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FOR PROTECTION OF THE BALTIC SEA ENVIRONMENT



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CAN
Europe



José Manuel Durão Barroso
President of the European Commission
1049 Brussels
Belgium

RE: Roadmap for the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies

Brussels, March 17th 2011

Dear President Barroso,

We are deeply concerned that the European Commission has failed to live up to its own commitments and ignored calls from the European Council and the European Parliament by not publishing the roadmap for the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies. It is regrettable that public funds continue to be used to subsidise environmentally harmful activities.

The EU has repeatedly committed to removing environmentally damaging subsidies internationally¹. At EU-level, the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy requested, in 2006, that the Commission put forward a roadmap for the sector-by-sector elimination of such subsidies by 2008.² The Commission reiterated this commitment in the mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme in 2007.³ The Europe 2020 Strategy also emphasises that “at national level, Member States will need to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, limiting exceptions to people with social needs”.⁴

In 2009, the Council again asked the Commission to review, as a matter of urgency, sector by sector, subsidies that have considerable negative effects on the environment, including the EU climate and energy targets, and are incompatible with sustainable development with a view to gradually eliminating them.⁵ Moreover, in December 2010, the Council renewed their longstanding request for a roadmap to eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies.⁶ These repeated requests for such a roadmap indicate that the Member States would greatly appreciate guidance from the Commission, particularly in the context of the fiscal consolidation many EU Member States will undertake in the coming months.

Also the European Parliament has urged “the Commission to put forward, in keeping with the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, and as a matter of urgency, a Road Map for the sector-

¹ For instance in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, agreed by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in October 2010, and the G20’s declaration in Pittsburgh in 2009.

² EC (2006): Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

³ COM(2007)225 final.

⁴ COM(2010)2020 final.

⁵ Council Conclusions 2968th Environment Council meeting in Luxembourg, 21st October 2009.

⁶ Council Conclusions 3061st Environment Council meeting in Brussels, 20th December 2010.

by-sector reform of subsidies that have a considerable negative impact on the environment, with a view to gradually eliminating them".⁷

The undersigned organisations strongly support this demand and are convinced that only a roadmap can ensure a harmonised approach to eliminating environmental harmful subsidies. Currently, discussions on a new funding period and major legislative reforms, such as the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy, are advancing without any apparent analysis of the environmental effects of the funding instruments⁸. However, a prerequisite for eliminating harmful subsidies is an agreement on their definition.

In light of the numerous, strong commitments by the Commission and the requests by Council and the European Parliament briefly described above, we now call on the Commission, under your leadership, to present a roadmap for sector-based efforts to eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies without further delay and to ensure its implementation by all means possible.

We would be pleased to discuss this subject in a face to face meeting and look forward to your reply. We will be sending this letter for information to relevant Commissioners, representatives of Member States and Members of the European Parliament. In view of the public interest in this matter, we will be making this letter available to the media in the coming days.

Yours sincerely,



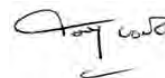
Uta Bellion
Director EU Marine Programme
Pew Environment Group



Angelo Caserta
Regional Director
BirdLife Europe



Mahi Sideridou
Deputy Director European Unit
Greenpeace



Tony Long
Director European Policy Office
WWF



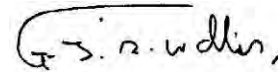
Christian Kjaer
Chief Executive Officer
European Wind Energy
Association



Dr. Anselm Görres
Director
Green Budget Europe



Jos Dings
Director
Transport & Environment



Stewart Wallis
Executive Director
nef



Samuel Martín-Sosa
Director
Ecologistas en Acción



Niki Sporrang
Director
Fisheries Secretariat



Monica Verbeek
Executive Director
Seas at Risk



Jean-Philippe Palasi
Director for EU Policy
Conservation International Europe

⁷ INI/2009/2152: 6th May 2010.

⁸ DG Environment has commissioned a study (Contract 07.0307/2008/514349/ETU/G1) providing methodology for identification, assessment and quantification of environmentally harmful subsidies, but it does not have an official status.

Jack Thurston
Executive Director
EU Transparency and Co-
founder of farmsubsidy.org and
fishsubsidy.org

Beatrice Gorez
Coordinator
Coalition for Fair Fisheries
Arrangements (CFFA)

Matt Shardlow
Chief Executive
Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation
Trust

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Hans Joosten
Secretary-General
International Mire Conservation
Group

Hélène Connor
Chairman and Director General
HELIO International

Zdenek Vermouzek
Director
Czech Society for Ornithology

Asunción Ruiz Guijosa
Chief Executive Officer
SEO/BirdLife

Hubert Weinzierl
President
Deutscher Naturschutzring

Michael Borch Grell
Head of Conservation and
Science
Dansk Ornitologisk Forening -
BirdLife Denmark

Marion Hammerl
Chief Executive Officer
Internationale Bodensee - Stiftung
President
Global Nature Fund

Angel Juarez Almendros
Director
Mediterrània - CIE

Damian Ludewig
Chief Executive Officer
Forum Ökologisch-Soziale
Marktwirtschaft e.V. (FÖS)

Zoltan Kun
Executive Director
PAN Parks Foundation

Veronika Kiss
Interim General Secretary
CEEweb for Biodiversity

M. Probonas
President
Hellenic Ornithological Society

Máire Treasa O Shea
General Manager
Oceanworld Aquarium

Dr. Onno Gross
President
DEEPWAVE - Organisation for
Marine Conservation

Jacek Bożek
President
Klub Gaja

Roberto Alvaro
Director
MAREFONDUM

Fabio A. Siniscalchi
President
Oceanus

Giuseppe Notarbartolo di
Sciara, Ph.D.
President
Tethys Research Institute

Dr. Josef Settele
Chairman
Butterfly Conservation Europe

Matti Riihimäki
Director
BirdLife Finland

Fabian Ritter
President
M.E.E.R. e.V.

Christoph Bals
Political Director
Germanwatch

Dr. Georg Heiss
Director
Reef Check e.V.

Gaoussou Gueye
Director
SG Caopa

Helen Darbshire
Director
Access Info Europe

Epiphane Edoh Edjossan
Secretary General
CERAD International

Rollo Gebhard
President
Gesellschaft zur Rettung der
Delphine e.V.

Joyce D'Silva
Director of Public Affairs
Compassion in World Farming

Dr M J Clarke
Chief Executive
Royal Society for the Protection of
Birds

Miquel Ortega Cerdà
Project manager
Ent, Environment and
Management

René la Cour Sell
Chief Executive Officer
The Danish Society For Nature
Conservation

Dr. Ruth McGrath
Director
VOICE

Suzanne Pleydell
Director
Project AWARE Foundation
Europe - Middle East - Africa

Eleonora de Sabata
President
MedSharks

Ana Barreira
Director
IIDMA

Alan Lauder
Chief Executive Officer
BirdWatch Ireland

Emer O'Siochru
Director
Smart Taxes

Lutz Ribbe
Director
EuroNatur

Brigitte Peter
Managing Director
Action Campaign for Endangered
Species

Eelco Leemans
Director
The North Sea Foundation

Sauro Pari
Director
Fondazione Cetacea

Christian Baumgartner
Secretary General
Naturefriends International

Gunnar Norén
Executive secretary
Coalition Clean Baltic

Dr. Paddy Walker
Chair
Nederlandse Elasmobranchen
Vereniging

Magda Stoczkiewicz
Director
Friends of the Earth Europe

Dr. Christoph Schmidt
Director
Pro Wildlife e.V.

Petru Botnaru
President
Terra 1530

Michael J. Sealey
President
Iberian Biodiversity

Rainer Baake
Executive Director
German Environmental Aid
(Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.)

Elena D'Andrea
Director
LIPU - BirdLife Italy

Leif Miller
Executive Director
NABU

James Thornton
Chief Executive Officer
ClientEarth

Dr. Miroslav Patrik
Chief Executive Officer
Děti Země or Deti Zeme - Children of
the Earth

Gonçalo F. de Carvalho
President
Sciaena - Marine Science and
Cooperation

Ferran Alegre
President
CRAM

Samantha Fanshawe
Director
MCS

Ewa Hajduk
President
Polski Klub Ekologiczny
Gliwice Chapter

Matthew Gianni
Political and Policy Adviser
Deep Sea Conservation
Coalition

Willy Ibens
Chief Executive Officer
Natuurpunt

Prof. Dr. João Joanaz de Melo
President
GEOTA

Philippe Funcken
Director General
Natagora

Michel Métails
Executive Director
LPO - BirdLife France

Mira Stanisławska - Meysztowicz;
President
Our Earth Foundation

Emil Vaklinov
Chairman
Environmental Organization Rhodope

Luís T. Costa
Executive Director
SPEA - Sociedade Portuguesa para o
Estudo das Aves

Howard Wood
Chair
Community of Arran Seabed
Trust

Dennis Kraft
Chairman
Sveriges Ornitologiska Förening

Claire Nouvian
President
BLOOM Association

Miodrag Dakic
President
Center for Environment

Alexandra Cunha
President
Liga para a protecção da
natureza (LPN)

Dr. Nenad Kocic
President
E.A. Vila Zora-Veles

Karin Dubsy
National Coordinator
Coastwatch Ireland

Matthias Duwe
Director
Climate Action Network Europe

Thodoris Tsimpidis
Director
Archipelagos, Institute of
Marine Conservation

Contact on behalf of the above signatories: Uta Bellion ubellion@pewtrusts.org, tel. +32 2 274 16 26