



# NATURA 2000 ITALIA

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### Financing Natura 2000

- 2** New European Financial Planning 2014-2020
- 4** The CAP Reform; the EAFRD and the Rural Development Programmes
- 6** **Box**  
The point on the Prioritized Action Framework (PAF)
- 8** Life 2014-2020
- 9** **Box**  
The Farenait Life project: communicating Natura 2000 to farmers

### The State of Conservation of Habitats and Species

- 10** The 3rd Report on Article 17 of the Habitats Directive
- 14** **News**
- 15** **Box**  
The National Action Plan on Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (NAP)



## The Community funds 2014-2020 for the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Directives

Starting from the 2007-2013 budget planning, the EC has clearly defined its views on the importance of funding for biodiversity and nature protection in the communication "A budget for Europe" which makes clear that "the effective management and, where necessary, the restoration of Natura 2000 sites are essential for achieving the EU 2020 goal of halting and reversing the biodiversity decline in the Union".

The integrated approach has been chosen to ensure that the management of the sites is part of a broader regional policy, to allow Member

States to set priorities and develop policies and measures reflecting national and regional specificities, to avoid duplication of

EU instruments funding, the administrative complication and transaction costs associated with it.

In this context, the medium-term action of the EU has introduced a range of measures, including the launch of the "UE 2020 strategy for biodiversity." Approved by the Member States and supported by the European Parliament in 2011-2012 it includes 6 objectives and 20 actions. Within the first objective "Fully implement of the EU legislation on the protection of nature," was provided for a specific action "to ensure adequate financing of Natura 2000 sites".

The Commission and the Member States have therefore made a commitment to supply the necessary funds to ensure effective management of the Natura 2000 net-

work, also through the means provided by the next multiannual financial framework 2014-2020.

In December 2011, a document on financing Natura 2000 was presented by the EU Commission, which explained how, through the PAF (Prioritised Action Framework), it is possible to strengthen the financing of Natura 2000 by the coordination of all EU financial instruments and in particular through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund,

the Fisheries Fund, the Life Programme, the Horizon 2020 Research Fund, as well as national funds (see box on page 6).



The Partnership agreement sent to the EC for approval on April 22, 2013, regarding the "natural assets", in line with the objectives of the National Strategy for Biodiversity, the priority for Italy is the implementation of policies to improve the conservation status of the Natura 2000 network and areas of high natural value and to protect biodiversity linked to the rural landscape, including the races of animals and plants in danger of extinction, consistent with the Guidelines for the agricultural biodiversity. The actions aimed at the conservation of «bio-cultural» biodiversity will be implemented with an innovative approach based on the concentration in well identified zones, focusing on the area agro-environmental agreements.

# Financing Natura 2000

## The new European financial planning 2014-2020

In March 2010 the European Commission (EC) launched a strategy called "Europe 2020 - For a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" proposing objectives and general criteria for the 2014-2020 planning, facing major challenges such as the out of the crisis, the globalization of economic relations, climate change, scarcity of resources (water, energy, raw materials), demographic evolution, social conflicts.

Through "Europe 2020", the European Union proposed a strategy focused on certain priorities, centered on innovation and targeted to competitiveness, sustainability and social inclusion, prompting the need to integrate the operations of the Funds also within regional implementation programs. The path traced by the EU to reach the in-

dividual regional programs appoints, with respect to the past, a more important role to the national level and it is therefore necessary for the regions to be able to negotiate in a way aware of the strategic contents set out in the Partnership Agreement between the State and the EU.

To direct the Structural Funds contribution to the achievement of the objectives and targets of Europe 2020, the legislative package proposed by the European Commission has introduced some important changes compared to the previous planning period:

- an integrated approach to territorial development supported by the Structural Funds in response to territorial challenges, to be achieved through ad hoc tools

- coordination between the funds, which is accomplished through a Common Strategic Framework for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

- a thematic concentration on eleven goals linked to the Europe 2020 fund investments and a further concentration of resources on strategic priorities diversified for geographical areas

- a supply chain of enhanced strategic planning which covers the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreements between the Commission and each Member State, and the national and / or regional operational programs

- a strong focus on results, through the strengthening of conditionalities and the emphasis on indicators of impact and outcome.

Later, in November 2012, the Commission services presented the "Position Paper" to start the preparation of the Partnership

Agreement and the Programs in Italy for the period 2014-2020. The paper outlines the main issues and challenges of the country system, to deal with the next planning of EU funds, indicating the intervention priorities and targets to be achieved.

With the document "Methods and objectives for the efficient use of EU Funds" of December 2012, the Minister for Cohesion has launched the comparison between ministries, between regions and social partners in order to obtain cognitive data useful for the definition of the strategy to be included in Partnership



Above and page 3. The transition towards a low-carbon economy is one of the objectives set by the Commission in its Strategy so-called "Europe 2020" and in this sense wind and solar power are a strong possibility but the location of the plants must be appropriate to avoid damaging the existing biodiversity; the procedure of impact assessment is essential to ensure that priority. *Photo E. Calvario*

Agreement. The DDP (Department for Development Policies), August 9, 2013, submitted a first strategic draft of a national framework, in order to start the negotiation with the European Commission services for the signing of the Partnership Agreement.

The regions were then called to contribute to the definition of the strategic contents of the Italian proposal and to develop regional planning in accordance with the structure of the national framework. ■

## The eleven Objectives set by the Commission

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2. Improving access to information and communication technologies, and the use and quality of the same
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors
4. Supporting the transition to a low-carbon emissions economy in all sectors
5. Promoting adaptation to climate change, prevention and risk management
6. Protecting the environment and promoting efficient use of resources
7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting the mobility of workers
9. Promoting social inclusion, fighting poverty and all forms of discrimination
10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11. Strengthening the capacity of public administrations and stakeholders and an efficient public administration, technical assistance



# The CAP reform, the EAFRD and the Rural Development Programmes

## The CAP reform

On 17 December 2013 was approved the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy for the period 2014-2020 which provides for the maintenance of the current two-pillar structure with direct payments and rural development policies. One of the objectives of the CAP 2014-2020 is the consolidation of environmental and climate performance with enhanced synergies between agricultural policies and sustainability also through the value of public goods produced in agriculture.

Among the new instruments for the achievement of these goals is the introduction of a new green payment required for agricultural practices sound for climate and environment, equal to 30% of the entire budget of the CAP direct payments. It is important to note that, given the importance for environmental purposes of Natura 2000 sites, Community legislation provides that the farms in these areas are entitled to payment of the greening provided that they apply the practices in a manner compatible with the objectives of management related to directives 92/43/EEC and

2009/147/EC. It is also noted that the same Habitats and Birds directives continue to be the reference to compliance with certain obligations on the part of beneficiaries of direct payments through the instrument of conditionality of the CAP that has been further consolidated.

## The rural development policy and the regulation n.1305/13

The "mission" of the rural development policy is to contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy by promoting sustainable rural development as a complement to other instruments of the CAP and to the cohesion policy under a Common Strategic Framework (CSF).

The regulation n.1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) confirms, in substance, the structure of previous community planning, increasing integration with other EU funds and providing a more flexible structure for rural development programs,

based on "priority" and "focus area" and a reduction in the number of planned measures.

At the national level, in the framework of rural development planning 2014-2020, there is a total budget of 20.8 billion euros. A significant part of the resources made available should be devoted to the achievement of environmental and climate objectives. The regulation n.1305/2013 provides that, for each rural development program, at least 30% of the total EAFRD contribution should be allocated to the intervention for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and to environmental actions including biodiversity and Natura 2000. This objective will be achieved through the means of compensation for the agro-climatic-environmental sector and organic farming, through the aid for areas facing natural or other specific constraints, and also, making use of forest benefits, and those in favour of Natura 2000 areas and of support for investment regarding climate and environment.

## Priorities for rural development

The rural development policies contribute to achieving the objectives of stimulating the competitiveness of the agricultural sector; to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action and, in addition, to achieve a balanced territorial development of rural areas. These objectives are pursued through six priorities that make explicit the thematic goals of the Common Strategic Framework, which in turn are detailed in 18 "focus areas" or "areas of action" given in Table 1.

The priorities most relevant in the context of environmental and climate policies as well as in reference to the preservation of biodiversity and the Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC are the priorities 4 and 5. Priority 4 is on preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry. This includes the preservation of biodiversity, in reference to Natura 2000 areas and agricultural areas of high natu-

ral value, better management of water resources, including the management of fertilizers and pesticides, and prevention as well as better management of soil.

This priority emphasizes the importance of SCI (SAC) and SAC sites of the Natura 2000 network identified as priority areas for rural development from 2014 to 2020 for the promotion of actions in favour of biodiversity and for the development of eco-agricultural activities in favour of sustainable management of territories.

Priority 5 is related to the efficiency of resources use and development of low-carbon emission economy including energy and water use efficiency in agriculture, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and, in addition, the promotion of conservation and carbon sequestration.

## Opportunities for Natura 2000 and measures (RDP)

The measures provided for by the new rural development regulation has been reduced from 40 to 18 through a process of



In the Regulation 1305/2013 priorities 4 and 5 are the most relevant for the conservation of biodiversity and for the support of Natura 2000 network; agro-ecosystems are important areas for the nesting of several species of birds. Photo F. Cianchi

**Table 1 - Priorities and focus areas of the EAFRD Regulation n. 1305/13**

Priority EAFRD	Focus area
1) Promoting the transfer of knowledge and innovation in agriculture and forestry and in rural areas, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) stimulating innovation, cooperation and development of the knowledge bases in rural areas
	b) strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry, on the one hand, and research and innovation, on the other hand, in order to improve the management and environmental performance
	c) encouraging the life-long learning of life-long and vocational training
2) Strengthening in all regions the farm profitability and agriculture competitiveness in all its forms and promoting innovative technologies for farms and sustainable forest management, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) Improving the economic performance of all farms and encourage the restructuring and modernization of farms
	b) encouraging the entry of appropriately qualified farmers in the agricultural sector and the generational change
3) Promoting the organization of the food chain, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and the management of risks in the agricultural sector, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) improving the competitiveness of better integrating primary producers in the food chain through quality schemes, promotion of local markets and short supply chains
	b) supporting the prevention and management of business risks
4) Preserving, restore and enhance the ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) preserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity, including Natura 2000 areas and areas with natural or other specific constraints, in high nature value farming, as well as of European landscapes
	b) better management of water resources, including the management of fertilizers and pesticides
	c) prevention of soil erosion and better management of the same
5) Encouraging the efficient use of resources and the transition to a low carbon emission and climate resilient economy in agro-food and forestry, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) making more efficient use of water in agriculture
	b) making more efficient energy use in agriculture and food industry
	c) promoting the supply and use of renewable energy sources, by-products, residues and waste materials and other non food raw material for the bio-economy
	d) reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and ammonia from agriculture
	e) promoting the conservation and carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry
6) Work towards social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, with particular regard to the following aspects:	a) facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises and employment
	b) to stimulating local development in rural areas
	c) to promoting accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

reorganization, consolidation and expansion with the introduction of measures ex novo. A new proposal is the possibility of including thematic sub-programs in the rural development planning, which contribute to the achievement of the priorities

in the field of rural development and that they can be related to, among other things, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and biodiversity.

The articles and the key measures of the

Regulation in relation to Natura 2000 n.1305/13 shown in Table 2, are discussed below. With regard to the sustainable management of agro-forestry Natura 2000 areas are proposed proven agro-environment schemes that encourage farmers

and other land managers to implement farming practices compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment and the climate, natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services. The agro-environment-climate payments (Article 28) are a measure that must be implemented within the rural development programs. It supported a collective approach to the management and implementation of this measure, extending the categories of possible beneficiaries to associations of farmers or groups of farmers and other land managers, where this is justified for the achievement of environmental objectives. In addition, the new measure cooperation (Article 35) promotes this type of orientation in reference to common approaches to agro-environment-climate projects and practises. Support for organic farming, unlike in the past, where it was included among the actions related to agro-environment, is now governed by a specific measure (Art. 29). Is reconfirmed, with the inclusion of important simplifications to promote greater implementation of the measure, also the Natura 2000 benefit (Article 30), which provides aid that is supplied to cover additional costs and loss of income due to the constraints imposed by management plans and conservation measures resulting from the enforcement of Directive 2009/147/EC and Directive 92/43/EEC. To highlight also the role of investment in non-productive materials (Article 17) linked to the achievement of the objectives of the agro-environment-climate, including the conservation of the biodiversity of species and habitats, as well as enhancing in terms of public utility the Natura 2000 areas or of other high nature value systems. It is also confirmed the measure for basic services and villages renewal in rural areas (Article 20) which is in charge of supporting the drafting and updating of plans for the protection and management of Natura 2000 sites and other areas of high natural value. This is a very important measure for management planning and monitoring related to Natura 2000 areas, which proposed significant examples of



Promoting the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, agriculture and fisheries and aquaculture is one of the 11 objectives of the EC for the new financial planning 2014-2020. Photo E. Calvario

implementation in the programming period 2007-2013. Also fundamental are tools to promote training and information, advice and assistance to farmers in relation to the opportunities linked to the enhancement of biodiversity and Natura 2000 areas. Finally, the Leader approach, in line with the positive experience carried out, can be a tool for the development of local development strategies aimed at enhancing the environmental resources of the territory of Natura 2000 areas.

## Conclusions

The Common Agricultural Policy has a very important role in contributing to the achievement of environmental objectives related to conservation of biodiver-

sity and the Natura 2000 network. To make full use of the opportunities offered by EU agricultural policy is essential to promote a complementary support between the first and second pillars CAP through the development of integrated packages of measures. In this way, it can be ensured the economic viability of farms through direct payments, and subsequently integrate the financing of specific activities of Natura 2000 management through the RDP to encourage support to extensive farming systems. It is also essential to ensure through rural development programs, the implementation of measures and operations to meet the actual needs of Natura 2000 areas and their consistency with the national strategy for biodiversity and with regional Prioritised Action Frameworks. ■

### The point on the Prioritized Action Framework (PAF)

We all know that European Commission asked Member States to identify priority actions for intervention, with particular reference to Natura 2000, to pass documents into regional programs (PAF) for the period 2014-2020, identifying interventions' priorities to protect habitats and species and to plan, through an integrated approach, the type (Structural Funds, EAFRD, EMFF, ESF, Horizon2020, LIFE, National funds, Private resources) and the amount (in €) of funding needed to implement these priorities. In this sense, the information contained in instruments applied locally to the management of the Natura 2000 sites (management plans, conservation measures) may support public authorities in the choices to be made for investing to the best within the Network itself.

For Natura 2000 then interventions to ensure the protection of species and habitats of Community interest will be then implemented in line with the provisions in the Prioritized Action Framework (PAF), a non mandatory instrument drawn up at regional level, strongly supported by the European Union. To date, of 21 Autonomous Regions and Provinces, 9 PAF (Autonomous Province of Bolzano, Campania, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Lombardy, Sardinia, Tuscany, Umbria, the Autonomous Province of Trento) were sent to the Commission, 4 of which approved by Council Resolution, 6 have been prepared or nearing completion (3 already transmitted informally to MATTM and 3 in the closing phase), while 6 regions have not yet provided an update on the matter.

**Table 2 - List of main articles and of the key measures of the EAFRD Regulation n.1305/13 which can support activities in relation to Natura 2000. Source: Financing Natura 2000 in 2014-2020: Guidance Handbook, Kettunen, M., Torkler, P. and Rayment, M. (2014) European Commission DG Environment (May 2014 draft).**

Art.	Summary description
14	Knowledge transfer and information actions: e.i.e, support for training and acquisition of skills, demonstration activities and information campaigns.
15	Consulting services, relief and assistance to farm management: support for the creation and use of these services and to promote the training of consultants.
16	Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs: covering the costs of participation for the first time by farmers or groups of farmers to quality and certification schemes.
17 (1d)	Investments in fixed assets: non-productive investments linked to the achievement of the agro-climate-environment objectives, including the conservation of biodiversity and the habitats of species, or development in terms of public utility of Natura 2000 sites or other high natural value systems.
18	Restoring agricultural productive potential damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events and introduction of appropriate prevention measures.
19 (1b)	Development of farms and enterprises: investments in the creation and development of non-agricultural activities.
20 (1*)	Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas: drafting and updating of the development plans of municipalities and villages in rural areas and basic municipal services, as well as plans for the protection and management of Natura 2000 sites and other areas of high natural value.
20 (1d)	Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas: investments in rural services and basic infrastructures.
20 (1e)	1e) Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas: investments for public use of recreational facilities, tourist information and tourist infrastructures on a small scale.
20 (1f)	Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas: studies and investments associated with maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of the villages, of the rural landscape and sites of high natural value, including socioeconomic aspects, as well as awareness actions on the environment.
20 (1g)	Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas: investments for the relocation of activities and conversion of buildings or other facilities located in or near rural centres, in order to improve the quality of life or environmental parameters in the area concerned.
21 (1a) 22	Forestry and reforestation.
21 (1b) 23	Establishment of agroforestry systems.
21 (1c, 1d), 24, 25	Prevention and restoration of forests damaged by fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events, including plant diseases, pest infestations and climate risks.
27	Constitution of associations and producer organizations.
28	Agro-environment-climate payments.
29	Biological farming.
30	Natura 2000 compensation and compensations linked to the Water Framework Directive.
31	Compensation to areas facing natural or other specific constraints.
34	Forestry, environmental and climate services and protection of forests.
35	Cooperation, including common approaches to projects and environmental practices and cooperation in the context of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP).
36, 37	Risk management including insurance for the harvest, animals and plants.
<b>Strategic/cross approaches under the EAFRD</b>	
42, 44	LEADER Approach.
51, 52, 53, 54	Funding technical assistance: the European Network for Rural Development, EIP network and the national rural network (Art. 54).

# LIFE 2014-2020

The new Program for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE 2014-2020) of the EU has been fitted with a budget of 3.46 billion euros, recording an increase of 43% compared to the "Life +" 2007-2013.

The objectives of the LIFE program are characterized by:

- Contributing to the shift towards a resource-efficient economy, with lower carbon emissions and resilient to climate change;
- Contributing to the protection and improvement of the environment quality and the interruption and reversal of the process of loss of biodiversity;
- Improving the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental and climate policy and legislation of the EU, to catalyse and promote the integration of environmental and climate objectives into other EU policies;
- Increasing support to the environmental and climate governance at all levels;
- To support the implementation of the Seventh Programme of Action for the Environment (Decision no. 1386/2013/UE of 20.11.2013) "Living well within the limits of our planet," published in the Official Journal of the European Union L354 of 28.12.2013.

LIFE 2014-2020 is divided into Environment sub-programme, with 2.59 billion euros and the climate actions sub-programme with a budget of 864 million Euros.

The first sub-program for Environment will support actions in the following areas:

- "Environment and Resources Efficiency" will try to find more creative solutions to improve the implementation of environmental policy and integrating environmental objectives in other sectors. The priority areas of intervention are priority issues in the field of water; including the marine environment, waste, efficient use of resources (including land and forests) and the green and circular economy, the environment and health, including chemical substances and noise; air quality and emissions, including the urban environment.
- "Nature and Biodiversity": will develop best practices to halt the loss of biodiversity and restore ecosystem services, keeping at the same time as its fulcrum the support for Natura 2000 sites, especially via integrated projects consistent with the priority actions framework of the member States. The thematic priorities relate to the theme of nature, especially to the conservation of habitats and species (including marine habitats and species and species of birds of EU interest) and the whole theme of biodiversity.
- "Environmental Governance and Information" will promote knowledge sharing, dissemination of best practices and a better compliance with the regulations as well as public awareness campaigns. The priority issues to consider are: information campaigns, communications and awareness, activities in support of a process of effective control and measures to promote compliance with the environmental legislation.

Within the sub-program in the field of climate change actions, the eli-

gible activities are related to:

- "Climate change mitigation": will focus on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.
- "Climate change adaptation": for activities aimed at increasing resilience to climate change.
- "Governance and information on climate": for actions that seek to improve awareness, communication, cooperation and dissemination of information on measures of mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

## Rates of co-financing for projects

The maximum rate of co-financing for projects funded as part of the sub-programs for the Environment and Climate Action for the duration of the first multiannual work program will be up to 60% of eligible costs, with the exception of the integrated projects, the assistance projects, preparatory projects and the projects of the Nature and Biodiversity priority area.

The maximum rate of co-financing for projects funded in the framework of the sub-programs for the Environment and Climate Action, for the duration of the second multiannual work program, will be up to 55% of eligible costs, with the exception of the integrated projects, assistance projects, preparatory projects and projects of the Nature and Biodiversity priority area.

The co-financing rate for integrated projects, assistance projects and preparatory projects will be up to 60% of eligible costs for the duration of the LIFE program.

The rate of co-financing for projects funded under the priority sector of the Nature and Biodiversity for the Environment sub-program will be up to 60% of eligible costs (up to 75% of eligible costs relating to priority habitats or priority species or species of birds which funding is considered a priority) for the whole duration of the LIFE program.

## The innovation of the integrated projects

Among the features introduced there is the new "Integrated Projects", designed to be applied on a larger scale and to integrate the various European funds in order to achieve environmental objectives and the protection of biodiversity.

Integrated Projects, in nature sector, will be aimed primarily at national and regional authorities responsible for the management of the Natura 2000 network and will require as a prerequisite the existence of a Regional Planning linking measures of conservation to financing instruments (PAFs).

They are a new type of projects that will improve the implementation of environmental policies and promote their integration with those relating to other sectors, in particular through a coordinated mobilization of other EU funding, national and private, that pursue environmental or climate objectives; they should aim to imple-



## The Farenait Life project: communicating Natura 2000 to farmers

LIFE project fa.re.na.it. - networking for the Natura 2000 in Italy - started at the end of 2011 thanks to the co-financing of the European Commission, the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture and other co-financiers, is about to conclude. The project, realized by CTS (Student and Youth Tourism Centre) in collaboration with Coldiretti, Environment Community, Ispra and the Lombardy Region, is a complex communication campaign aimed to revitalize in rural areas the Natura 2000 and its benefits through the development of communication and training actions addressed to public administrations, farms and schools.

By a survey, carried out in the early months of the project, it was possible to detect the insufficient level of cooperation between the different administrations whose work affects the European ecological network, the poor state of activation and of requests for funds from the RDP to allocate for the conservation of RN2000 and the low level of knowledge of RN2000 and its benefits by the agricultural world.

The survey found that the 78% of the farmers interviewed never heard of the Natura 2000 network, known more in the South (28%) than in the North (21%) and Central (17%). Among those who know RN 2000, only 12% had access to a greater percentage of contribution, while 27% did not make any application for funding. The advantage associated with RN 2000 is mainly to encourage the multifunctionality of agriculture and create market opportunities (39%), while the constraint more perceived is the excessive bureaucracy (58%). Most of those who know RN2000 also believes that farmers who contribute to the conservation of the environment should be rewarded through fiscal benefits (33%) and tax reliefs on fuel or equipment (13%).

On the basis of these results, the first year of the project aimed at providing tools and services to public administrations, available on the site [www.lamiaterravale.it](http://www.lamiaterravale.it), both to support the communication on Natura 2000 network into its territory, and in supporting management and development of Natura 2000 sites, in particular:

- a TOOL KIT containing tools and templates for the communication of RN2000;
- the activation of a "contact point" service, remote information desk for advice and information on issues of management and regulatory compliance;
- the activation of a periodic newsletter service.

Starting from the second year of the project, all regional governments and, in particular, the Councils and Departments responsible for environment and agriculture, have been involved in seminars and workshops, as a first interlocutors in the territory for farmers; this activity helped to establish a collaboration between the Environment and Agriculture Departments in order to reduce possible conflicts and to harmonize and coordinate interventions.

Along with the organization of seminars dedicated to the AP, meetings with the farmers working in the Natura 2000 sites have been held in all regions. The entire cycle of seminars and meetings helped to verify the conditions to be promoted to facilitate "farmers friends of biodiversity" that operate in N2000 sites (if any tools, administrative procedures, tax reliefs, etc.). Proposals and measures deemed necessary have been then collected, according to the AP and local, national and European rural world, in order to overcome the problems and develop Natura 2000 from a structural point of view as well as of communication side. This information will be collected and summarized in a white paper, a document that aims to provide concrete suggestions and proposals for a better management of the ecological network.

From a strictly financial point of view, the necessity for the full establishment of Natura 2000 has emerged, including several measures such as:

- the renegotiation of maximum bonus with the European Commission at the proposal stage of the new regional RDP in order to adapt them to local conditions and needs.
- the definition of a common tool for calculating the compensation Natura 2000 which allows to homogenize and objectively indicate the economic value of the financial contribution;
- the adequate funding of the measures in terms of total share for those dedicated to Natura 2000, which shall be planned in accordance with the Priority Action Plans (PAF);
- funds complementarity. Agriculture within N2000 plays a marginal role in the economy. To make sure that the area is self-supported is necessary to move in multiple directions by promoting the "social" role, not linked to production (multi-functionality), and improving the production environment (working conditions, etc.), as well as the positioning of products within the market.

Extremely important are also those measures directed to simplify procedures for accessing funds, minimizing bureaucracy and time of reimbursement of expenses incurred by farmers or supporting companies with figures of "facilitators" specially setting up as part of the activities of promotion and animation of the PSR, which could lead the Natura 2000 network, and the related measures, to the knowledge of farmers in a capillary and focused way.

The common challenge, that still requires work, is to change the attitude of the rural world toward Natura 2000, informing about the existence, value and benefits of the network and the existing risks to biodiversity and starting from the comparison and active involvement of those who live and work within the agricultural and rural areas.

ment on a large territorial scale, in particular regional, multi-regional, national or transnational, environmental or climatic plans or strategies, provided for the Union legislation on environmental or climate, and should be developed on the basis of other Union acts or processed by the authorities of the Member States primarily in the areas of nature, including the management of the Natura 2000 network, water, waste, air and climate change mitigation and adaptation to them, ensuring at the same time the participation of stakeholders and promoting coordination and mobilization of at least one more source of EU funding, national or private, pertinent. The percentages and the method of financing these projects are still under negotiation.

## Multiannual work program

The multi-annual work program for the period 2014-2017 defines the framework for the implementation of the two sub-LIFE Programs: The subprogram for the environment and the sub-program for Climate Action. The multi-annual work program specifies the indicative allocation of funds among the priorities, types of funding, the subjects of the projects that implement the thematic priorities set out in Annex III of Regulation (EU) No. 1293/2013, the technical methodology for the selection of projects, the criteria for the award of grants, as well as the indicative calendars to call for proposals. The document also describes innovative financial instruments (the instrument for the private financing of energy efficiency and the financing instrument of natural capital), managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), which will be tested in the course of the entire multiannual work program to assess the potential for mobilization of investment in the field of biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, in order to overcome the obstacles that currently hinder the dissemination of projects in these areas. ■

Further information on the following website: <http://www.minambiente.it/pagina/programma-lambiente-e-lazione-il-clima-life-2014-2020>

# The State of Conservation

## The 3rd Report on Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

According to art. 11 of the Habitats Directive, Member States are required to undertake surveillance of the conservation status of habitats (listed in Annex I) and species of Community interest (listed in Annexes II, IV and V), on the whole national territory.

The results of the monitoring shall be submitted to the European Commission in accordance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, which provides that every six years has to be drafted a "National Report" on the state of implementation of the Directive instructions. The data must be reported for each habitat and species at bio-geographical level using the format established by the European Commission that includes a general part with information on the implementation of the Directive, as well as a part on the assessment of the conservation status of habitats and species.

Monitoring the state of conservation is a key for assessing the achievement of than expected in art. 2 of the Birds Directive, namely the achievement for all the bird species to an appropriate level of conservation. Despite the art. 12 of the Birds Directive does not expressly include in national reports on the implementation of the Directive the assessment of the conservation status and trends of species of attachment, the European Commission and the Member States agreed on including these assessments in the reports, up to achieve homogenization and alignment of the processes of monitoring and reporting of the Habitats and Birds Directives.

