



The Federation
of Associations
for Hunting
and Conservation
of the EU

Annual Report 2015

THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN HUNTERS

A wooden hunting stand (blind) is positioned in a forest during autumn. The stand is made of dark wood and has a small rectangular opening for observation. The surrounding trees have vibrant orange and yellow leaves, and the ground is covered in tall grass and some green plants.

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FACE is the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation.

Established in 1977, FACE represents the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit-making non-governmental organisation (INGO).

This makes FACE the largest democratically representative body for hunters in the world and probably one of the largest European civil society organisations.

FACE is made up of its Members: national hunters' associations from 35 European countries including the EU-28. FACE also has 7 Associate Members and has its Secretariat in Brussels.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987, and more recently of Wetlands International. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting-related issues, from international conservation agreements to local implementations with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe.

This annual report covers June 2014 - October 2015 and outlines the background and key activities of our main working themes.

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

MICHL EBNER



Every hunter in Europe must feel like a part of FACE

We are all observing today the widening gap between city and countryside, a marginalisation of the role of hunting in our society, and the surge of polarizing animal rights movements acting against any form of sustainable use.

These trends take place at local, national and international level making the defence of sustainable hunting a challenge that goes beyond the influence of our hunting clubs, our local and national governments. Hunting in the EU depends more than ever on decisions taken in Brussels, in the European Commission and the Parliament.

Through its over 35 Members, FACE represents the interests of 7 million hunters from all 28 EU Member States, but also beyond the borders of the Union. The reputation of FACE is due to its commitment to provide evidence-based technical expertise and analysis to decision makers at European level when amending legislation. The real strength of FACE however is the unity and cohesion of its Members in promoting the sustainable and responsible use of natural resources, traditions and the rights of 7 million hunters, and their families, to engage positively with nature.

European hunting culture a vital part of our common heritage, composed of different traditions and approaches to environmental conservation. FACE is working so that Europe does not become the sterile container of ideological notions that deprive citizens from their right to fully and responsibly experience nature.

The defense and promotion of hunting in Europe today is increasingly exercised by actively engaging the institutions of the European Union in Brussels. The interests and legitimate requests of seven million hunters need to receive the attention that they are owed and the appropriate channels need to be established to let our messages get through. In order to do this FACE runs the Intergroup “*Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside*” of the European Parliament, discussing with policy makers the most important issues that affect hunting. But FACE is engaged in many more activities foreseeing active engagement with EU decision makers. This Annual Report will give you an overview of what FACE is doing for European hunters.

In our globalized world every hunter should feel obliged to contribute to the promotion of wildlife and habitat conservation through sustainable hunting – as private citizens by educating fellow citizens to the positive values of hunting, or as a member of a hunting organisation professionally or on a voluntary basis. The FACE Secretariat is proud to bring to you a summary of the activities undertaken in the past year. We hope that this will contribute to strengthen the sense of belonging every hunter should feel in regards to FACE.



DR MICHL EBNER

HONORARY PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

GILBERT DE TURCKHEIM



Very often in the course of my 12 years as FACE President, I was asked to explain what FACE is and what FACE does for hunters.

Since FACE was founded, in 1977, it has developed a coherent vision based on the common values and positions of the European hunting community in terms of responsible engagement towards sustainable hunting.

This was a necessity coming from the increasing decision making powers of the European Institutions. While hunting is not a direct competence of the EU, birds and wildlife protection, habitat conservation, firearms and animal health are. They have an impact on how hunting is administered in EU Member States. National laws governing hunting essentially depend from the Birds, Habitats and Firearms Directives, which are decided in Brussels.

This means that hunters need an outpost in Brussels. Not only to follow the policy making process, but also to influence it. FACE is a lobby representing the interests of hunters, probably one of the largest citizens' organisations of the EU.

A tangible example of the capacity of FACE to shape EU policy is the Sustainable Hunting Initiative. If today the European Union fully recognizes hunting as an activity that provides significant social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits in different regions of the European Union, this is thanks to the work undertaken by FACE in 2001 with the European Commission.

But while the achievements of FACE are in themselves tangible, we cannot afford to relax on our advantageous position. Hunting is confronted with new challenges every day. Our society is changing at a faster pace. Urbanisation, industrialisation, the shift from an agricultural economy to a society of city dwellers, a changed perception towards nature and wildlife, all these trends expose hunting to new threats.

In the course of our almost 40 years of existence FACE has built alliances with , farmers, land owners and other land users, and with environmental organisations in favour of the sustainable use of natural resources. The industry itself is not excluded from our network, as the current close cooperation on the Firearms Directive demonstrates. These alliances are essential to successfully represent the interests of hunters in Brussels' political arena. In my twelve years at the helm of FACE I have endeavoured to bring together within FACE countries and hunters' organisations based on the common values of solidarity, mutual recognition and respect for a wide variety of hunting cultures and traditions.

