

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000447/26
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D)
(4 February 2026)**

Subject: Commission's guarantees against attempts to weaken the EU's environmental and climate *acquis*

The EPP's recent leaders' retreat in Zagreb saw the party adopt its political priorities for 2026. Those priorities reorientate the European Green Deal, making environmental and climate protection secondary to competitiveness objectives, industrial interests and sectoral demands. Key pieces of legislation such as the Nature Restoration Law, the Natura 2000 network, the Habitats Directive, the Nitrates Directive and the Water Framework Directive are presented as frameworks that should be simplified or applied more flexibly.

Given that those rules safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems, are crucial to ensuring safe drinking water, food security, public health and climate resilience, and form the foundation of the EU's environmental and climate *acquis*:

1. Does the Commission reaffirm its commitment to not reopen or weaken the Nature Restoration Law, the Habitats Directive and the Natura 2000 network due to pressure from productive sectors and conservative groups?
2. Does the Commission guarantee that any processes evaluating the Nitrates Directive and the Water Framework Directive will ensure that their levels of environmental and health protection are maintained without ambitions being scaled back?
3. Does the Commission undertake both to not use the regulatory 'simplification' agenda to reduce substantive obligations with regard to environmental and climate protection, and to uphold the principle of non-regression with respect to European standards?

Submitted: 4.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(1 April 2026)**

Protecting Europe's environment is imperative for prosperity and competitiveness, health and well-being of Europeans. Economic resilience and strategic autonomy depend on the environment and the availability of sufficient, clean natural resources. Implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation ⁽¹⁾ is just starting and it is too early to draw lessons on its impact.

As stated in the environment omnibus communication ⁽²⁾, the Commission will intensify its support to Member States and regional authorities preparing draft national restoration plans.

It will work with Member States and stakeholders to consider additional measures in secondary legislation, support affected parties, attract investment, and reduce reporting burdens.

It will stress-test the Birds ⁽³⁾ and Habitats ⁽⁴⁾ Directives in 2026, considering *inter alia* climate change, food security, competitiveness, resilience, evolving case law and the need for legal certainty.

The Commission will complete the evaluation of the Nitrates Directive ⁽⁵⁾. Following the REsource EU Action Plan ⁽⁶⁾ and the environment omnibus communication the Commission will review and revise the Water Framework Directive ⁽⁷⁾ building on stakeholders' input and experiences in Member States, emphasising simplification and the removal of potential bottlenecks to promote circularity and secure access to critical raw materials in the EU, while protecting the environment and human health.

The Commission remains firmly committed to the EU's environmental and climate objectives ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ 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.

⁽²⁾ COM(2025) 980 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Simplifying for sustainable competitiveness.

⁽³⁾ 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.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.

⁽⁵⁾ Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1-8.

⁽⁶⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/01c448d6-dc93-40d7-9afe-4c2af448d00c_en.

⁽⁷⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1-73, as amended by Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32-35.

⁽⁸⁾ As explained in its answer to Written Question E-004283/2025.