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The effective integration of Community Directives strengthens **the conservation of Biodiversity**

The European Commission is focusing straight for the further integration of policies relating to nature and biodiversity with other important sectoral policies; in fact policies affecting the agricultural sector are inevitably linked to those of water management and those of the maritime and fisheries management, in full compliance with the provisions of the National Strategy on Biodiversity; this is the main topic that we wanted to face in this issue of the Natura 2000 Newsletter.

The implementation of synergies between the objectives and the fulfillments required by the Water Framework Directive (2000/60 / EC), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56 / EC), the Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides (2009/128 / EC) and those of the Directives strictly linked to naturalistic issues, such as the Habitats Directive (92/43 / EEC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147 / EC), is a programmatic action that can no longer be postponed and that will optimize the resources and time required to implement measures to protect and mon-

itor biodiversity, with particular reference to aquatic ecosystems, making the conservation measures within the protected areas and Natura 2000 sites more effective. In this context are included the "Guidelines to address the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water and to reduce the use of plant protection



Credit: Rocco Calvario

products and associated risks in Natura 2000 sites and in natural protected areas" provided by the "National Action Plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products", nearing enactment by joint decree of the Ministries of Agriculture, En-

vironment and Health, on the basis of which regions and autonomous provinces, by February 2016, are called to identify appropriate measures to protect the aquatic environment and Natura 2000 sites.

The Agreement between ISPRA and Environment Ministry, which is described in a special box, concerns the testing of some measures and monitoring actions provided for by the Guidelines in order to provide useful operational guidance.

Another aspect that we wanted to high-

light in this issue of the newsletter is the Fitness Check process of the EU nature legislation claimed by the European Commission, that started an assessment procedure on the degree of implementation of Habitats and Birds Directives, in order to optimize integration and reduce the administrative burdens without lowering standards of protection under the Directives. The European Commission will carry out such an assessment in a complete and transparent way, in consultation with our country, the other Member States and key stakeholders. In spring a public consultation will also be opened via Internet to give the civil society the opportunity to comment on the topic. The process of designation of Sites of Community Interest (SCIs) into Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) is in full evolution, in accordance with Article 4 of the Habitats Directive and Article 3 paragraph 2 of DPR 357/97 and subsequent integrative amendments; the framework reported in Newsletter n. 5 is therefore updated in this issue, reporting the experiences of some regions and provinces that have recently introduced legislation that identify site-specific conservation measures, with procedures and methodologies explained in the Box on this subject. In this issue we report also some "News" on information and topics considered of particular interest. ■

Conservation of freshwater and marine ecosystems: **activate synergies provided by the European Community Directives**

The sustainable use of aquatic and marine ecosystems and biodiversity conservation are priorities of the Community environmental policy framework; the commitments assumed with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Habitats Directive (HD), the Birds Directive (BD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), as well as with the National Strategy on Biodiversity require to enable a real and concrete protection of these ecosystems and the ecosystem services they guarantee.

These directives are closely linked and, in fact, you can generally say that the success of a policy is invariably produced by progress in the others. The benefits of the coordinated implementation of these directives are multiple, such as those arising from the integration of conservation measures planned at site level for habitats and species with those provided for the planning at the scale of the river basin district and vice versa.

The integration of the WFD directives, HD



Credit: Enrico Calvario

The aquatic river (p. 2 SCI Lao River Valley, CS), lacustrine (p. 3 SCI Ventina Lake RI) and marine (p. 5 above: SCI along the coast of the Peloponnese), ecosystems and environments are central for the objectives of conservation and protection of several EU Directives (Water Framework Directive, Pesticides Directive, Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive); they are closely related and the success of one is determined by the progress in the application of the others. The direction taken by the European Commission definitely goes towards strengthening integration and synergies of policies relating to the nature and biodiversity with those of other important intervention sectors. Particular attention is paid to the protection of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention (p. 5 below: WWF Burano Lake, GR)

and BD falls within the framework established by the WFD, which aims to ensure that the planning of the river basin district will contribute to achieving the goals set by other legislation for the protection of water resources and related ecosystems.

The basic elements for the integration of HD, BD Directives and WFD are the Natura 2000 sites (SCIs/SACs and SPAs) and the protected areas, including the Ramsar Zones, where species and habitats of Community interest (i.e. listed in Annex I of the BD and the Annexes I, II, IV and V of the HD) occur:

In compliance with Article 6 and paragraph V of Annex IV of the WFD, these areas must be identified in the "Register of protected areas" as "areas designated for the protection of habitats and species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is important for their protection, including relevant Natura 2000 sites designated under Directive 92/43 / EEC and Directive 79/409 / EEC."

For natural water bodies (i.e. not heavily modified or artificial), included in Natura 2000 sites, protected areas and Ramsar zones listed in "Registers of protected areas", it is expected that the quality objectives established by the WFD (achievement of good status by 2015) are integrated with the objectives defined by the legal instrument under which these areas have been protected (Article 4.1, c of the WFD - Environmental objectives for protected areas).

If the conditions for achieving the good status / ecological potential are not sufficient for the conservation of species and habitats protected by the HD and BD, in the River Basin Management Plan additional measures shall be included to achieve the objectives of the HD and BD Directives.

The WFD provides a framework for identifying objectives and protection measures to be applied, even in the case any divergences may arise.

Indeed, Article 4.2 of the WFD states that in



Credit: Enrico Calvario

the Natura 2000 sites the target most restrictive should be achieved among those established according to the three Directives. For example, if in a Natura 2000 site, there is one species (Annex II HD) or habitat (Annex I HD) needing "high" ecological status of the water body to achieve the favourable conservation status, the goal to achieve for that water body will be "high" instead of "good".

In summary, in these areas:

- the protection goals established by the three Directives must be achieved (Article 4.1, c WFD: "*Member States shall comply with all standards and objectives within 15 years from entry into force of this Directive, unless otherwise provided by the Community legislation under which the single protected areas have been established*");
- monitoring activities integrated in accordance with the three directives must be implemented (Article 8.1 WFD: if PA case "*for protected areas the above monitoring programmes shall be supplemented by those specifications contained in Community legislation under which the individual protected areas have been established.*" - Annex V, point 1.3.5 WFD: "...monitoring shall continue until the areas satisfy the water-related requirements of the legislation under which they are designated");
- the management measures must be integrated and coordinated in order to achieve the objectives referred to in point 1 and

included in the River Basin Management Plan (Article 13 WFD) and in management plans of Natura 2000 sites and of protected areas.

In summary, both HD and BD as well as the WFD aim to protect aquatic ecosystems, ensuring a balance between the protection of water bodies and their associated biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. Therefore, considering what reported in the above articles of the WFD and whereas the implementation of the measures provided for by the WFD can determine a common benefit on biodiversity, it can be stated that there are many possible synergies between the three Directives in order to protect wetlands.

The Marine strategy framework Directive (MSFD) is one of the fundamental regulatory instruments that European Union (EU) has adopted for the protection of the marine environment, its ecosystems and biodiversity. In Italy, it has been transposed into national legislation with the Legislative Decree no. 190/2010 of 13 October 2010.

The main MSFD goal is achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of the marine environment by 2020 and it is expected that:

- 1) marine species and habitats should be protected, the loss of biodiversity due to human activity should be avoided and different biological components have to function in balance;
- 2) the Anthropogenic inputs of substances and energy, including noise, into the ma-

rine environment shall not cause pollution effects.

Such environmental status is to be achieved for each region and marine sub-region identified by the Directive, which indicates the Mediterranean Sea as a marine region with four associated sub-regions: i) Western Mediterranean, ii) Adriatic, iii) Ionian and central Mediterranean, iv) Aegean and Levant Sea.

The MSFD fulcrum is represented by marine strategies that should be arranged and implemented by Member States for their marine waters in their respective regions and sub-regions in close cooperation with neighbouring states. In this sense the MSFD identifies a route consisting of five steps that the Member States must put in place for their marine waters based on a

specific schedule:

- Starting assessment of present environmental status and the environmental impact of human activities on it
- Determination of good environmental status
- Definition of a series of environmental goals and associated indicators
- Development and implementation of monitoring programs for on-going assessment of the environmental status, according to environmental targets
- Provision of programs of measures identified for the achievement or maintenance of good environmental status (by 2015), taking into account the socio-economic impact of the proposed measures. The programs should be operational within one year (2016)

With reference to the relationship between MSFD, the BD, the HD and other instruments related to the conservation of the marine environment, Member States are explicitly asked to refer to pre-existing commitments relating to the nature conservation resulting from other laws or international agreements, and to integrate them in their measure programs.

MSFD requirements contribute to achieve the goals of the two directives HD and BD and strengthen its effectiveness. Achieving or maintaining a “good environmental status” (GES) of marine waters implies, in fact, the adoption of appropriate measures for the maintenance or restoration of a “favourable conservation status” for those species and habitats defined in art. 1 of the HD.

Directive	Main objective	Object protection	Environmental conservation objectives
DQA 2000/60/EC	Protection of inland surface waters, transitional, coastal and groundwater and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly dependent on water bodies in terms of water needs.	Water resources and associated ecosystems.	Achieving “Good” ecological status for surface water, and “Good” chemical and quantitative status for groundwater by 2015.
DQSM 2008/56/EC	Protect and restore the ecological balance of seas and Europe oceans and ensure that human activities are carried out in a sustainable manner, so that the present and future generations may benefit from a marine environment biologically rich and dynamic, secure, clean, healthy and productive.	Globality of species, habitats and marine ecosystems.	Achievement or maintenance of <i>Good Environmental Status</i> (GES) of marine environment by 2020.
HABITATS 92/43/EC	Conservation of habitats and species of Community interest.	Species and habitats of Community interest and priority; SCI established for the protection of species of Ann. II and habitats of Ann. I.	Favourable conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest and priority (sp. Ann. II, Ann. IV and V, habitat Ann. I); maintenance or restoration of a favourable conservation status of habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network.
BIRDS 2009/147/EC	Conservation of all species of birds.	All species of birds living in the wild in Europe; SPA established for the protection of sp. Ann. I and regular migratory.	Maintain or adapt the populations of all species of birds living in the wild in Europe to a level corresponding to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements.
PD 2009/128/EC	Ensure and monitor a process of practice change in using pesticides towards forms characterized by greater environmental compatibility and sustainability.	Biodiversity values present in specific areas such as protected areas, Natura 2000 sites, Ramsar sites.	Reduction / elimination of certain pesticides use that can cause problems for Biodiversity in specific areas, such as Natura 2000 sites, protected areas, Ramsar sites.

S. D'Antoni, C. Battisti, Cenni M. and Rossi G.L. (editors), 2011 - Contributions to the protection of wetland biodiversity. Reports ISPRA 153/11



Credit: Rocco Calvario

of the presence in the environment of plant protection products classified as dangerous for the aquatic environment. Among the possible measures are to be contemplated: mitigation, substitution / use limitation / elimination of plant protection products, as well as providing information and training. The Regions and Autonomous Provinces will make the choice taking into account the peculiarities of the territory and its fragility, the type of pressures present and the type of response expected, as well as the ecosystems to safeguard, with particular reference to protected areas, to Natura 2000 sites and Ramsar areas.

A similar consideration can be made in relation to the protection instruments included in the BD.

The main contribution is probably provided by the integration in the Directives HD and BD of the time constraints set for the implementation of MSFD, otherwise absent. Consequently, the goal of maintaining or restoring a favourable conservation status for a species or habitats of Community interest now follows the MSFD timetable, which envisages the implementation of measures developed by Member States by 2016 and the GES realization by 2020.

MSFD provides for an additional and important integration compared with existing obligations under the HD; being addressed to the whole complex of species, habitats and ecosystems, allows, thereby, to fill existing considerable gaps regarding the marine environment in reference to species and habitats listed in the Annexes of the HD.

If in principle the MSFD gives a strengthening also in legal terms to HD and BD, the true extent of this added value is currently difficult to estimate, since it depends on the future implementation and interpretation of possible exceptions provided in MSFD and by the findings of socio-economic

analysis of the measures in place, as well as their feasibility in technical terms.

The Pesticides Directive (PD), 2009/128 / EC has been transposed into national legislation by Legislative Decree n. 150 of 14 August 2012 that, by Article 6, provides for the creation of the “National Action Plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products - (NAP)”, intended to prepare specific protection measures for the aquatic environment.

In particular, it is expected that, taking into account the environmental quality objectives and outcomes of the environmental monitoring carried out under the HD, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, in accordance with the addresses of the Guidelines - presented in the following article - will adopt specific measures for the reduction

In particular, the Ramsar Zones are considered a priority for protection and require a greater level of safeguard. For these areas, the Ministry of the Environment, taking into account the mentioned guidelines, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, heard the Technical and Scientific Council *, in agreement with the Regions, Autonomous Provinces and competent local authorities, should, where possible, identify requirements for the prohibition of pesticides dangerous for aquatic ecosystems, as well as those found as a result of the activities of environmental monitoring, where data are available. ■

* Body constituted pursuant to art. 5 of Decree 150/2012, and consists of representatives of the Ministries (Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Protection of Land and Sea, Health and Economic Development), Regions and members of other public administrations and of science and academia.



Credit: Maria Cristina Sadun

Guidelines for the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water and to reduce the use of plant protection products and related risks in Natura 2000 sites and in protected natural areas.