Wishing Michel Ebner success in his new role as FACE President, I invite all hunters in Europe to remain united against the challenges awaiting us in order to ensure that hunting in remains a vital element of our common European identity, deeply rooted in the social and economic fabric of communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'G de Turckheim'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Gilbert de Turckheim

THE FACE SECRETARIAT

The FACE Team is based in Brussels and makes up the Secretariat, representing the interests of its Members and 7 million hunters every day.

The team combines a passion for hunting and nature with expertise in a range of key areas so as to best ensure hunting is facilitated and sustainable, right across Europe.



SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOREWORD

FILIPPO SEGATO



Dear fellow hunters and friends of FACE,

2015 was another successful, albeit challenging year for FACE. We engaged the European Institutions on all hunting related policies, increased our network capacity and initiated a review of our strategic priorities. This enabled us to improve our reputation at institutional level and create value for hunters across the EU.

FACE continues our hard work in the defence of European hunters. Our focus remains on our primary themes, namely migratory birds, large carnivores, biodiversity and land use, international agreements, animal welfare and health, firearms and ammunition, hunting methods and culture. Notwithstanding the extent of the scope of our activity we have embarked in a review of our priorities with the aim of reassessing the needs of our Members and recalibrating our strategy. In order to best assist our Members, FACE must first learn what they require from us.

Probably the most testing challenge for FACE in 2015 was represented by the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives, a process carried out by the European Commission and aimed at assessing whether or not the Birds and Habitats Directives were still fit for their purpose.

FACE participated to the evidence-gathering and public consultation together with many governments, organisations and stakeholders confirming its commitment to the support of both the Birds and Habitats Directives while at the same time calling upon the EU institutions and Member States to recognise

the valuable role of hunting in meeting the targets of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.

In spite of our firm support of the Nature Directives, we have to acknowledge a wide array of sore points emerging from the reality of the every-day application of the Nature Directives at Member State and local level. In its response to the European Commission FACE has stressed that the interpretation and implementation of the Nature Directives must better cater for hunting as an activity that provides significant social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits across the European Union.

The epitome of the application challenges of EU Nature legislation is probably represented by the return of wolves to our landscape and the conflicts that this successful conservation experience is triggering everywhere. Recognising the need to raise the awareness of EU policy makers about human-wolf conflicts, FACE organised a landmark conference on “The Return of the Wolf to the European Landscape: Challenges and Solutions”, organised in the frame of the Intergroup “*Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside*” where several speakers described the extent of wolf conflicts and the challenges arising from their growing populations into new territories.

2015 was also an election year for FACE. Michl Ebner was elected President succeeding Baron Gilbert de Turckheim. FACE owes a debt of gratitude to President de Turckheim for his twelve years in office. I personally wish to thank him for his continuous support and advice and for educating us that the success of FACE lies in the unity and solidarity of all hunters. And I look forward to a close cooperation with President Ebner whose extraordinary political and business experience will contribute to shaping the hunting policy in the EU for the coming years.

A special thanks also goes to Karl-Heinz Florenz MEP who embarked in the challenging task of chairing the parliamentary Intergroup “*Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside*” and to the Members of FACE for their support and their trust in the work we do here in Brussels. But my biggest and continued thanks goes to the FACE Team. It is truly rewarding to work with a group of professionals and friends who exhibit such dedication and passion to our mission, and a solid commitment to the defence of hunting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Filippo Segato". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive script.

Filippo Segato

THE FACE SECRETARIAT

Administration

Charlotte Nyffels

Office & Business Manager

Charlotte manages the operations of the FACE Secretariat, from finances to human resources, whilst coordinating the administrative and office work, the translation services for the Members and the organisation of FACE Governance Meetings.

Chloé Gerber

Office Assistant

Chloé assist the Office & Business Management Unit with general administration and reception services, facilities management, and meetings organisation. She also provides personal assistance to the Secretary General.

Sabine Borgers-Guse

Senior Translator (Part-time)

Sabine provides top quality German translations.

Conservation

Cy Griffin

Director of Conservation

Cy is responsible for wildlife and nature policy at FACE, providing a unique awareness and understanding of both the biology of game species with their related EU legislation. He provides technical and biological insights on a daily basis, from migratory birds to trapping. From November 2013, Cy has taken over the management of our Nature Conservation work in addition to Wildlife Conservation.

Charlotte Simon

Nature Policy Officer

Having recently graduated in Biology of Organisms and Ecology at Brussels University, Charlotte took on the position as FACE's Project Assistant. Working with the Director of Conservation, Charlotte is involved in different nature conservation projects as well as the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto. Moreover, she is finding funding opportunities for us and our Members.

