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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.7.2026)

Biodiversity protection in the EU is firmly grounded in the implementation and enforcement of the EU Birds¹ and Habitats Directives² and the Natura 2000 network, among other legal instruments. According to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, any plan or project likely to have a significant negative effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, must be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives and can only be approved if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. Exceptions to this obligation may be accepted under the conditions established in Article 6(4).

Building on this framework, the Nature Restoration Regulation³ delivers on the commitment taken under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030⁴ and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework⁵ by setting legally binding restoration targets across ecosystems. Together with Member States, the Commission will continue to support effective implementation, financing, monitoring and enforcement measures to halt biodiversity loss, restore degraded ecosystems and strengthen the resilience of Europe's natural capital for future generations.

The Commission is currently carrying out a stress test of the Birds and Habitats Directives⁶ as part of its wider initiative on simplification. The stress test aims to evaluate whether the Directives remain fit to achieve their objectives in a cost-efficient way, while maintaining their ambition and high standards of nature conservation. The results – planned for end 2026 – will form the basis for the Commission to decide on the appropriate follow up.

¹ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7–25.

² 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, p. 7–50.

³ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024.

⁴ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en.

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>.

⁶ https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/nature-and-biodiversity/stress-test-birds-and-habitats-directives_en.