The “Guidelines for the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water and to reduce the use of plant protection products and associated risks in Natura 2000 sites and protected areas” is a new and important step to implement the NAP (National Action Plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products) following the indications provided for in the section A.5.1 of the same NAP.

The subject is of great interest for the protection of the rich and varied biodiversity found within agro-ecosystems and, finally, after many years of attempts, we could afford to face properly the criticalities de-

rived from a use not always careful of pesticides.

On November 26, 2014, the Technical and Scientific Council, under Article. 5 of Law Decree n. 150/2012, consisting of representatives of the Ministries (Mipaaf, Mattm, Health and Economic Development), Regions, members of other public administrations and of scientific and academic world, after obtaining the advice of the Standing Conference of State-Regions-Autonomous Provinces, forwarded the "Guidelines" to the relevant ministries (Mipaaf, Mattm, Health); the Decree signed jointly by the three ministries will be shortly issued.

It is important to underline that the Guidelines — have been prepared and approved by the deadline, set by the NAP to 13 February 2015, i.e. within one year after its entry into force; they concern measures for the integration of the purposes of Directive 2009/128 / EC with those of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60 / EC, the Habitats Directive 92/43 / EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147 / EC, in order to contribute to the achievement of common goals, except for the obligations and requirements imposed under the specific sector regulations.

The Guidelines are a real “vademecum” to



Credit: Enrico Calvario

The pictures in p. 6 and 7 show agro-systems with no use of pesticides, in which there has been a spectacular flowering of wildflowers; the image of p. 8 (bottom) depicts an area treated with glyphosate herbicide, a component especially dangerous to aquatic ecosystems, engendering a desiccant effect particularly evident. The Guidelines are a support reference for Regions / Autonomous Provinces, Basin Authority / River Basin District, Management Entities of Natura 2000 sites and protected areas, which will have to identify the most appropriate measures for the protection of the areas they manage in order to reduce the risks generated by the use of pesticides on biodiversity, as required by Pesticide Directive.

support Regions and Autonomous Provinces which, together with the Basin Authority / Hydrographic District, the management bodies of Natura 2000 sites and protected areas, will have to identify the most appropriate measures for water protection, in accordance with the provisions of Directive 2000/60 / EC and the Legislative Decree of April 3, 2006, n. 152, and the Habitats and species of Community interest, to be included in the management plans and conservation measures of Natura 2000 sites and protected natural areas.

The Guidelines identify specific measures; Regions and Autonomous Provinces and / or institutions in charge of water protection and protected areas / Natura 2000 sites are responsible for the classification of such measures into "voluntary" or "mandatory"; they deal with the following issues:

- measures to mitigate risks associated with the drift, the runoff and leaching of plant protection products, as well as their limitation/ replacement/elimination in order to protect the aquatic environment and drinking water;
- specific measures of risk mitigation, which can be incorporated into management plans and conservation measures of Natura 2000 sites and protected areas, according to the objectives of protection;
- complementary measures to provide for along with measures of risk reduction.

The Guidelines identified measures aimed to protect aquatic environment and protected areas / Natura 2000 sites and are not binding at this stage; the competent authorities will have to assess the effectiveness of the choice of each measure and the subsequent intervention connotation (mandatory / optional), in relation to the distinctive territorial features and the protection level necessary to achieve the objectives set by the regulations for the protection of water resources, aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity (Directives 2000/60 / EC, 92/43 / EEC, 2009/147 / EC), to reduce the impacts and risks resulting by the use of plant protection products.

The measures mentioned in the document are therefore a list of possible interventions aimed to reduce the risks arising from the use of plant protection products and may cover both measures of risk mitigation, and



measures for restriction/ replacement / elimination of plant protection products in case of specific criticalities.

The choice of measures will have to follow a principle of progressive intervention level, appropriate to the problems found, compared to the risk for human health and the environment and the natural value of the areas involved.

In the Guidelines a set of complementary measures is also envisaged, concerning the protection and conservation of species and habitats of Community interest, training and consulting, addressed to professional users for the proper application of the measures, as well as marketing efforts aimed at the promotion of products made in certain geographical areas with high environmental value, or in respect of production rules regarding systems of quality certification related to specific environmental requirements.

The Guidelines put forward the need to ensure the harmonization of the different instruments of planning and programming in the same territory and this fact is extremely significant.

For this reason, the process of evaluation and selection of measures carried out by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces must involve all the stakeholders who have expertise in the discipline of use of plant protection products, of environment and health protection as well as the management bodies of Natura 2000 sites and of protected natural areas and of the Hydrographic Basin District Authority.

In decision making, that provides for the

coordination of all the regional structures involved and, if appropriate, interregional with reference to certain hydrographic districts, the identification of critical issues with respect to water quality, Natura 2000 sites and natural protected areas will be a priority, to evaluate the methods of intervention and the subsequent selection of measures to be taken with respect to the problems identified.

This choice must be supported by use of accredited and specific databases and information systems, relating to the authorized plant protection products, as envisaged by the NAP, that will be made available by the relevant ministries.

The assessment must take into account the socio-economic impact so that their application does not jeopardize the profitability and competitiveness of agricultural enterprises; the consultation of stakeholders is therefore to be considered essential and part of the process.

Finding Funds to support measures

The Guidelines document also faces the issue of finding the necessary resources to start the suggested measures; they can find support and implementation in various programme areas, which include those financed by the Community Agricultural Policy.

If we choose this option, the channel / financing instrument changes, first of all, according to the type of transaction, depend-

ing on whether it is an investment or management action; the reference articles of Regulation (EU) n. 1305/2013 are n.17, 28, 29 and 30.

In case of an investment with environmental connotations, the financing instrument is represented by the letter d) of Article 17 of the Community Regulation. They are “non-productive investments”, linked to the achievement of agro-environment-climate goals, mostly represented by “ecological infrastructure”, such as the creation of hedges, rows of trees, field margins, stone walls; they are often extremely important intervention in order to encourage biodiversity within the agro-ecosystems.

If it is expected to intervene with a direct action to the ordinary or proactive management from an environmental perspective, the financing instrument, within the CAP, is represented by articles 28 (agro climatic environmental payments) and 29 (organic farming). As those mentioned above, these commitments will be designed as “volunteers.” The intervention may be found, but not necessarily, in the Conservation Measures / Management Plans of Natura 2000 sites or in the Management Plans of Basin Districts, but as voluntary action, even if strongly suggested, and not related to the needs of implementing the relevant Directives. The fact that Measures and Plans include this intervention indicates that its implementation in Natura 2000 sites or in hydrographic basins would have a multiplier effect of the environmental efficacy (e.g. or-

ganic or integrated farming within a Natura 2000 site can give more and wider benefits and can help to enhance the effects of interventions related to the directives).