David Scallan

Wildlife Policy Officer

David joined the FACE team in September 2015. He deals with a variety of dossiers including migratory birds, large carnivores, land use and the economics of hunting. David has a strong background in conservation policy, ecology, game management, sustainable agriculture and human-wildlife conflict. He received his Ph.D. from the National University of Ireland Galway in 2012, with a dissertation examining the economic, ecological and social place of hunting activities in rural Ireland. David is experienced in site and species monitoring, ecological surveys, project management and economic impact assessments.



Legal and Public Affairs

Johan Svalby

Director of Legal and Public Affairs

From April 2014, Johan has taken up the combined role of managing the day to day legal and public affairs work of FACE. Johan combines his legal training with a thorough knowledge of EU and international legislation, subjects and processes, providing essential legislative monitoring and advice with astute interpretation of the laws affecting hunters in Europe. He coordinates FACE's Technical Group on Legal Affairs as well as our work on Animal Welfare and Health, the Bern Convention and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Paul Wujek

Legal Affairs Officer

Having joined the team in July 2014, Paul provides legal and policy advice and support for FACE and its Members, and closely follows developments in EU policies and infringement procedures. Paul also plays a key role in FACE's relations with the EU Institutions, especially with the Permanent Representations. Prior to joining the team, Paul gained legal working experience at the Legal Service of the Council of the European Union.

Cecilia Luetgebrune

Public Affairs Officer

Cecilia plays a key role in FACE's relations with the EU Institutions, especially the European Parliament where she is our focal point for the Parliament's Intergroup for Hunting, Biodiversity and Countryside. Since having joined FACE in 2014 she maintains contacts with decision makers and organisations connected to FACE's work areas and projects. Having graduated in Agriculture, Cecilia is also responsible for the FACE dossiers related to Agriculture and Rural Development.

Communications

Mayssa Vande Vyvre

Communications Officer

Mayssa joined FACE in July, 2015 as the Communication Officer. Mayssa received her B.A in Political Science and Sociology at Emmanuel College in Boston (USA), and graduated in Communication and European Policy at IHECS in Brussels. Before starting at FACE, she worked for the Canadian Government in Boston and in an EU consulting firm in Brussels as the communication project manager. Mayssa makes sure that FACE Members, partners, decision-makers and the media are kept informed of the many activities and dossiers covered by FACE on a daily basis.

2015 interns

Claudia Guarnati

Hugo Palejowski

Outgoing Staff

Dan Burgar Kuželički

Yasmin Hammerschmidt

FACE MEMBERS

CONNECTING HUNTERS ACROSS EUROPE

FACE works with its Members, its Partners and the EU Institutions to facilitate understanding, action and exchange through regular meetings in Member States, as well as in the European Parliament and Commission.

FACE is nothing without its Members.

FACE Members encompass the expertise, knowledge, structures and influence that make up European hunting. FACE Members are national hunting associations from 35 countries including all the EU Member States as well as other Council of Europe countries.

Full Members

Federata e Gjuetarëve të Shqipërisë
Zentralstelle Österreichischer Landesjagdverbände
Royal Saint-Hubert Club de Belgique / Hubertus Vereniging Vlaanderen vzw
Lovački Savez Herceg-Bosne (LSHB)
Lovački Savez Republike Srpska (LSRS)
Savez Lovačkih organizacija BiH (SLOBiH)
Съюз на ловците и риболовците в България
Hrvatski Lovački Savez
Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Κυνηγίου και Διαθροής Αγριας Ζωης
Ceskomoravská Myslivecká Jednota
Danmarks Jægerforbund
Eesti Jahimeeste Selts
Suomen Metsästäjäliitto / Finlands Jägarförbund
Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs
Deutscher Jagdverband e.V.
Κυνηγική Συνομοσπονδία Ελλάδος
Országos Magyar Vadászkamara
Országos Magyar Vadászati Védegylet
FACE Ireland c/o National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC)
FACE Italia
Latvijas Mednieku Asociācija
Lietuvos Medžiotojų ir Žvejų Draugija
Fédération Saint-Hubert des Chasseurs du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg asbl
Federazzjoni Kaċċaturi Nassaba Konservazzjonisti (FKNK)
Lovački Savez Crne Gore
Koninklijke Nederlandse Jagers Vereniging
Norges Jeger- og Fiskerforbund
Polski Związek Łowiecki