In 2013, the European Commission has set respectively in June and December the delivery of national reports on the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives, to be completed in accordance with a format largely "approved" for both Directives.

In our country, the 3rd National Report pursuant to ex art. 17 of the Habitats Directive, referring to the period 2007-2012, has been prepared under the coordination of the Nature and Sea Protection Directorate of the Ministry for the Environment, the Land and the Sea (MATTM) and with the technical support of the Institute for the Environment Protection and Research (ISPRA), thanks to a fruitful collaboration between all the key stakeholders involved in management of biodiversity data, that means Regions and Autonomous Provinces, ISPRA and scientific societies. This collaboration has allowed us to collect, process, review and validate an enormous amount of data, and define the assessments on the conservation status needed to fill the format prepared by the European Commission.

All data of the 3rd National Report of the Member States, including Italy, are available online on the "Central Data Repository" of

the European Environment Agency (EEA), or on the relevant page Sinanet (National environmental information system) of ISPRA, while further information and documents on Article. 17 can be found on the website of the European Commission.

A detailed analysis of the information and results of the 3rd Report can be found on the volume realized by ISPRA "Species and habitats of Community interest in Italy: distribution, conservation status and trends", that can also be downloaded from the website of Ministry of Environment.

As to the Report pursuant to art. 12 of the Birds Directive, the building process was conducted in accordance with the procedures and criteria specified in the decree of November 6, 2012 of the Minister of Environment and Protection of Land and Sea and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, with particular reference to involvement of stakeholders (Regions and Autonomous Provinces, Italian Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies, MIPAAF, environmental and hunting associations) in sharing methodologies, in data collection and verification of data processing, carried out always with the technical and scientific ISPRA support.

Data and maps of the National Report art. 12 Birds Directive can also be found on the website of "Central Data Repository" EEA.

National reports of the Birds and Habitats Directives provide the framework, currently the most accurate and updated on the conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest in Italy, covering therefore a strategic importance not only to determine the success of the implementation of EU directives in biodiversity, but also as a reference to identify priorities and critical issues of the next financial planning period 2014-2020 and to measure the achievement of the targets set in the context of EU policies, as well as in the national regulations, with particular reference to the national Strategy and European Strategy for Biodiversity.

The work done and the results of the reports described above and the future prospects of the activities related to the monitoring, management and sharing of data on species and habitats have been the subject of the National Conference "Biodiversity in Italy: state of conservation and monitoring," held in Rome on 27 and 28 February 2014 with broad public of insiders.

The conference gave an opportunity to present the "Guidelines for the Regions and Autonomous Provinces in monitoring of species and habitats of Community interest", prepared by the MATTM and by ISPRA and to provide, as required by art. 7 of Presidential Decree 357/97, guidelines for setting up systems and regional monitoring programs, able to produce data as standardized and suitable

# n of Habitats and Species

for compilation of future reports pursuant to art. 17 of the Habitats Directive.

The intention of the Ministry of the Environment is not to waste efforts made, in order to make operational and efficient this valuable network of collaborations between institutional and scientific subjects, but to continue in the coordination and setup of the management process and exchange of data on species and habitats as a system, including the use of the "National Biodiversity Network," as a strategic tool for the sharing of biodiversity data.

## Results

Regarding the Habitats Directive, on the whole for the 3rd report have been accounted 113 plant species, 225 animal

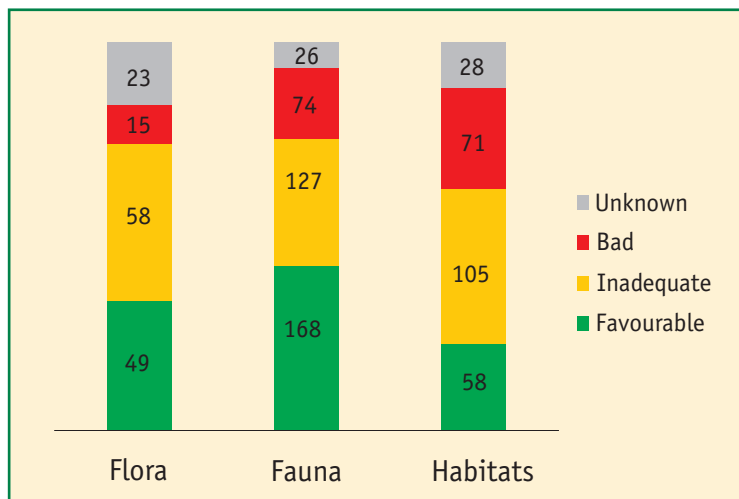
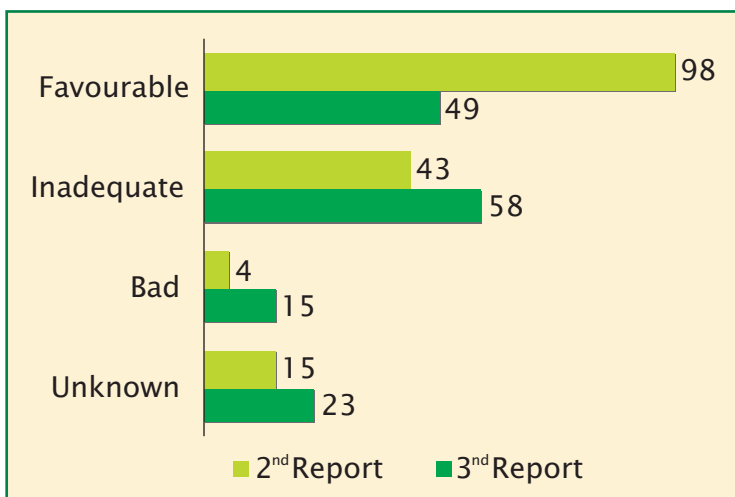


Fig. 1. General conservation status for species and habitats of Community interest; the numbers are referred to the completed questionnaires.

Fig. 2. Comparison of evaluations on the conservation status of plant species emerged from the second report (years 2001-2006) and the third (years 2007-2012). The numbers refer to the completed questionnaires.



species and 132 habitats, for a total of 802 completed questionnaires for all of the three terrestrial biogeographic regions and of the marine region.

These numbers show how much has been considerable the effort to monitoring and reporting, since Italy is, on the European scene, among the countries with the greatest richness of species and habitats of Community interest. By number of plant species Italy is surpassed only by Spain and Portugal, while the fauna ranks second after Greece. In addition, Italy has, together with France, the country with the highest number of habitats of Community interest; are present in our country, more than half of all habitats protected by the Directive. Our country is also distinguished by the significant rate of endemism evident in particular for the flora; in fact, about 50% of plant species protected under the Habitats Directive and present on our territory are endemic to Italian.

The richness of species and habitats of the Italian territory and the high rate of endemism depend on both historical events, such as the moderate effect of the Quaternary glaciations, and the peculiar geography, geomorphology and climate lay of our land, consisted of a mosaic of different habitat types. This wealth, coupled with the strong anthropic pressure exerted by a population density among the highest in Europe, arises also the great responsibility of Italy in the protection of biodiversity, also at European level, and highlights the importance of obtaining an accurate picture of the conservation status and future prospects of flora, fauna and habitats of Community interest, as knowledge base essential to an effective action for the conservation and restoration.

