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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate D - Natural Capital
ENV.D.2 - Biodiversity

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Mr Gammeltoft, Mr Bronzi and Mr Beckmann,
WWF Sturgeon Initiative Leader
WWF Central and Eastern Europe
Ottakringerstr. 114-116, A-1160 Vienna

Subject: Reply to WWF: Follow-up of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and protection of critically endangered sturgeon species in Europe (09/06/2021)

Dear Mr Gammeltoft, dear Mr Bronzi and dear Mr Beckmann,

Commissioner Sinkevičius has asked me to reply to your letter of 9 June 2021 in which you urge the Commission to include in the future nature restoration law legally binding targets for the sturgeon species that are listed in Annex V of the Habitats Directive¹.

The Commission is strongly committed to sturgeon conservation. The Habitats Directive lists all sturgeon species that occur in Europe. Therefore, their conservation is a legal obligation for the EU Member States.

As you note in your letter, the EU nature directives sub-expert group (NADEG) recommended the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons² for implementation. The Commission closely follows this process and is currently exploring how it could financially support the Bern Convention Secretariat in overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan.

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206 of 22.7.1992, p. 7).

² <https://rm.coe.int/pan-european-action-plan-for-sturgeons/16808e84f3>

Regarding the setting of legally binding targets for specific species, including the five sturgeon species that are currently listed in Annex V of the Habitats Directive, please note that we are considering the possibility of establishing such targets subject to the impact assessment that is being finalised.

I would like to you for your interest in and your efforts to conserve Europe's sturgeon species.

Yours sincerely,

Stefan Leiner