Federação Portuguesa de Caça (FENCAÇA)
Asociația Generală a Vânătorilor și Pescarilor Sportivi (AGVPS)
Lovački Savez Srbije
Slovenská poľovnícka komora
Slovenský Poľovnícky Zväz
Lovska zveza Slovenije
Oficina Nacional de la Caza (ONC)
Svenska Jägareförbundet
JagdSchweiz / ChasseSuisse / CacciaSvizzera / CatschaSvizra
Türkiye Atıcılık ve Avcılık Federasyonu
FACE UK: British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) & Countryside Alliance

Associate Members

European Association of the Civil Commerce of Weapons (AECAC)
European Association of Traditional Hunts (AECT)
Association of European Manufacturers of Sporting Firearms (ESFAM)
Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF)
The European Bowhunting Federation (EBF)
European Institute for the Management of Wild Birds and their Habitats (OMPO)
Conservation Force



FACE MEMBERS

BOARD

M. EBNER, *President*

V. BÖHNING, *Vice-President, Germany*

C. L. CHRISTENSEN, *Vice-President, Nordic Region*

S. ZERJAV, *Vice-President, Central Region*

B. CHEVRON, *Treasurer General**

F. SEGATO, *Secretary General**

R. ALI, *Vice-President, United Kingdom*

G. DALL'OLIO, *Vice-President, Italy*

L. DOMBROVSKA *Vice-President, Baltic Region*

A. DURAND, *Vice-President, France*

L. HOEDEMAKER, *Vice-President, Atlantic Region*

A. KELEMEN, *Vice-President, South-East Region*

N. PAPADODIMAS, *Vice-President, Mediterranean Region*

BUREAU

* Non-voting members

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INTERGROUP “BIODIVERSITY, HUNTING, COUNTRYSIDE”

Known as the Sustainable Hunting Intergroup, FACE has provided the Secretariat for this key official Parliamentary platform since 1985.

Its objectives are to promote the role of hunting and other forms of sustainable use of wild species for biodiversity, wildlife management, rural development and forestry issues and to discuss current subjects whilst building the bridge between civil society and decision makers.

With over 150 actively supporting MEPs during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term making up its Membership, the Intergroup is one of the largest in the Parliament. Its activities are run by its Bureau who are responsible for setting the themes and providing overall guidance.

For the 2014-2019 term of the EP, the Intergroup will be reconstituted under the name “Biodiversity, Hunting & Countryside”, which reflects better its conservation goals and the fact that most of its Members are not hunters.

“With 5-6 gatherings annually in the European Parliament, the Sustainable Hunting Intergroup mobilises current themes such as Natura 2000, animal welfare, biodiversity, agriculture, forestry or invasive alien species. We keep an interactive role so as to create the space for dialogue between MEPs from different political groups, officials, assistants and European Commission representatives. Having made a special effort with our communications, we have – thanks to the key involvement of FACE – seriously increased our visibility through high-profile events. The Intergroup equally plays a role in clarifying the European discourse to hunters on the ground by providing tailored guidance.”

MEP Véronique Mathieu,
former President of the
Sustainable Hunting Intergroup



Intergroup President's Foreword

In 2015, the Parliamentary Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside proudly celebrated its 30th anniversary. Successfully re-established in February 2015, it is one of the oldest and – counting 112 Members of the European Parliament as members – one of the largest Intergroups in the Parliament.

We are facing a lot of challenges regarding biodiversity, sustainable hunting and wildlife management as well as climate change and rural development in the next few years. This Intergroup will serve as the key stakeholder platform within the European Parliament, enabling open cross-political discussions between decision-makers and experts, aiming to affirm the significant role of rural actors and the socio-economic importance of countryside activities.

The next challenge for hunting in the EU would be the implementation of the Nature Directives after the Fitness Check. For this reason, it is necessary to improve the relationships with other interest groups especially in the frame of the Common Agricultural Policy and, for that, FACE is a strong partner of the Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside Intergroup.

Hunters and their allies in the European Parliament have shown that when working together results can be achieved. One example was the successful action to prevent the written declaration against trophy hunting.

FACE must remain united and encourage its Members to think out of the box developing new ideas to improve the representation of hunters within the European Parliament. As a keen hunter, I will be available to help FACE to implement an appropriate hunting policy in the EU.



MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz, President of the Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside



Intergroup – Role And Objectives

The Intergroup deals with issues for which the European Parliament is competent in the fields of biodiversity, hunting, angling, wildlife management, forestry, agriculture, and nature conservation, taking account of public and wild animal health and welfare. Also addressed are cross-cutting issues which have an impact on socio-economic activities in rural areas.



The new Intergroup Bureau at the constituent meeting of the Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside 1.12.15 in Strasbourg

From left to right: MEP Bendt Bendtsen, MEP Annie Schreijer-Pierik, MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz, MEP Renata Briano, MEP James Nicholson, FACE President Gilbert de Turckheim

The main objectives of the Intergroup are to promote the role of hunting and other forms of sustainable use of wild species contributing to biodiversity enhancement and rural development, to represent the interests of rural actors, such as 7 million European hunters, ensuring them a voice in decision-making processes and to offer an open cross-political platform for discussions between decision makers and stakeholders.