In all cases in which the type of intervention is planned as part of the Management Plans / Conservation measures of Natura 2000 sites or Management Plans of Basin Districts, or because it is related to mandatory measures as linked to the implementation of the directives 92/43 / EEC, 147/2009 / EC, 2000/60 / EC, or because provided as an additional measure, but compulsory, (the decision is taken by the competent authority on the basis of economic analysis and problems of the territory and protection requirements for biodiversity and water resources), the financial instrument is Article 30, that provides for the supply, respectively, of the so-called Natura 2000 pay-

ments or Basin allowances, offsetting costs or loss of income related to the implementation of the above directives.

Since these commitments are envisaged in the Conservation Measures / Management Plans of Natura 2000 sites or in the Management Plans of basin districts, will be outlined as “mandatory” even if they should be higher than the so-called “baseline” that, in the case of the Natura 2000 payments, consists, among other things, in the Good Agronomic and Environmental Conditions (GAEC), while in the case of Basin allowances consists, among other things, in Acts and by the GAEC of the cross-compliance.

Appropriate Assessment

The interventions within the implementation of the Guidelines must be acknowledged by regional provisions as



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conservation measures for habitats/species of Community interest and included in the Management Plans of Natura 2000 sites, in order to ensure the level of protection required under the Habitats and Birds Directives. Without these conditions, on the basis of an assessment to be made case by case, it is necessary first to verify the absence of significant negative impact on the sites, by the screening required by the appropriate assessment procedure, in Article 5 of DPR n. 357/97 and its regional implementation.

Operational criteria for the selection and application of measures

The scheme proposed by the Guidelines is inspired by the methodology already used in planning and environmental programming, and represents a methodological approach to ensure uniformity of application throughout the national territory, according to a scheme summarized in seven points listed below:

- Identification of criticalities regarding water quality, Natura 2000 sites and protected areas.
- Coordination of regional structures involved in the integration of planning and programming tools (e.g. District management plans, rural development programs, Natura 2000 sites management plans and Protected Natural Areas, Conservation measures, Water Protection Plan, National Irrigation Plan) with the measures identified.
- Interregional coordination on hydrographic district scale to combine planning and programming tools.
- Assessment of the methods of intervention and subsequent choice of the measures to be taken with respect to the problems identified on water bodies or regarding the conservation of species and habitats of Community interest or endemic and / or in danger of extinction, also using scientific and technical reference documents as well as accredited and specific databases and information systems related to authorized plant protection products. The assessment must take into account the socio-economic impact of the measures and the specific conditions

at regional and local levels.

- Consultation of stakeholders.
- Identification of training needs required for the proper application of the measures.
- Implementation of information initiatives aimed at consultants, dealers and users.

The Guidelines directions are reviewed and updated on the proposal of the Technical Scientific Council on the basis of new knowledge in relation to the mitigation of impacts on aquatic ecosystems, water resources and on habitats and species of Community interest. ■

List of measures provided by the Guidelines

A. Measures to reduce the risk arising from the use of plant protection products

Mitigation of risk arising from the phenomenon of drift

1. Realization and Management of an untreated buffer zone.
2. Use of anti-drift nozzles and of spraying machines with anti-drift systems.
3. Hedges and artificial barriers.

Mitigation of risk arising from runoff

4. Implementation and management of a vegetated buffer zone
5. Use of the furrow technique
6. Interventions aimed at containing the runoff of plant protection products due to soil erosion.

Mitigation measures of risk arising from the phenomenon of leaching

7. Limitations and / or replacement of PPPs reporting on the label the obligation to adopt specific mitigation measures for the reduction of leaching.

Measures of limitation, replacement or clearance of pesticides

8. Reduction of the amount of herbicides by means of different utilization strategies.
9. Use limitation of plant protection products reporting on the label the obligation to adopt specific measures to mitigate the risk for non-target organisms.
10. Limitation / Replacement / Clearance of plant protection products to achieve the "good" ecological and chemical status of surface waters.
11. Limitation / Replacement / Clearance of plant protection products to achieve the "good" chemical status of groundwater.
12. Limitation / Replacement / Clearance of plant protection products not subject to environment monitoring activities for surface water and groundwater.
13. Replacement / restriction / Clearance of plant protection products for the protection of species and habitats in order to achieve the conservation objectives under the Habitats Directive 92/43 / EEC and Birds Directive 2009/147 / EC and for the protection of endemic species or at high risk of extinction, of Apoidea and other pollinators and supporting measures

Measures for the limitation of pollution due to pesticides through specific company investment

14. Adoption of systems for the storage and preservation of plant protection products and waste resulting from their use with a high standard of safety.

B. Additional measures

15. Additional measures to increase the safety levels during storage and preservation of plant protection products and waste resulting from their use
16. Additional measures for the protection and conservation of species and habitats of Community interest (under point A.5.8.2 of DM January 22, 2014)
17. Training and specific advice for the proper implementation of the measures
18. Implementation of marketing actions aimed at the promotion of products made in specific geographical areas and / or in respect of production rules.

ISPRA-MATTM agreement on monitoring of measures required by the Guidelines

The Ministry of the Environment, the Protection of Land and Sea (MATTM) has signed a specific agreement for a period of one year, with the Institute for Protection and Environmental Research, (ISPRA), aimed at “Testing the measures provided for by the Guidelines for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products (NAP) and of an index of danger assessment, for the sustainable use of plant protection products in Natura 2000 sites and protected areas.”

The Guidelines are intended to protect as a priority, required by the NAP, the following “target”:

- habitats and species of Community interest related to aquatic ecosystems
- habitats and species of Community interest related to terrestrial ecosystems
- habitat in which there is a need to protect domestic and wild Hymenoptera, moths and other pollinators.

The NAP states also that regions, autonomous provinces and managing institutions of natural protected areas may define additional restrictions on the use of plant protection products for the protection of endemic species or at high risk of extinction and, taking into account the priorities of protecting the aquatic ecosystems internationally ratified by the documents of the Conferences of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention and the Rio Convention, with particular reference to the Ramsar zones whose protection is of priority importance and that require a higher level of preservation.

By February 2016, the MATTM, in concert with the MIPAAF, will listen to the Council and in agreement with the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and local relevant institutions, should define requirements for the prohibition or regulation of pesticides dangerous to aquatic ecosystems, in Ramsar zones.

Under the Convention mentioned above, ISPRA will perform various activities that are briefly described below.

First of all is planned the identification of agricultural areas included in Natura 2000 sites and / or natural protected areas / Ramsar zones where to perform the experiments described later, giving priority to companies that already support experimental projects / research conducted by other agencies (e.g. MIPAAF, Agricultural Research Council – CRA -, Regional agency for environmental pro-

tection -ARPA) or companies already engaged in collaborative projects with the management bodies of protected areas.

