Question for written answer E-003078/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Wouter Beke (PPE), Norbert Lins (PPE)

Subject: Simplification of high-impact environmental legislation

The Commission enjoys broad support in screening the EU *acquis* for overlaps and inconsistencies. Simplification is essential, especially where EU legislation complicates permitting procedures for businesses and farmers. Initiatives to simplify permitting under the Clean Industrial Deal, the Affordable Energy Action Plan and the Defence Readiness Omnibus are welcome steps.

Despite their legitimate objectives, EU environmental laws often remain a practical obstacle to sustainable development, legal certainty and investment, particularly in densely populated and fragmented regions. A pragmatic approach is needed to ensure legal certainty, economic development and competitiveness, without questioning environmental objectives.

A call for a simplification package for environmental legislation with a major impact on permitting procedures is therefore justified. Evaluation of, inter alia, the Habitats Directive[1], the Birds Directive[2], the Nature Restoration Regulation[3], the Water Framework Directive[4] and the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive[5] is desirable, with attention paid to socio-economic consequences and disproportionate effects on businesses and agriculture.

1. Does the Commission intend to present a simplification package for environmental legislation with a substantial impact on agriculture and businesses? If so, what are the timeline and approach?

2. Is the Commission willing to evaluate the abovementioned directives and regulations with a view to simplification, including greater scope for socio-economic considerations in permitting?

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[1] Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, pp. 7, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj.
[2] Directive 2009/147/EC of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, pp. 7, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/147/oj.
[3] Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj.
[4] Directive 2000/60/EC of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, pp. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/60/oj.
[5] Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, pp. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/92/oj.