The results obtained draw a complex picture, alternating light and shadow. Assessments made (Fig. 1) showed an unfavourable conservation status (inadequate or bad) for about half of the questionnaires on the species of Community interest (50% for the flora, 51% for the fauna) and for well over half those relating to habitat (67%). The most critical conditions for flora (in terms of number of taxa with unfavourable conservation status) are found in the Mediterranean biogeographic region; are in fact found to be in bad state of preservation as many as 14 species, 7 of which are in the Mediterranean region, 5 in the continental, 1 in the Alpine and 1 both in the Mediterranean and in the mainland.

The deterioration of the conservation status of the flora compared with the previous reporting cycle (Fig. 2) may be due both to an increase in knowledge and refinement of some of the methods used, and to an actual deterioration of some species; just think that was recorded the extinction on the national territory of *Aldrovanda vesiculosa* and *Caldesia parnassifolia*, in addition to the disappear-

ance of *Kosteletzkya pentacarpos* from the Mediterranean region and Clover from the Alpine region. It should also be noted that there are numerous cases of unfavourable conservation status even within the quota of endemic species of Community interest, which include many as 52 entities.

It is confirmed also the dismal record of the most critical conditions conservationist for the species that live in humid and coastal areas, which are more subject to anthropogenic pressure.

The conservation status of species of Community interest of the Italian fauna presents significant problems too; 18% of the questionnaires reveal a bad state of preservation and 15% poor future prospects. Increased knowledge about distribution and density of populations are certainly a positive thing, and allowed that questionnaires not recognized decreased from 16% in the 2nd Report to 7% of the current one (Fig. 3).

This increase of knowledge refers mostly to favourable conservation status of species (44% of the new questionnaires valued) or goes to cover situations that were previously considered rare or of dubious presence. On balance, the percentage of questionnaires that reveal an inadequate conservation status (32% in the previous report, the current 36%) or poor (19% in the previous report compared with 25% in the current) increased slightly; in general the situation of the conservation status of the fauna has not improved significantly over the past six years. This is largely attributable to the continued anthropogenic pressures that, for all taxonomic groups treated, have always been of great impacts on wildlife. The most critical situations are found in some invertebrates (such as the lepidopteron *Euphydryas maturna*, especially now reduced by the indiscriminate removal of a single relict population in Piedmont, in danger of extinction), the whole of the ichthyofauna of the Italian inland waters (where most part of the native taxa are seriously threatened and in some cases already extinct on a local or national base) and in the majority of amphibians, reptiles and bats.

Regarding habitats, the current general framework classifies the 27% in bad state of preservation and the 40% in a state of insufficient preservation. Compared with the previous report (Fig. 4), there are considerable differences in the overall assessments: in particular, we note the considerable decrease of habitats in favourable conservation status and the consequent increase of those in unfavourable conservation status or inadequate. These changes, however, are caused by the use of different assessment methods and the deepening of knowledge rather than to an actual worsening of condition. In the face of the unsatisfactory results, the 3rd Report reports a favourable conservation status for 22% of the Italian habitats; although it should be stressed that are mostly anthropic areas (such as semi-natural grasslands and chestnut), they should however be considered important ecosystems as have long been a vital link in our agricultural production system and currently are characteristic elements of the Italian landscape.

The main categories of threat to plant and animal species are origi-

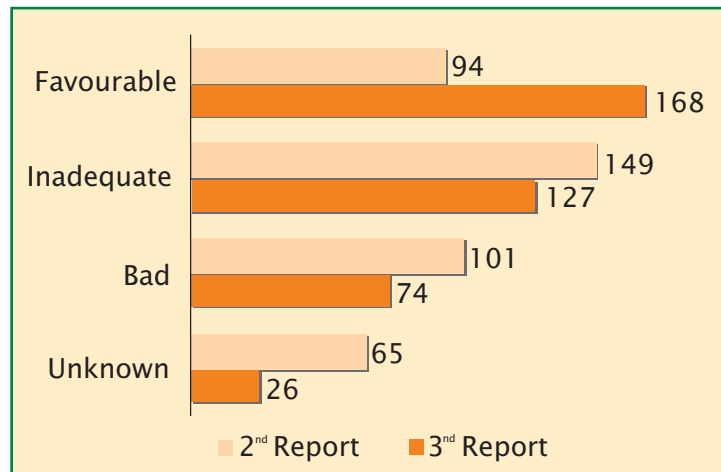


Fig. 3. Comparison of the evaluations on the state of conservation of animal species emerged from the second report (years 2001-2006) and the third (years 2007-2012). The numbers refer to the completed questionnaires.

nated by the ecosystem changes due to direct human intervention (pollution of surface waters, reduction of habitat connectivity, use of biocides, hormone or chemical products), associated with inadequate agriculture and forestry practices, the abandonment of pastoral systems, with the consequent reduction of semi-natural habitats, urbanization and human disturbance. Is precisely the anthropic interference the greatest threat to the habitats of Community interest, alongside the creation of infrastructure, the planting of non-native species and alteration of ecosystems; arsons are also one of the most common threats to the conservation status of Italian habitats. In particular to flora (but also to some species of wildlife) direct harvesting by humans, despite the legislation adopted at national and regional level, is still a significant threat.

To these factors should be finally added the introduction of invasive alien species, which can be one of the causes of extinction of local populations, particularly decapods and ichthyofauna, and in the near future may become, if left unchecked, one of the most important threats at the national level.

Climate changes have not been considered of great importance for the conservation of species and habitats of Community interest, al-

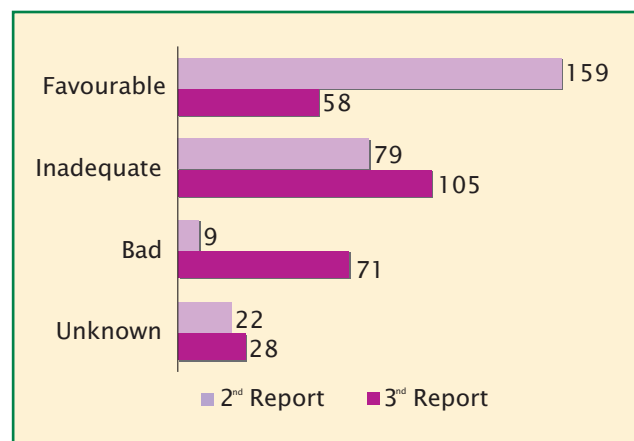


Fig. 4. Comparison of evaluations on the conservation status of habitats emerged from the second report (year 2001-2006) and third (years 2007-2012). The numbers refer to the completed questionnaires.



though in some relief, interact in an unclear way with the most important anthropogenic factors of land degradation. Despite the great progress made in relation to earlier reports, the knowledge gaps that still remain and the lack of homogeneity of the data at the national level meant that for a certain percentage of cases it was not possible an assessment of the comprehensive conservation status of species and habitats. In fact, if on one hand the available knowledge allowed us to develop distribution maps for almost all of the species and habitats, basic instrument for the assessment process, up to date the knowledge gaps still affect a high percentage of taxa of plants and animals, both on land and at sea. In some cases, especially for invertebrates, fish, amphibians and reptiles there are still many unresolved taxonomic problems, and many species were actually complexes of cryptic species, some of which are endemic Italian and highly threatened.