Contributions made by the Intergroup to the work of the European Parliament include:

- Sustainable Hunting Initiative
- Agreement between FACE and BirdLife International
- Free movement of goods and persons in the EU's firearms legislation
- Public health (in the EU food hygiene regulations)
- Management of the cormorant
- The EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy
- Invasive Alien Species
- The impact of the CAP reform on biodiversity
- Multi-functionality of forests



“Through the support of the different political groups, we jointly bring the legitimate concerns of the hunting and conservation communities into the parliamentary process. Whether it is the Common Agricultural Policy reform, wildlife conservation, forestry or animal health policy - we operate as a network and a team in a cross-cutting and effective manner. Our thanks go to FACE, ELO and all the supporters of the Intergroup.”

MEP Markus Pieper,
former Secretary General
of the Sustainable Hunting Intergroup

Other issues dealt with by the Intergroup include management of large carnivores under the habitats directive, humane trapping standards, water resources, animal health and welfare etc.

The Intergroup is open to all those MEPs willing to:

- Enhance biodiversity
- Promote wildlife and nature conservation
- Sustainable hunting, angling and wildlife management
- Take account of public and wild animal health and welfare
- Contribute to economically and socially prosperous rural areas
- Preserve countryside traditions
- Endorse IUCN Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources.

The Intergroup wants to be as representative as possible for the political spectrum and for the different EU-countries and offers a forum for stakeholder dialogue with some of the world's largest civil society organizations.

Intergroup – Events In 2015

In 2015, the Intergroup held four events organized by FACE. After the constituent meeting in February, the Intergroup held a meeting titled “Combating Wildlife Crime - Identifying measures, actions and strategies to effectively reduce illegal practices” in May 2015. As Africa is facing the biggest poaching crisis ever and illegal wildlife practices pose a huge challenge across the European continent, the meeting aimed at identifying strategies to successfully combat these crimes. The expert panel, chaired by MEP Renata Briano exchanged views with Members of the European Parliament and key officials from the competent services of the European Commission.

In September 2015, more than 150 participants followed the intense discussion on the increasing conflicts between wolves and humans that took place in the framework of the Intergroup meeting **“The Return of the Wolf to the European Landscape: Challenges and Solutions”**. The meeting chair MEP Bendt BENDTSEN stated: *“The growing wolf population and its geographical spread is new in Europe. As a policymaker, it is my belief that wolves must be monitored to gather fact-based grounds upon which to make our decisions. I believe that the wolf population should be regulated on a pan-European level, and as a Member of the European Parliament, I am of the opinion the Habitats Directive should be reviewed to allow a better regulation of the wolves”*.

Karl-Heinz FLORENZ added: *“Wolves are welcome, but a peaceful coexistence requires coordinated and reasonable management, which takes into account the needs and interests of the local people. How this can be achieved is the main question.”*

During the conference on the “Fitness Check of EU Nature Legislation - For a better implementation?” in October 2015, Members of the European Parliament Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside agreed that more flexibility and a better consideration of cultural and regional requirements are needed for a better implementation and acceptance of the Birds and Habitats Directives while contributing to achieving the environmental goals of the EU.

MEP Annie SCHREIJER-PIERIK, Secretary General of the Intergroup, stated that “The fitness check of the EU Nature Legislation is of utmost importance to the EU in general and to citizens of the Netherlands as a Member State in particular. Current implementation in policy fields such as hunting, agriculture and water management directly contradicts our EU goals in other policy fields. Sometimes it even causes contradiction between goals of EU natural conservation policy itself! Therefore time has come to enable a more flexible implementation of EU nature legislation at the level of Member States and local authorities.”



Intergroup Session on the wolf, 15 September 2015, EP in Brussels

Also in 2015, the Intergroup was of enormous importance for the work of FACE and the interests of the 7 million hunters in Europe. As one of the backbones of FACE's work in interest representation, the Intergroup provides great opportunities to promote and defend sustainable hunting across Europe. It enables FACE to directly engage with decision makers and provide them with relevant, science-based information on the wide range of topics related to hunting, angling and other forms of sustainable use of natural resources.



“Through my work with this Intergroup, I regularly have the pleasure of working with FACE. They are passionate about how hunters can contribute to the conservation of the countryside and maintain rural activities that have been enjoyed by so many, for so long.”