The types of crops that will be considered include arable lands, orchards, rice fields and vineyards, because of their availability within the Natura 2000 network and natural protected areas, because they represent substitute habitats for species and / or because their environments are subjected to pesticide treatments.

Before the identification of “experimentation” and “control” fields the environment surrounding the cultivated fields will be

analysed, considering the external agricultural pressure and territorial context, in order to make an assessment of the threats to the species and habitats considered so that it can be assumed that the threat that differentiates the two types of field is constituted by the pesticide treatments. In each of these types of cultivated fields will be identified 2 fields of “control” (treated) and 2 fields of “experimentation” (cultivated with “non-use” or “reduced use” of plant protection products) of about 1 ha each; in particular for arable crops will be identified also 2 fallow fields of “control / untreated”, always of approximately 1 ha each, for the experimentation of the PENAT danger index.

For each type of the selected

crop included in the experimentation, , at least five years from the start of sampling, the following conditions will have to be met:

a) a) in fields of “experimentation”, the use of organic farming methods or methods that provide for a reduced or no-use of plant protection products for crop protection, among those indicated by the Guidelines measures and that are still prior identified among those allowed in organic agriculture, which present less risk to biodiversity:

b) in the fields of “control”, the pesticide treatments for specific crops are carried out following the manner specified on the label and on the basis of the specifications for plant protection.

In the fields of “experimentation” and “control” will be carried out a series of research activities including:

- samplings of plant and animal species deemed potentially sensitive to pesticides, on the basis of their presence in the Natura 2000 site / protected area, such as:

- *Apis mellifera*, *Bombus terrestris*, *Bombus ruderatus*, *Bombus*



The Narcissus of poets *Narcissus poeticus* can form extensive blooms in agro ecosystems pasture of high environmental quality.
Credit: Enrico Calvario.

pascorum scop., *Bombus humilis*, *Bombus Sylvorum*, *Andrena flavins*, *Andrena labialis*, *Andrena ovatula*, *Andrena carbonaria*, *Megachilidae beachella* Curtis, *Megachilidae centucularis*, *Megachilidae variscopa*, *Osmia coerulescens*, *Osmia rufa*, *Osmia cornuta*.

- Lepidoptera: *Phengaris teleius*, *Coenonympha oedippus*, *Lycaena dispar*, *Euphydryas aurina*.
- Odonata: *Coenagrion mercurial*, *Leucorrina pectoralis Sympecma braueri*, *Ophiogomphus cecilia*.
- Crustaceans: *Austropotamobius pallipes*.
- Amphibians: *latastei Rana*, *Pelobates fuscus insubricus*, *Triturus carnifex*, *Bombina variegata*, *Italic frog*, *Urodela*.
- Reptiles: *Emys orbicularis*, *Elaphe quatorlineata*, *Zamenis siculus*, *Zamenis longissima*, *Zamenis lineatus*, *Lacerta bilineata*, *Podarcis muralis*.
- Bats: e.g. *Barbastella barbastellus*, *Myotis spp.*, *Plecotus spp.*, *Rhinolophus spp.*
- Birds: e.g. *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Alauda arvensis*, *Emberiza grille*, *Motacilla flava*, *Hirundo rustica*; *Ardeidae*, *Ciconia spp.* *Numenius spp.*
- Plant species that are key species for habitats protected under the Habitats Directive (e.g. *Azolla spp.*, *Bidens spp.*, *Lemna spp.*, *Cyperaceae*, *Callitriche*, *Isoetes spp.*, *Marsilea spp.*, *Potamogeton spp.*, *Juncaceae*, *Persicaria spp.*, *Hydrocharis spp.*, *Ranunculus spp.*)

- Sampling in channels and / or water bodies adjacent to the selected agricultural plots, of some of the evaluation parameters of the chemical-physical and ecological water status required by the Water Framework Directive (e.g. macroinvertebrates, diatoms, phytoplankton) and of presence, in case of fields of “control”, of used pesticides. Also in fields of “experimentation” and “control” (except for the rice fields) the sampling of soil fauna will be carried out. Samplings of various biotic and abiotic components will be carried out as much as possi-

ble to coincide in time with each other and in pesticide treatments that will be used in fields of “control”. Sampling activities in arable land will be carried out simultaneously with the activities aimed at testing index Natura 2000 Pesticides (Pe.nat 2000), developed under the Convention MATTM-ISPRA which had as subject the “Evaluation of the potential risk of plant protection products on the Natura 2000 areas”. These activities will provide for samples in the fields of “experimentation”, “control” and “control / untreated”.

- Testing of the conceptual model of Penat 2000 index, which takes into account the exposure routes (environmental sectors: water, soil, air, food chain) with reference to potential targets consisting of species and habitats protected under the Habitats Directive. This experimentation will be carried out in arable land within SCIs. For this experimentation, two fields will be selected: one of “experimentation” in which pesticide treatments are performed in the manner specified on the label and on the basis of the plant protection disciplinary, the other of “control / untreated” where there are no agricultural activities, which will have to submit characteristics similar to those of the Penat 2000 experimental field. The parameters that will be sampled in the area of testing and control of Penat 2000 index are:
 - ▶ sampling of surface waters with determination of chemical and chemical-physical parameters;
 - ▶ sampling of groundwater for each piezometer with determination of chemical and chemical-physical parameters well detailed in the Convention;
 - ▶ sampling of soil;
 - ▶ characterization of the soil profile of the ground;
 - ▶ assessment of biodiversity of edaphic invertebrates as bioindicators of the state of naturalness of each soil sample through the application of indices such as e.g. the BQS (Biological Quality of Soil) and / or the relationship Acari Collembola.



Aquatic ecosystems, protected in several respects by the Community Directives, represent important suitable environments for wintering and to stop during migration, for many species of waterfowl; the picture shows Coots *Fulica atra* and Red-crested pochard *Netta rufina* (males and females).
Credit: Enrico Calvario

The activities for the designation of SACs go on, news from regions and provinces; a participated route.

Activities necessary for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by Regions and Provinces continues daily.

The designation of SACs constitutes a fundamental element for the full implementation of the Natura 2000 network as it allows the full enforcement of site specific conservation measures essential for effective network management and for the maintenance of its strategic role aimed at achieving the goal of halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2020; the main innovations acquired during the year 2014 are as follows.

Lazio Region

Lazio Region, by the resolutions of the Regional Government number 886, 887, 888, 889, 890 of 12/16/2014 (one per province), has intended to ensure the implementation of Article n. 4 and n. 6 of the Habitats Directive providing for the designation of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the identification of specific measures for the conservation of natural and semi-natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest present there.

In order to provide for the definition of specific site conservation measures, the Lazio Region has set up a working group within the administration composed of officials of the Infrastructure Environment Directorate, Housing Policies and the Regional Agency for Parks (ARP), experts in Natura 2000.

In order to combine the preservation of habitats and species of Community interest with the economic and productive activities, in accordance with art. 2 of Directive 92/43 / EEC and art. 6 of L.R. 29/97, the Lazio Region has recognized the need to start a participatory process and established the following procedures for consultation with public and private entities territorially concerned by SCIs:

- by March 2015, the public or private entities territorially interested can submit comments by using a specially crafted card downloadable from the website of the Region.
- provinces, municipalities and park authorities territorially relevant can spread the mentioned resolutions and transmit to the Lazio Region observations arising by public subjects, collective and private, who are entitled to by law.

At the end of the preparatory stage with the comments received, the Lazio Region, by resolution of the Government, will proceed to the final adoption of specific site conservation measures to be subsequently forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment, of land and sea protection, in order to issue decrees for designation of SACs.

Liguria Region

The Liguria Region by DGR n. 1459 of November 21, 2014 adopted conservation measures for 27 marine SCIs, of about 9,000 hectares, identified mainly by the presence of the priority habitats *Posidonia oceanica* beds. The distribution area of this habitat (from the coastline up to a maximum of 35-40 meters deep) corresponds with the portion of the sea most affected by human activity (urbanization, drains, ports, landfills, fishing) and consequently, in the last century the *Posidonia* beds have suffered a generalized degradation, up to the entire disappearance along

entire coastal stretches. The phenomenon is aggravated by the particular rate of growth and propagation of the plant, extremely slow and such that the disappearance of the habitats is to be considered an irreversible loss. For these reasons, the Region has conducted extensive studies on the distribution and dynamics of this habitat in connection with the socio-economic reality of the coastal strip enacting specific legislation dedicated to it.

The managing bodies of SCIs adopted the measures taking into account any comments submitted. Also in this case, as in Lazio, a participatory process was set up in order to enable stakeholders to present observations deemed appropriate.

Piemonte Region

By DGR n. 54-7409 of April 7, 2014, in implementation of art. 40 of Law n. 19 of June 29, 2009 (Unified code on the protection of natural areas and biodiversity), the "General conservation measures for the protection of the Natura 2000 network", were approved, then changed by the DGR n. 22-368 of September 29, 2014. These "Measures" consist of a number of provisions, divided into good practices, obligations and general prohibitions, effective for all Natura 2000 sites, together with specific provisions relating to habitat groups constituting prevailing environmental types present in each site. Measures also provide directions for future preparation of site-

specific measures and management plans. In the absence of specific management plans or site-specific conservation measures, they are a reference for the Appropriate Assessment procedure.

Emilia Romagna Region

The Emilia-Romagna has issued General Measures for Conservation SCIs and SPAs by DGR n. 1419/2013 and, again in 2013, has delegated to the provinces, such as managing bodies of the sites, the enactment of specific conservation measures. The picture that emerges is shown below.

• Ravenna Province

The Provincial Council with the Resolution n. 78 of November 26, 2013 has approved management plans with attached Cognitive Framework and Specific Measures of Conservation (SMC) of Natura 2000 sites, as an integral part of the mentioned resolution. Subsequently, the Executive Committee within the Management entity for Parks and Biodiversity - Romagna has approved, in relation to sites concerned, "Integrations-adjustments" to Resolution 78/2013 of the Provincial Council with the Resolution n. 21 of April 28, 2014. Finally, on 20 May, 2014, the Provincial Council with Resolution n. 23 has provided for "Adjustments and integrations to the resolution n.78 of November 26, 2013".

• Piacenza Province

The Province of Piacenza and the Management Authority for the Parks and Biodiversity of Western Emilia (EGPBEO), for sites within the Regional Parks, were called to enact and implement the SMC and Management Plans (MP). The Province and EGPBEO have carried out a specific consultation of stakeholders in order to share the conservation goals, the context of regulation and incentives, the management actions. These instruments (SMC and MP) have been approved by Resolution of the President of the Piacenza Province n. 7 of October 3, 2014; finally, by Resolution of the Provincial Council n. 14 of December 22, 2014 have been modified only



The Crested Lark, *Galerida cristata*, a bird species typical of agro ecosystems. Credit Enrico Calvario

Management Plans for sites or parts of sites of the Natura 2000 of Piacenza area for which the Piacenza Province is competent in management.

• **Reggio Emilia Province**

By resolution of the Provincial Council n. 48 of May 29, 2014 the SMC of 21 Natura 2000 sites falling within the province have been finally approved, as well as the MP of 13 of them.

The Department of Planning has developed, with the support of external specialists coordinated by its engineers, these important instruments for the protection and enhancement of the Natura 2000 sites. Measure 323 of the **Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013** of Emilia-Romagna Region funded the project. Approved conservation measures and management indications are the result, besides of technicians and specialists proposals, of the participation and sharing route that accompanied the work from the early stages and was attended by various institutions (e.g. municipalities, neighbouring provinces, region, the reclamation authority), as well as by a wide audience of stakeholders such as environmental groups, farmers, hunters.

• **Rimini Province**

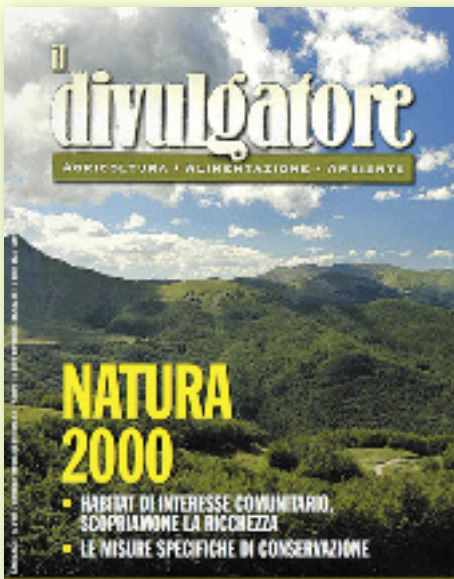
By resolution of the Provincial Council n. 51 of December 18, 2013 SMC and Management Plans for Natura 2000 provincial sites have been approved and then by resolution of the Provincial council n. 83 of April 30, 2014, the province has incorporated the comments received from the Region modifying and approving specific site Management plans and SMC.

