



VIRGINIJUS SINKEVIČIUS
Commissioner for Environment
Oceans and Fisheries

Brussels, 04/08/2020
Ref. Ares (2020) 4375181

Toby Aykroyd
Coordinator
Wild Europe
64 Boulevard Louis Schmidt
Brussels 64-B-1040
BELGIUM
tobyaykroyd@wildeurope.org

Dear Mr Aykroyd,

On behalf of Executive Vice-President Timmermans and of Commissioners Simson and Wojciechowski, I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 14 May, related to the Biodiversity Strategy, bioenergy, forests and nature-based solutions.

The Biodiversity Strategy was adopted on 20 May 2020¹. Concerning **bioenergy**, it states that:

“To mitigate climate and environmental risks created by the increasing use of certain sources for bioenergy, the revised Renewable Energy Directive includes strengthened sustainability criteria. It also promotes the shift to advanced biofuels based on residues and non-reusable and non-recyclable waste. This approach should continue for all forms of bioenergy. The use of whole trees and food and feed crops for energy production – whether produced in the EU or imported – should be minimised.”

To better understand and monitor the potential climate and biodiversity risks, the Commission is assessing the EU and global biomass supply and demand and related sustainability. As part of its increased ambition to protect and restore forest ecosystems, the Commission will publish the results of this work on the use of forest biomass for energy production by the end of 2020. This will inform the Commission’s policymaking, including the review and revision, where necessary, of the level of ambition of the Renewable Energy Directive, the Emissions Trading Scheme, and the Regulation on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) set for 2021.”

In addition, the importance of **old-growth forests** is also raised in the Communication:

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>

“As part of this focus on strict protection, it will be crucial to define, map, monitor and strictly protect all the EU’s remaining primary and old-growth forests. It will also be important to advocate for the same globally and ensure that EU actions do not result in deforestation in other regions of the world. Primary and old-growth forests are the richest forest ecosystems that remove carbon from the atmosphere, while storing significant carbon stocks. Significant areas of other carbon-rich ecosystems, such as peatlands, grasslands, wetlands, mangroves and seagrass meadows should also be strictly protected, taking into account projected shifts in vegetation zones.”

The Communication also raises the importance of **nature-based solutions** for climate mitigation and adaptation, and commits that *“a significant proportion of the 25% of the EU budget dedicated to climate action will be invested on biodiversity and nature-based solutions”*, and announces several actions.

Last but not least, as announced in the European Green Deal Communication, the Commission will present in September an impact assessed plan to increase the EU climate ambition. On this basis, relevant legislation, including the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation and the Renewable Energy Directive are likely to be reviewed.

I believe the Biodiversity Strategy is ambitious, with clear objectives and targets. I hope you have a similar opinion and that the Commission can count on your support to implement it.

Yours sincerely,



Virginijus Sinkevičius