MEP Robert Sturdy,
outgoing Co-President
of the Sustainable Hunting Intergroup



FACE AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

FACE was founded in 1977 by national hunting associations to take part in the process of shaping the Birds Directive by providing hunters' extensive knowledge of nature and governance of hunting. A similar role was taken at international level, with FACE's involvement, together with CIC (International Council for Game & Wildlife Conservation) and the OMPO institute, in the establishment of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) in the 1990s.

Since those early days FACE has remained very close to its origins by engaging with these legal instruments every step of the way, and continuing to respond to the challenges of conserving migratory birds and ensuring sustainable hunting of these species which we cherish.

FACE marks 35 years of the Birds Directive

Whilst FACE joins in celebrating the success of the Birds Directive it argues that greater recognition should be made of the socio-cultural diversity within the EU. People should not be left out of the equation as it is ultimately the citizens that turn policy into action on the ground.

This is why on 23 September 2014, FACE held a conference in Brussels under the title "A New Vision for the Birds Directive and the Positive Role of Hunting", organised in collaboration with the European Commission, to underline its commitment for birds and the Birds Directive, but also to showcase examples of hunters' involvement in conservation and habitat restoration.

The timing of this conference was particularly timely as it took place less than 2 weeks after the infamous mandate from President Jean-Claude Juncker to the newly appointed Commissioner Karmenu Vella, requesting an "evaluation of the Birds and Habitats directives and assess the potential for merging them into a more modern piece of legislation".

At this conference the outgoing European Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potočnik gave recognition of the role of hunters in wild bird conservation saying that *"For over 35 years, the Birds Directive has helped protect Europe's wild birds. Responsible and sustainable hunting has also played an important role, supported by agreements between hunters and bird conservation organisations, such as the one we are celebrating today between BirdLife and FACE. It's encouraging to see the hunting community adopting such a pro-active approach to bird conservation and giving such high-profile recognition to the EU Nature legislation."*





The conference stressed how hunting and the Birds Directive are not in contradiction. On the contrary, hunting and hunters contribute actively to the conservation of wild birds, habitats and biodiversity. The Directive fully recognizes the legitimacy of hunting as a form of sustainable use, providing significant social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. In effect European hunters are operating as a fully-fledged environmental organisation contributing to reach the targets set out by EU-policy makers.

Speakers gave examples of projects and initiatives carried out by hunters aiming at the conservation of wild bird species, habitats restoration, and improvement of the scientific knowledge of migratory as well as land birds, often in cooperation with other environmental stakeholders. Presentations highlighted how legislation alone is not enough for wildlife conservation, and cooperation between citizens and institutions must also be pursued. Concrete actions and motivated people at ground level are fundamental for the achievement of the goals set out by the Birds Directive. In 35 years European hunters have demonstrated to be effective partners in achieving these objectives - when and where recognised.

The conference was attended by key officials from the European Commission's DG Environment, MEPs and representatives from other political and conservation institutions and organisations and featured high-level speakers from the Commission, NGOs, science, national politics and hunting associations.

The conference also marked the 10 years of an agreement signed by BirdLife International and FACE which was characterised by constructive dialogue between the two organisations. FACE stands firm on its commitment taken with BirdLife International, not to support initiatives aimed at amending the text of the Birds Directive, believing that such initiatives would only weaken the current provisions of the Directive, which is not in the interest of either party.

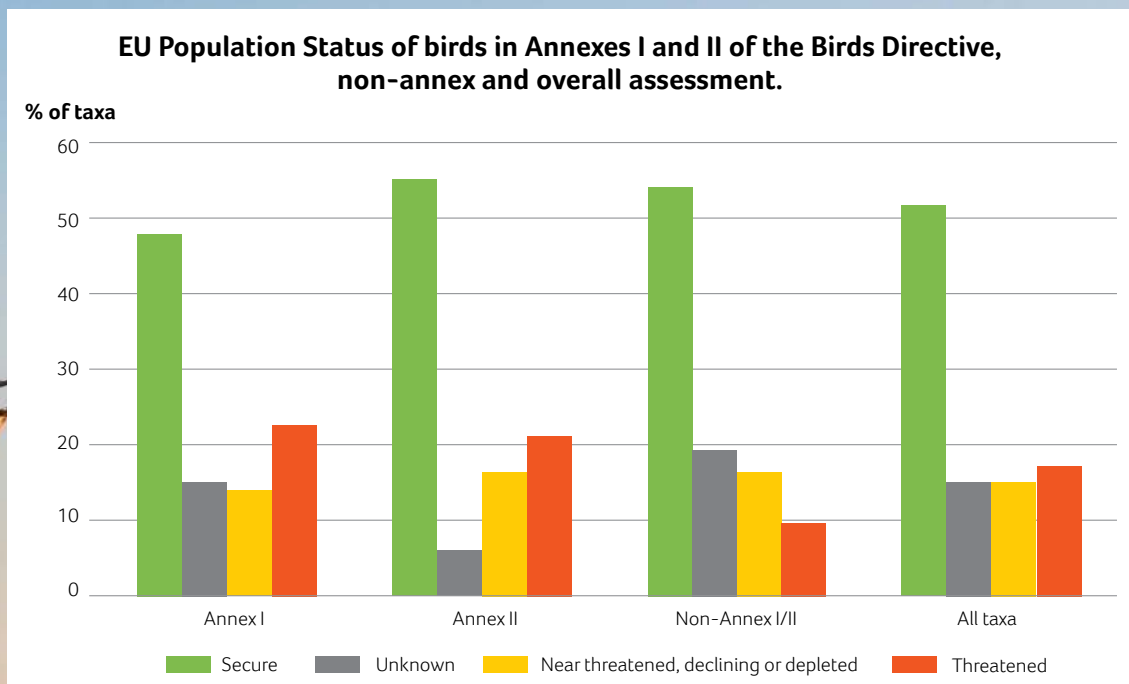
FACE President Gilbert de Turckheim summed up the hunters' view of the on the workings of the Birds Directive: *"The interpretations of this Directive must be conducted with more flexibility in order to prevent disputes that are unrelated to the conservation status of birds. The top priority for the future is the protection of habitats, and it is crucial to have an extensive network of motivated people on the ground actually achieving conservation objectives."*