• **Bologna Province**

The province of Bologna by the resolutions of the Provincial Council n. 29

of 28 April 2014 and n. 87 of 11 December 2014, issued and approved the SMCs of 17 Sites of Community Importance and Special Protection Areas under its jurisdiction, that integrates the general ones adopted at a regional level. SMCs are directed primarily to avoid a significant disturbance to species and habitats degradation in Natura 2000 sites and to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, taking into account the need to establish a balance between the conservation needs and the socioeconomic ones. The SMCs identified by the Province of Bologna have been articulated in regulations, economic incentives and management guidelines. Within sites are prohibited activities, interventions and the works that may affect the preservation of the natural environment protected, especially with regard to the habitats of Community interest, flora and fauna. For all types of plans, projects and actions (e.g. Plans for Agricultural Use, power lines, drains, plants that produce air emissions, water diversion) the Appropriate Assessment procedure is compulsory even if they fall outside the sites, within a distance from the border defined on a case-by-case analysis, according to the type of activity and the species and habitats concerned. The SMCs are already enforced, are valid indefinitely and are periodically audited by the management body according to the results of the monitoring activities on the conservation status of habitats and species. Local authorities concerned are obliged to conform planning tools, general and sectoral, or regulatory instruments in force with the requirements of specific conservation measures.

For each site a "vademeum" has been also issued, a sort of guide for the citizen who wants to know the content of measures. The cover of each of the 17 vademeum shows a photo that identifies the site; the vademeum follows the site map, the purposes of specific conservation measures, the general requirements and then gets into the heart of the description of the measures.



Cover of one of the "Vademecum" produced by the Province of Bologna and the cover of the latest issue of the magazine "Il divulgatore" made by Agenter Territorial Agency for Food, Agro and Energy Sustainability, that in a monograph issue summarizes information on habitats, the species of Community interest and the conservation measures for Natura 2000 sites in the Province of Bologna. The publications can be downloaded from the website:

<http://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/ambiente/Engine/RAServePG.php/P/338811030412/0/L/0>



SACs designated or to be designated

Region / Autonomous Province	Designation date	N° SACs
Valle d'Aosta Region	07/02/2013	27
Basilicata Region	16/09/2013	20
Friuli Venezia Giulia Region	8/11/2013	56
Autonomous Province of Trento	23/11/2014	123
Lombardia Region	19/5/ 2014	46
Umbria Region	07/08/2014	95

To date 367 SACs in six regions have been designated in Italy.

Three regions (Sicily, Liguria and Marche) are still in the process, with a request aimed at the signing of the decree of designation.

Fitness check – Adequacy assessment of Habitats and Birds Directives: keep attention to the site to make your contribution!

The Commission is gradually progressing to the revision of the complete stock of European legislation to assess their suitability (Fitness check); the procedure aims to provide a critical analysis, based on evidence and concrete figures, of how much European actions are proportionate to their objectives and provide the expected results.

The process started in 2010, when the European Commission announced its intention to work towards a new agenda dedicated to the "smart regulation". Within this process, the assessment is a retrospective phase essential to assess the effects, understand the extent of changes and estimate how much they can be reasonably connected to the action of the European Union.

Based on these assumptions in December 2012, the Commission adopted the "Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT)"; the Commission examined the entire legislation body of the European Union and proposed four categories of activities, one of which is dedicated to a fitness check, which includes a global assessment of the measures adopted, to assess whether the legal framework of a particular sector is up-to-date and suitable for the purpose.

All the most important and complex legislative acts, as Birds and Habitats Directives, have been selected automatically for the fitness check based on the following criteria:

- **Efficacy.** Have the appointed objectives been achieved? What progress has been made so far, are they in line with initial expectations? Which factors have facilitated or hindered the achievement of these objectives? Which is the contribution of the Directives to the preservation of biodiversity in Europe?
- **Efficiency.** Have the costs been reasonable in relation to the benefits obtained? Are there significant differences in costs incurred by the different Member States, which are the reasons? Are availability and access to funding a constraint or a support to the implementation of Directives?
- **Coherence.** Does the policy and EU legislation complement other actions underway or are somehow in contradiction? To what extent do the Directives complement or interact with other sector policies of the EU? How much they support the

creation of equal conditions for economic operators?

- **Relevance.** Are EU actions still necessary? Is there a continued commitment to face the fundamental problems regarding species and habitats of EU conservation interest? How relevant are the Directives for the achievement of sustainable development? How relevant is the European legislation on nature?
- **EU added value.** Can or could similar changes be achieved at National or regional level? Does EU action provide a tangible added value? What would be the situation if there had been no European legislation for nature?

Since the fitness control requires a demonstration covering all environmental, economic and social aspects in relation with the two Nature Directives, the Commission started, in October 2014, a specific initiative for the collection and assessment of information regarding the results obtained and the problems faced both by the European Union and the Member States, in the implementation and integration of the Directives. The study, headed by a Steering Group of the European Commission composed of representatives from different sectors of the Commission, will provide the necessary technical support to deal with the consultation of all Member States and key stakeholders. Another important contribution to fitness control will be represented by the report of the Commission "State of Nature in the EU" (the health of nature in Europe), based on assessments made by the Member States on the conservation status of species and habitats protected by the two Directives, planned for April 2015. The mid-term review of the "European Strategy for Biodiversity" timetabled for the end of this year, will provide additional relevant information.

Consultation activities

Carried out in a spirit of openness and transparency, the fitness control will require an extensive consultation with all Member States and interested groups during the first half of this year aimed to collect the necessary information. Moreover, for twelve weeks starting from April a public consultation in Internet will be opened to give civil society an opportunity to provide their opinion on the matter. At the end of September a high-level conference on the fitness control will be held. This will allow sharing the first results of the



The oaks which grow isolated in the middle of cultivated fields are relevant natural elements, whose presence should be encouraged and preserved as part of agro ecosystems. Credit: Enrico Calvario



The breeding colonies of herons, called heronry, are often located in close proximity to wetlands; they are particularly sensitive to human disturbance and require appropriate conservation measures. In the image a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* hatching. Credit: Enrico Calvario

assessment with the Member States and key stakeholders before finalizing the assessment by the end of this year.

Results

The European Commission will publish the results of the fitness control, as a working document, in early 2016. The results should be a solid base for future initiatives regarding European nature legislation.

