

BirdLife partners create a new European Network against Environmental Crimes

Madrid, October 10, 2014. SEO/BirdLife and RSPB, BirdLife Spanish and British Partners, are working on the implementation of a new project that will bring significant progress in the defence of the environment: the constitution of a “European Network against Environmental Crimes”. Constituted of environmental lawyers and experts in the field, this Network is aimed to assess the effectiveness of EU and national environmental laws in Europe and emit recommendations for a coherent and effective application of the law.

The project receives the financial support of the [Criminal Justice Program of the EU](#). [BirdLife Europe](#) and the BirdLife Partners in Greece ([HOS](#)) and Czech Republic ([CSO](#)) will also collaborate in the project.

What are *environmental crimes*?

[Environmental crimes](#) are acts that breach environmental legislation and cause significant harm or risk to the environment and human health and often generate economic losses. These acts notably include the illegal emission or discharge of substances into air, water or soil as well as actions that impair the conservation of species.

The BirdLife Partnership plays a key role in the implementation of environmental laws at EU and national levels and works actively at denouncing environmental crimes harming biodiversity.

How will the new project fight them?

The Network will strengthen the work performed by BirdLife Partners in Europe by facilitating the exchange of information and the experience of lawyers who work in this field. One of the first activities will focus on developing a report that assesses how effectively are applied the international and national criminal laws. This will allow identify loopholes and help develop recommendations for a coherent application of the criminal law that protect the environment in EU countries. A series of workshops will also be organised on the following topics: illegal hunting, poisoning of the fauna and habitat destruction to educate on the importance of respecting the environment and the laws that protects it.

What do we want to achieve?

The implementation and application of the Directives 2008/99/CE on the protection of the environment through criminal law, which came into force in the EU in December 2010, are not equal in all the countries. This creates inequities and fuels the chances for criminals to use these differences to their benefit. The project will work hard to reverse this situation, so that the criminal law works as an effective tool to protect the environment in a more efficient and equal way.

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