The population status of Annex II species of the Birds Directive

In May 2015 the European Commission finally published the results of the reporting exercise under the Birds and Habitats Directive, the State of Nature in the EU report¹. This was second time in which habitats and species of the Habitats Directive have been assessed, but the first time there has been an EU assessment on the population status of birds, although BirdLife International made its own assessment in 2004.

On the Birds Directive one conclusion which has been drawn is that a higher proportion of Annex I species are showing an increasing breeding population trend (40%). By contrast Annex II species show highest percentage of species with decreasing long-term breeding population trend (40%). It should be pointed out that Annex II species also have the lowest level of Unknown trends, and the conclusion could be different with more complete information.

In terms of 'Population Status' of all birds in the EU, which amounts to around 450 species, 52% are secure, 15% near threatened or declining, 17% threatened, and 16% unknown. For the population status of Annex II species, 55% are secure, 17% near threatened or declining, 22% threatened, and 6% unknown. In comparison to the assessment made by BirdLife International in 2004, the main change is the percentage of species classed as threatened which has increased from 11% to 22%.



FACE position on the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directive (June 2015)

Why FACE supports the Birds and Habitats Directives

Brussels, 19 June 2015 – FACE remains fully committed to the support of both the Birds and Habitats Directives, which has been demonstrated by its engagement in stakeholders Agreements under European Commission initiatives^{2,3}. It calls upon the EU institutions and Member States to join this support and recognise the valuable role of hunting in meeting the objectives of the Nature Directives.

The Nature Directives contribution to biodiversity

The Nature Directives are necessary in achieving Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy, but also for Target 2 on restoration, and contribution to Target 6 in helping the EU meet its international commitments to conserving biodiversity.

The European Parliament has adopted the resolution on the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, finalising the process of adoption at the highest political level within the EU. This commitment now needs to be delivered. The Nature Directives are familiar instruments with Member States, having already transposed it into national legislation, and therefore in place to deliver on targets. Any new legislation will meet the delays that the Nature Directives have already gone through.

The Nature Directives are appropriate instruments to deliver on Biodiversity targets, but require greater political support and will to implement them in a favourable manner. It would also be helpful to prioritise on species in poorest status, rather than dedicating resources to charismatic species. It should be remembered that the Habitats Directive covers 1 200 species of wild animals and plants, a majority of which (60 %) are in unfavourable conservation status⁴. For the Birds Directive the situation is better with 52% of species in 'secure' population status, but this is logical as it covers all species, both common and rare. Still evidence shows that site protection measures under the Birds Directive have been successful in delivering results.

The Natura 2000 Network, offering vital protection for Europe's most endangered species and habitats, is one of the most evident achievements of EU nature policy. It benefits from the fact that it is based on the principle of conservation and sustainable use, ensuring lasting coexistence with human activities and biodiversity conservation, as such it is not in contradiction with hunting.

The Nature Directives contribution to hunting and its governance

The Birds Directive fully recognises the legitimacy of hunting of wild birds as a form of sustainable use. Hunting is an activity that provides significant social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits across the European Union. It is limited to certain species, listed in the Directive, which also provides a series of ecological principles and legal requirements relating to this activity, to be implemented through Member States' legislation. This provides the framework for the governance of hunting⁵.