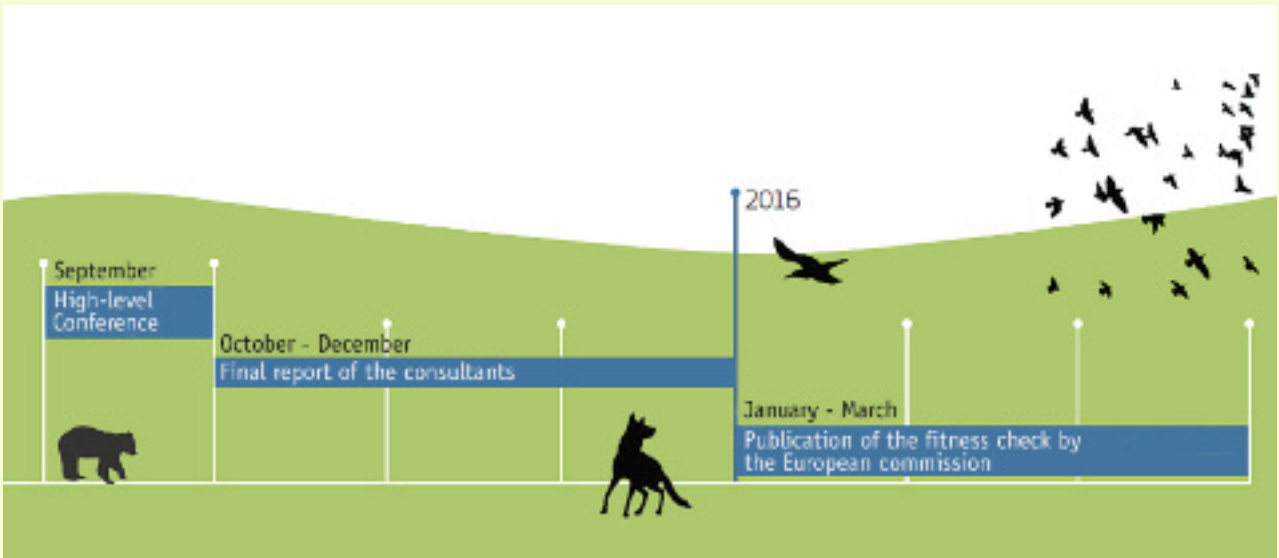
Make your contribution

In January, the European Commission has published the list of documents that will be used for the analysis. If it should appear that an important publication for your country or sector has not been included,

it will be possible to propose inclusion forwarding the proposal to the site: info.NatureDirectivesFitnessCheck@milieu.be, indicating the title of the publication, the authors, the type of document, the link to download it (if available), a brief comment on the content and motivation for which it is deemed relevant to the "fitness check".

You are also invited to attend the public consultation that will be published on the website of the European Commission in early April. Periodic updates on the fitness check will be published on the dedicated website of Environment DG:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/index_en.htm



Steps provided for in the Fitness Check process. **January 2015:** start of consultation with all Member States and stakeholder groups, through a special questionnaire for collecting data / evidence. **April 2015:** launch of a public consultation on Internet for a period of 12 weeks, which will gather views and opinions. **April 2015:** publication of the report "State of Nature in the EU", which will be based on assessments of the conservation status provided by Member States in 2013 for the Birds and Habitats Directives. **June 2015:** in Brussels will be held the "Green Week 2015" focused on nature and biodiversity issues, that will provide opportunities for discussion on topics related to the Fitness Check. (By the end of June 2015, the stage of collecting data / evidence for Fitness Check will be largely completed). **Late September 2015:** in Brussels will be held a conference dedicated to the Fitness Check, where the draft of the assessment results will be shared and discussed with Member States and key stakeholders. Beginning 2016: publication of the Report of the Commission on Fitness Check results.

Taken from "Natura 2000 nature and biodiversity Newsletter n. 37 - January 2015. European Commission

First marine biogeographical seminar in Saint Malo in May 2015.

From 5 to 7 May 2015, the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy will host in Saint Malo the first marine biogeographical seminar. During the seminar, delegates from the 23 member states bordering the sea, experts and stakeholders will discuss the main issues related to the management of marine Natura 2000 sites, including the following:

- conservation objectives and importance of adaptive management
- resolving conflicts between the activities that take place at sea and protection objectives of Natura 2000 sites
- Regional integration of issues affecting Natura 2000

Further information on the meeting in the link:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/events/events-pcoming/157_first_marine_biogeographical_process_seminar_en.htm

In Luxembourg the "Kick off" of the biogeographical seminar Natura 2000 for the Continental, Pannonian, Black Sea and Steppic Regions

From June 29 to July 1, 2015 will be held in Luxembourg the "Kick off Biogeographical Seminar Natura 2000" for the Continental, Pannonian, Black Sea and Steppic regions, to discuss and exchange good practices on the management of 52 habitats identified as representative of the biogeographical regions concerned. Further information on the meeting and the whole biogeographic process to links:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ContinentalPannonianBlackSeaSteppicRegionsHabitatInformationForm>
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm

European Commission Natura 2000 Award - 2015.

January 21 was the deadline for submitting applications for the award "Natura 2000 - 2015" and is now under way the procedure for the evaluation of the applications submitted. Participation is open to all those who are somehow involved in the management or dissemination of the Natura 2000 network (eg. Companies, public and private institutions, trade associations, NGOs, landowners, individuals, schools, universities). In early April, the "short-list" of selected proposals will be presented; in addition to the five existing categories (communication, socio-economic benefits, conservation, conflict resolution, cross-border cooperation and networking) the category "prize of European citizens" has



been added. The winner of this category will be chosen from the selected candidates of the "short-list" by the public vote. The award was created in 2014 in

order to raise awareness and promote the best "good practices" regarding the conservation of nature in Europe, with the aim of bringing to the attention of public the importance of the Natura 2000 network in protecting biodiversity. Winners will be announced during a ceremony to be held in Brussels on May 21, 2015.

In Brussels on 2-3 December 2014, was held the Workshop on the coordinated implementation of EU Directives on Nature, Biodiversity, Sea and Inland Waters.

The workshop was held in Brussels on 2 and 3 December 2014, and the plenary session was opened with a reference to the meeting of the last year that initiated closer cooperation between Member States for the integration of European directives on the topics covered. It was stressed that on the common issues a synergy is needed for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Birds and Habitats Directives, in order to enhance the integrations and avoid repetitions leading to duplication of work to be done. The main goal of the workshop was to discuss the implementation of the various directives in order to identify possible integrations and to create a solid base for the event to be held in Luxembourg in November 2015. Eugenio Duprè (Italian Ministry of the Environment), which represented the Italian Presidency, emphasized the importance of enhancing, through the integration of Directives, cultural and natural patrimony and the value of ecosystem services. The plenary was followed by

three parallel sessions on the following topics:

Session 1 – Goals and assessment, identification of common objectives, identification of potential bottlenecks and practical solutions to possible conflicts

Session 2 - Monitoring, opportunities for the integration of certain aspects of the monitoring and reporting required by the Directives.

Session 3 - Measure program and public participation, integration of "measure programs" and, in some cases, of activities of public consultation required by BD, HD, WFD and MSFD.

During the parallel sessions some case studies on best practices of integration were presented. The Commission selected the cases before the workshop. Additional case studies on the three topics discussed can be presented by Member States by Spring 2015.

More information on the case studies is available on the website:

https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/efbc492a-ef96-4fe0-a1dc-a03a87000837/Parallel%20session%20_NL_Case%20Water%20and%20Nature.pdf

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and in the website of the Ministry of Environment and Territorial Protection at http://www.minambiente.it/home_it/menu.html?mp=/menu/menu_attivita/&m=Rete

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