



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF REGIONAL AFFAIRS  
AND AGRICULTURE

Ms Jessika Roswall  
Mr Costas Kadis  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel  
Belgium

7 May 2026 N° 1.9-2/315

**Request for coordinated measures to manage increasing Great Cormorant populations**

Dear Commissioner Roswall,  
Dear Commissioner Kadis,

Please find attached the Joint letter concerning the need for coordinated EU-level measures to manage the increasing Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) population across Europe.

Yours sincerely

Hendrik Johannes Terras  
Minister for Regional Affairs and Agriculture of the Republic of Estonia

On behalf of:

Andres Sutt  
Minister of Energy and Environment of the Republic of Estonia

Peter Kullgren  
Minister for Rural Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden

Johan Britz  
Minister for Employment and Acting Minister for Climate and the Environment of the Kingdom of Sweden

Enclosed: Joint letter - Request for coordinated measures to manage increasing Great Cormorant populations

Joint letter on behalf of:

Hendrik Johannes Terras  
Minister for Regional Affairs and Agriculture of the Republic of Estonia

Andres Sutt  
Minister of Energy and Environment of the Republic of Estonia

Peter Kullgren  
Minister for Rural Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden

Johan Britz  
Minister for Employment and Acting Minister for Climate and the Environment of the Kingdom of Sweden

**Ms Jessika Roswall**, Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

**Mr Costas Kadis**, Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans

### **Request for coordinated measures to manage increasing Great Cormorant populations**

Dear Commissioner Roswall, dear Commissioner Kadis,

We, the Ministers responsible for fisheries and the environment, wish to draw attention to the substantial increase in Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) populations across Europe, including in coastal areas, rivers and lakes. The Baltic Sea is the main breeding area for cormorants and therefore a key source of population growth across the rest of Europe.

Given the significant impact on fish stocks and aquaculture, as well as serious damage to ecosystems, and the related socio-economic consequences and implications for food security, we urge the Commission to take steps towards the necessary legislative changes and revisions to the derogation guidelines under the Birds Directive in order to enable more effective control of Great Cormorant populations and to promote coordinated management measures.

Although derogations under Article 9 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) allow action to reduce the negative impacts of Great Cormorant populations, their application remains administratively burdensome, lacks consistency and harmonised implementation across Europe, and is often constrained by national barriers linked to the current interpretation and application of the Directive. Given the transboundary nature of this issue, a holistic and ecosystem-based approach is essential in order to maintain balanced Great Cormorant populations across the region.

We urge the European Commission to:

- **Facilitate the development of a coordinated EU-wide management plan to ensure effective, ecosystem-based and adaptive management of Great Cormorant populations.**
- **Consider introducing a review clause into the Birds Directive that would allow its annexes to be updated on the basis of scientific evidence regarding the status of species, thereby avoiding the need to reopen the Directive for general discussion whenever a targeted update is needed. At this stage, however, we are primarily seeking a targeted amendment concerning the Great Cormorant, namely its inclusion in Annex II of the Birds Directive as a huntable species, in order to reduce barriers to hunting outside the breeding and rearing season.**
- **Strengthen the guidelines on derogations under Article 9 of the Birds Directive, as the recent guidelines do not resolve the practical problems related to cormorant management. There is a need for clearer criteria to simplify the use of derogations and to avoid unnecessary and costly administrative burdens in implementation. Additional guidance is particularly needed in cases where derogations must be made simultaneously from several provisions, for example where damage caused by Great Cormorants occurs during the breeding and rearing season, when hunting is prohibited even for species listed in Annex II. Our main priority, however, remains the inclusion of the Great Cormorant in Annex II, as set out above.**

The undersigned Ministers stand ready to engage constructively with the Commission and relevant stakeholders in advancing these necessary measures.

**Hendrik Johannes Terras**

Minister for Regional Affairs and Agriculture of the Republic of Estonia

**Andres Sutt**

Minister of Energy and Environment of the Republic of Estonia

**Peter Kullgren**

Minister for Rural Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden

**Johan Britz**

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**Sari Essayah**

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Finland

**Sari Multata**

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**Armands Krauze**

Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia

**Andrius Palionis**

Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania

**Richard Takáč**

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic

**Tomáš Taraba**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment of the Slovak Republic

**David Vlačić**

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of Croatia

**Marija Vučković**

Minister for Environmental Protection and Green Transition of the Republic of Croatia

**Stefan Krajewski**

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development the Republic of Poland

**Martin Šebestýn**

Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

**Igor Červený**

Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic

**Tánczos Barna**

Deputy Prime Minister and Interim Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania