite their very different relevance for biodiversity conservation (same for Pillar 2 measures)



Recommendations

- Biodiversity measures individual schemes needs to be **monitored against specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound objectives, and evaluated in terms of results, coverage and impacts**. An EU reporting system in which these results can be aggregated into common CAP impact indicator under the new PMEF is also needed to support a results-orientated policy
- Flexibility -> led to a **wide array of implementation choices**, both in terms of the instruments and measures applied, their focus and the budget allocated (status quo over ambitious choices)-> **clear objectives and accountability are a prerequisite**
- Environmental authorities' involvement-> when involvement was strong the alignment was much greater-> **fundamental in future CAP**
- Tie **biodiversity tracking clearly** to clear, verifiable, and ideally quantified targets (aligned with biodiversity strategy) for the achievement of biodiversity policy objectives
- Adjust tracking according to **Member States programming of the measures**
- Verify tracking according to programming objectives with the evidence of actual biodiversity relevance



Towards 2030- towards better alignment between CAP and biodiversity strategy?

- Shift the focus of payments and support away from compliance with detailed rules set at the EU level, towards a **focus on performance** -> ***CAP Strategic Plans ***
- New enhanced conditionality
- New opportunities with ecoscheme in Pillar 1
- ANCs out of Pillar 2 minimum spending for the environment



Towards 2030- Green Deal objectives

EU Farm to Fork Strategy

50% reduction in the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and in the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030

At least a 50% reduction in nutrient losses while ensuring no decrease in soil fertility by 2030 – meaning at least a 20% reduction in the use of fertilisers

At least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030

EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030

At least 10% of agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features

Increased uptake of agro-forestry practices

Reverse the decline of genetic diversity

Reverse the decline of pollinators

Step up efforts to protect soil fertility, reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter

Plant 3 billion trees in the EU

Key role for CAP

Structured Dialogue between
Commission & MSs



“National values”



Last thoughts

- No specific link made between GD objectives and CAP Strategic plans by co-legislators
- Level of conditionality requirements reduced
- ANCs back in minimum spending for the environment
- ...-> missed opportunity ?





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Thank you for your attention !

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