



Influencing EU policy A national NGO's perspective

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Outline of presentation

- **Why the RSPB lobbies the EU Institutions**
- **How the RSPB lobbies each of the EU Institutions**
- **Case study: the EU Financial Instrument for the Environment**
- **Some lobbying “thoughts”**



Why the RSPB lobbies the EU Institutions

- 90% of all environmental legislation in the UK derives from the European Union
- Nature conservation in the UK strengthened by the EU's Habitats and Birds Directives
- EU policies – particularly the CAP, CFP and Structural Funds – have a major impact on wildlife in the UK
- Funding opportunities e.g. LIFE-Nature programme



How does the RSPB lobby at EU level?

- The European Advocacy Team:
 - 3 staff based in the UK, 1 staff in Brussels
- BirdLife International:
 - an active Partner in each of the 25 Member States
 - Task Forces (Agriculture, Regional Policy, Birds Directive)
 - a secretariat office in Brussels (14 staff)
- The RSPB is also a member of other pan-European environmental NGOs:
 - CAN-Europe; EEB; Europarks, Eurosites, IUCN, European Federation for Transport and Environment



Lobbying the Commission

Lobbying the Commission before proposals for legislation are published:

- Relevant desk officer; Heads of Unit; Directors-General; Commissioners; Commissioners' cabinets
- Official consultations (minimum of 8 weeks)
- During inter-service consultation
- Before meetings of the College

Lobbying the Commission after proposals have been sent to

Parliament and Council:

- Before Parliament's First Reading
- Before Council Common Position
- Before revised proposal is published
- During conciliation



Lobbying the Commission contd.

Lobbying the Commission after legislation has entered into force:

- Complaints on the non-application of Community law
- Petitions from Parliament; Parliamentary questions

Lobbying the Commission to propose new legislation:

- Via Member States and the Parliament
- Public campaigning



Lobbying the Council

- Lobbying the Council = very difficult!
- Work as part of a pan-European partnership (e.g. BirdLife)
- Coordinated lobbying in advance of key Council/Working Group meetings (press work and letters to Ministers)
- Seeking to obtain information on Council developments
- Contacts with the Presidency (e.g. BirdLife's Greening Europe)
- Contacts with the Permanent Representations in Brussels
- Brussels-based activity e.g. press work and open letters



Lobbying the Parliament

- Important information:
timetable; lead Committee (including Rapporteurs and Shadows); Committees giving an 'Opinion' (including Draftsmen).
- Meetings with:
Rapporteurs; Shadows; Draftsmen; group coordinators; other interested MEPs on relevant Committees.
- Short, clear briefings
- Events to highlight policy priorities, e.g. receptions, lunchtime briefings
- Coordinated, pan-European lobbying of MEPs



Follow-up

- Lodge an official complaint with the Secretary General of the EU if you believe a Member State is not applying EU law correctly
- Complaints should be fully documented
- Follow up the complaint with Parliamentary Questions and Media coverage to make sure it does not get forgotten – and remember Ministries will put pressure on the Commission to forget about it!



Case study: The EU Financial Instrument for the Environment

Objective: to secure EU funds to help co-finance nature of Europe-wide importance

- Internal: Developed a common BirdLife position also shared by other NGOs and groups
- Commission: met relevant desk officers, Commissioner, his advisor and DG Environment Director General.
- After EC proposal published: prepared recommendations to improve proposal with BirdLife Partners and other NGOs.
- Parliament's 1st Reading: met with Rapporteur, Shadows Draftsmen and advisors; prepared proposals for amendments; lobbying before Committee votes and plenary.



Case study: Financial Instrument for the Environment cont...

- Commission: contacts before Parliament's First Reading and before Council Common Position.
- Council: close contacts with the UK Presidency; pan-European lobbying before Council meetings; coordinated press work across Europe.
- NEXT STAGE:
- Continued work with Parliament: meetings with Rapporteur, Shadows and advisors; lobbying before vote.
- Conciliation: ?? contacts with the Parliament's conciliation delegation and Presidency.
- Outcome: *so far the Regulation looks very different and is in line with our policy. BUT we are struggling on the budget!*



Concluding remarks

- The EU dimension cannot be ignored!
- To make a difference at EU level, it is vital to:
 - develop clear policy position and focus on priorities;
 - have Partners/allies in other Member States;
 - have a clear idea of the legislative timetable;
 - target the Institutions according to the timetable;
 - keep up-to-date in terms of positions of Member States and groups within the Parliament;
 - know the key people to contact within the EU Institutions.



There is no substitute for

- Knowledge – know your subject well
- Allies – from all Member States
- Commitment - have the will to win
- Pragmatism - Be flexible on the means
- Bottom line – But keep focus on the end result you want
- Tenacity - Never give up

Be clear, be polite, be tough...but most of all
Never give up and don't let the buggers grind
you down!

