

**Priority question for written answer P-004301/2026/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Practical issues in classifying, protecting and managing habitat types under the Habitats Directive in agriculture and forestry

Beyond the Habitats Directive's fundamental problems – such as outdated annexes, the strict protection of species that are no longer threatened and barriers to key transformation infrastructure – the management of its habitats types has for years been a source of recurring conflicts in the agriculture and forestry sectors. These conflicts are mainly to do with mapping and classification, the resulting management requirements and the management of habitat changes. In particular, in the case of use-dependent habitat types, strict protection provisions, non-deterioration requirements and a failure to take natural dynamics into account can lead to significant conflicts. This concerns hay meadows in particular, but also other open area and woodland habitat types, among others. At the same time, different protection and usage requirements increase the pressures on agricultural land. National and regional solutions have proven insufficient so far.

1. How should Member States deal with classifications that are incorrect, outdated, or altered by natural developments such as climate change, as well as with conflicting objectives, such as bird protection or peatland rewetting?
2. How can protection provisions, non-deterioration requirements and restoration obligation be reconciled with cooperation, voluntary action and the rewarding of services in the protection of nature and species, especially since use-related habitat types can only be protected in the long term through cooperation between agriculture, forestry and nature conservation as well as voluntary measures?
3. What possibilities does the Commission see for safeguarding the conservation status of habitat types through an area-based or overall assessment by qualitatively enhancing existing areas, without adding additional areas?

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