While emerging therefore also important positive elements related to the fact that today than in the past on some entities there are greater knowledge than those used in the previous reporting, to fill the gaps in knowledge that still exist is required ad hoc monitoring that continue over time. In many phases of the evaluation process during the preparation of the 3rd Report, in fact, expert judgment was essential not only to make the summaries of the data, but all too often to make up for the lack of information. The work also highlights the urgent need to extend the research and monitoring also to

face some significant issues that remain, such as the difficulty of quantifying the favourable reference values.

The experience of collaboration with the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and the world of research allowed us to test the effectiveness of virtuous systems for the collection, storage and updating of data, based on collaboration between local administrations, universities and individual researchers and to identify among the priority goals the networking and creating coordinated systems in order to fully implement the requirements of the legislation and implement a more effective surveillance of the conservation status of species and habitats of Community interest in our country.

The results of the 3rd Report and weaknesses identified in any case represent a clear and fundamental tool for directing the efforts and commitments, in line with the provisions of the Habitats Directive, to improve the conservation status of habitats and species.

It is a useful cognitive framework to focus efforts, both at national and at local level, on the implementation of concrete measures for the conservation and restoration beginning with measures in phase of definition in the process of designation of Special Areas of Conservation, even seizing funding opportunities offered by the next planning cycle of EU funds 2014-2020 and then implementing the appropriate synergies with the preparation of PAF by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces. ■

All data of the 3rd National Report of the Member States, including Italy, are available online on the "Central Data Repository" European Environment Agency (EEA), <http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/it/eu/art17/envupjhw> or to the relevant page of the Sinanet ISPRA, [http://www.sinanet.isprambiente.it/it/Reporting\\_Dir\\_Habitat/download-dati](http://www.sinanet.isprambiente.it/it/Reporting_Dir_Habitat/download-dati)

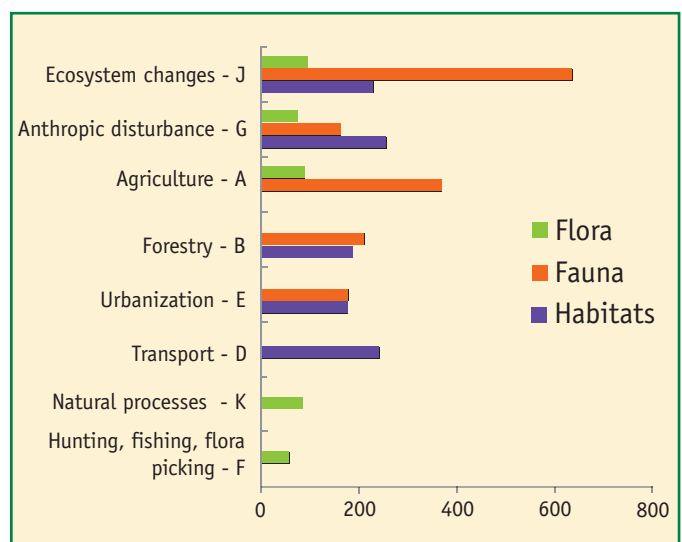


Fig. 5. Main categories of threats to plants, animals and habitats species conservation of Community interest highlighted by the third report.

### Finally on-line the national database for the management of Natura 2000 network

On the website of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea <http://www.minambiente.it/pagina/banca-dati-gestione-rete-natura-2000> is available the online version of the National Data Bank for the management of Natura 2000 (DB-management)

The DB-management is a support for the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) representing a useful framework for organizing in a standardized way conservation measures, an essential element for the designation. This database contains the keys to articulate the site specific measures for habitats and species of Community interest, according to the guidelines and technical guidelines expressed by the Commission.

The use of a uniform standard allows the sharing of data at multiple levels (regional, national and EU); moreover, if properly completed and used, the DB-management will monitor the consistency of the conservation measures in Natura 2000 sites, to quantify and monitor costs for the conservation of habitats and species of the Directive (Priority Action Framework - PAF), will monitor pressures and threats on habitats and species, creating a dynamic bidirectional update for monitoring data (article 17), to be a useful tool for the work of the new bio-geographical seminars as well as be a tool to support the preparation of the Impact Assessment.

The new version will allow to enter and search the data in the DB-management through web access and then to have available them at any time, updated in real time. The database, with access permitted with differentiated entitlements password, will be searchable and editable by different users: Ministries, Regions / Autonomous Provinces, Local authorities, professionals, and citizens.

The Regions and Autonomous Provinces can implement data relating to Natura 2000 sites under its jurisdiction, while the other types of users can only view the data contained in the DB-management. The new database will also allow a more simple and easy data entry. For example, among other features, when you insert a conservation measure, you be allowed to copy that information on all or on a number of regional sites, with a significant reduction in the time required to populate the database itself.

### Update on the designation of Special Areas of Conservation

The designation of SACs is a critical step towards the full implementation of the Natura 2000 network, because it guarantees the full entry into the system of site-specific conservation measures and offers enhanced security for the network management and its strategic role in achieving the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2020.

The designation shall be in accordance with Article 4 of the Habitats Directive and Article 3, paragraph 2 of Presidential Decree 357/97 and subsequent amendments

To date, a total of 272 SACs located in five regions have been designated.

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

### Resumed the process for new biogeographical seminars

On 26 and 28 May was held in Thessaloniki a bio-geographical seminar on the Mediterranean Region.

The bio-geographical seminars represent a new process launched by DG Environment of the European Commission in 2012, which, based on voluntary participation, provides for the organization of 9 seminars, one for each bio-geographical region ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/seminars\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/seminars_en.htm)).

The goal of the initiative is focussed on the management of the Natura 2000 network and is aimed at the exchange of experiences and good practices, the identification of objectives and priorities, in order to strengthen cooperation and synergies in sites' management and achieving a favourable conservation status. At the seminar in Thessaloniki a delegation with experts of ISPRA and of the Italian Botanical Society and representatives of local authorities (Basin Authority of Liri Garigliano and the Province of Caserta), under the coordination of the Ministry of the Environment, attended the meeting representing Italy.

The delegation followed the work of three technical meetings related to marine habitats, forests and grasslands. The contributions arising from the workshop will be compiled into a final report with recommendations and proposals for concrete actions regarding the management of habitats and shared by all stakeholders in the management of Natura 2000 sites.

### Workshop on Monitoring and Biodiversity

On July 1, in Trevi (Perugia), the National Biodiversity Observatory meets the Regional Observatories on the subject of monitoring and collecting data on species and habitats, as a contribution to the implementation of the National Strategy for Biodiversity.

Drawing on by the conclusions of the National Conference on Monitoring held on 27 and 28 February in Rome, the workshop, sponsored by the Umbria region, opens a comparison between the national coordination, regional experiences and the scientific world.

Issue of particular importance is the opportunities offered by the new scheduling of EU funds 2014-2020, with particular reference to the ERDF and EAFRD.

# The National Action Plan on Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (NAP)

On December 19, 2013 was approved by the State-Regions Conference, the "National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products - (NAP)", provided for in Article 6 of Legislative Decree of 14 August 2012, n. 150 entitled: «Implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides» with the end to guide, ensure and monitor a process of change in the practices of use of plant protection products to forms characterized by greater compatibility and environmental sustainability.

The NAP was published on February 22, 2014 in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic with a Joint Decree of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, in agreement with the Minister of the Environment, Land and Sea and the Ministry of Health, after a rather long process that has threatened to trigger for our country yet another European Union infringement procedure.

The final version of the NAP, valid for five years, is substantially composed of five chapters which cover: training and information, the functional control of sprayers, protective measures for specific areas, the management in plant protection products (PPPs) and phytosanitary standards strategies.

As for the training, in compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation in force is introduced the requirement of possession of "license" also for agricultural workers who handle and distribute the PPPs, always with a frequency of five years. Even the consultants, in addition to the staff wing sale, must attend specific courses, be enabled and prove to be properly updated.

The functional check of sprayers, already mandatory in different Italian regions for farms that adopt the Production Regulations / Regional Integrated Defense, by No-

vember 26, 2016 will be performed at one of the centers approved by the Regions or Autonomous Provinces, pursuant to Annex II of Directive 2009/128/EC. The frequency of subsequent monitoring is variable depending on the type of machine.

Measures for protection of most important specific areas relate to those specific for aquatic environment, drinking water, for the protection of water bodies for recreational purposes, along railway lines, along the roads, for the areas visited by the population or vulnerable groups, for specific areas of

and reducing pesticides in specific areas, such as rail and road network, the areas visited by the population and the natural ones in which there is an agricultural activity more or less important (Ramsar sites, the Natura 2000 network and protected areas).

Precisely for this reason they are new, but also for the possible effects on agriculture, the Nap refers to a later stage the definition of guidelines to be adopted within two years at the local level, taking into account individual circumstances and controls on water, as well as on the conservation status of habitats and species protected in the Natura 2000 network sites.

If the chemical analyzes made, both on the surface and in depth, should highlight relevant dangerous concentrations of plant protection products or impacts on habitats and species of Community interest, it will be in fact necessary to intervene with targeted actions. Again, any measures to restrict or replacement of certain plant protection products may be accompanied by some form of support from the Rural Development Program. The Nap is the result of a long process of comparison;

were about two thousand remarks submitted by the various stakeholders (industry, trade, agriculture, environment, health and safety and occupational groups) during the consultation phase, which began in December 2012. During the last three months of 2013, a Technical Scientific council, established within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, has prepared a new version of the document, leading to synthesis of observations made.

The above-mentioned guidelines, aimed at processing measures to protect the aquatic environment and drinking water and Natura 2000 sites and of protected natural areas, are currently being prepared by a specific Working Group, appointed by the Scientific Technical Council. ■



**One of the objectives of the Nap is to regulate the use of pesticides within the areas of high natural value such as Natura 2000 sites, protected areas and Ramsar areas in order to protect biodiversity. Photo E. Calvario**

high natural value (eg. Ramsar sites, protected areas, Natura 2000 Network)

Inside the farms since January 1, 2015 the plant protection products should be handled, stored and disposed of in accordance with Annex VI of the NAP in order to minimize the risk of contamination of the environment and of the operators themselves.

Finally, as regards the methods of plant protection, the NAP defines that from January 1, 2014, systems are: mandatory integrated defense, voluntary integrated production (in accordance with the Regional Disciplinaries and the National Quality System for Integrated Production (NQSIP) and biological farming.

The newest chapter concerns the protection of the aquatic environment, drinking water

NAP February 22, 2014 - published on G.U. validity 5 years.  
**Summary of the main Measures of NAP on the Protection of Biodiversity**

Action	Implementing entity	Enforcement
<b>A.5.1 – Guidelines.</b> Preparation of direction guidelines to protect the aquatic environment and drinking water and to reduce the use of plant protection products and related risks in specific areas.	MATTM, MIPAF, HEALTH on a proposal of the Council	Within 12 months (22 February 2015)
<b>A.5.2 – Measures to protect the aquatic environment and drinking water.</b> Provision of information to the regions and autonomous provinces, on toxicity, ecotoxicity, environmental fate and phytosanitary aspects regarding the products on the market.	MATTM, MIPAF, with the support of the Council	Within 12 months (22 February 2015)
<b>A.5.2.1 – Specific measures for the aquatic environment.</b> Adoption of special measures to reduce the presence in the environment of pesticides classified dangerous for the aquatic environment. Among the possible measures to be contemplated: mitigation, substitution / restriction of use / disposal of plant protection products, as well as providing information and training.	Regions and Autonomous Provinces	Within 24 months (22 February 2016)
<b>A.5.8.1 – Measures to reduce the risk caused by the use of plant protection products.</b> Definition of measures to reduce the use of plant protection products and / or risks in art. 15 of Legislative Decree n. 150/2012 in the Natura 2000 network sites and in protected natural areas to enforce the strategy of protecting biodiversity, already ratified by other planning and regulatory instruments and in particular the last «National Strategy on Biodiversity».	Regions, Autonomous Provinces, in agreement with the Management Authority, where in force	Within 24 months (22 February 2016)
<b>A.5.8.1 – Measures to reduce the risk caused by the use of plant protection products.</b> Promotion of training and information activities aimed at the acquisition of knowledge related to biodiversity risks arising from the use of plant protection products in Natura 2000 sites, with particular reference to the choice of the active substances in accordance with relevant provisions of the management plan / measures conservation or other management tool already adopted, in order to make more effective the action of professional users who work in companies located in Natura 2000 network sites and protected natural areas.	Regions and Autonomous Provinces	
<b>A.5.8.1 – Measures to reduce the risk caused by the use of plant protection products.</b> Identification of requirements for the ban, if possible, in Ramsar, of plant protection products dangerous for aquatic ecosystems, as well as those found as a result of environmental monitoring activities, where data are available.	MATTM, MIPAF, HEALTH heard the advice, in agreement with the Regions, Autonomous Provinces, Agencies with jurisdiction	Within 24 months (22 February 2016)
<b>A.5.8.2 – Voluntary measures are complementary.</b> Identification and inclusion in the management plans / measures for the conservation of Natura 2000 sites, all of those types of intervention concerning habitats and/or species to be protected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of specific criteria to promote, within each site, the financing of defense techniques proper to the biologic production method as well as those related to voluntarily integrated production.</li> <li>• actions directed to boosting the establishment of hedges and buffer strips of suitable width, maintaining them, their recovery, or the natural recolonization of the species typical of the perfluvial bands and of other species that constitute habitats of Community interest.</li> <li>• incentive risk mitigation actions for the reduction of the contamination of surface water bodies due to pollution resulting from drift and runoff of pesticides.</li> <li>• incentive oriented advice actions for farmers working in farms located in Natura 2000 sites, in order to acquire adequate competence to assess the opportunities stemming from the location of the company in the site.</li> </ul>	Regions, Autonomous Provinces, Management Authority.	

**NATURA 2000 Italia** informa

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[ta/&m=Rete\\_Natura\\_2000.html#Documenti\\_di\\_riferimento.html](http://www.minambiente.it/ta/&m=Rete_Natura_2000.html#Documenti_di_riferimento.html)

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