Despite this recognition, hunting is too often framed as being negative to environmental objectives, even though evidence suggests that any impacts are of low importance in comparison to issues such as habitat loss. Conversely, if permitted, hunting can provide significant net benefits. If the Nature Directives continue to be applied in an excessively restrictive sense towards hunting then these benefits could be reduced, negatively impacting rural economies and the achievement of the environmental goals of the EU. This is not a default of the Nature Directives, but lies in their interpretation and implementation.

As a stakeholder taking part to the consultations in the frame of the Fitness Check of EU Nature Legislation FACE states that the Directives are very appropriate to sustain the strategic objectives for protecting nature in the EU.

FACE calls on the EU for more recognition of hunters in their role in delivering environmental objectives. This was highlighted at the conference marking 35 years of the Birds Directive and 10 years of the BirdLife-FACE Agreement, which was held in September 2014⁶. Equally FACE calls for greater understanding of the importance of hunting for 7 million Europeans, and that their role in delivering the strategic objectives of the directives is better recognised.

Adaptive harvest management of migratory waterbirds in Europe

It has been a long-standing challenge to address the development of internationally coordinated harvest management of migratory waterbirds. This need is becoming more pressing, due to the changes of waterbird populations, both for those which are becoming over-abundant and in worrying decline.

At the same time advances in knowledge of populations, modern information and communication technologies, and growing expertise in harvest management, are resulting in some initial success stories.

Pink-footed Goose Management Plan and Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group

The 2nd meeting of the AEWA Svalbard Pink-footed Goose International Working Group⁷ was held in Sneek, the Netherlands on the 14-15 October 2014, followed by a meeting of the Wetlands International Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group.

The first of its kind in Europe

The AEWA International Species Management Plan (ISMP) for the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose (SPFG) was adopted at the AEWA MOP in 2012. It is the first management plan in Europe to follow the principles of adaptive management. The goal of the plan is to maintain the favourable conservation status of the SPFG population at flyway level while taking into account economic and recreational interests. This is being achieved through good stakeholder participation, science based decision making and sustainable hunting.

A stated action of the ISMP is to maintain the population in the long term at 60,000 individuals. The reason for this limit is to avoid damage by goose grazing on their breeding habitat in Svalbard, and on agricultural areas during migration. Harvest management strategies are set on a 3 year regulatory cycle with an annual review. Provisions for emergency closure of a hunting season are in place if the annual review indicates an unforeseen dramatic decline.

The population estimate for the 2013/14 season is 76,000 geese. The population seems to have stabilized or even declined for the first time during the recent decade. The numbers of SPFG harvested in Denmark and Norway remained stable since 2012, with a preliminary estimate of 11,081 geese reported shot in 2013.



The meeting was also a first where 2 European countries agreed on a sharing of the harvest of a migratory bird, where Denmark and Norway agreed on a 70/30 split of the harvest. A historic moment. The Danish Hunters Association gave a closing remark that if the Netherlands and Belgium ever wish to allow hunting of the SPFG then they would be happy to share some of their bag.

The adaptive harvest management process may also be incorporated into AEWA Action Plans for declining species. Currently the same methodology is being used for the Draft Action Plan for Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*). Rather than subjective assessment of the impact of hunting as we have seen in the past, we are now moving towards decisions on what level of hunting is sustainable based on clear criteria.

Artemis: The Information Portal for Huntability Species In Europe

Gaining greater understanding of our species

Lack of information on hunting bag statistics has been identified as a failing on the part of the hunting community: “there is a need for sound, scientifically-based monitoring mechanisms to ensure that any use is maintained at levels which can be sustained by the wild populations without adversely affecting the species’ role in the ecosystem or the ecosystem itself. This should include information on bag statistics, which is at present lacking or poorly developed for most species throughout the European Union” – European Commission Guide to Sustainable Hunting under the Birds Directive.

FACE has sought to redress this through the creation of the Artemis Information Portal on Huntability Species, launched in November 2012. This website features existing information gathered by FACE, contains details of existing bag data collection schemes throughout the EU, and information on the distribution and ecology of huntability species. The portal allows a greater understanding of our species and provides a new tool for managers and researchers.

The Artemis Portal will continue to develop with information being added and updated progressively so as to enhance the sharing of hunters’ knowledge.

LIFE+ Reason for Hope – FIDC joins Waldrappteam initiative

27 October 2014 Jane Goodall, joined the LIFE project ‘LIFE Northern Bald Ibis – Reason for Hope’ and representatives from Italian hunting associations (FIDC & CCT), to sign an agreement for reintroduction and protection of Northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*).



Ambassador of UN Peacekeeping, Dr Goodall said: “For me it is not easy to sign this document together with hunters. Hunting is not my way to preserve and protect nature. However, I am open for cooperation to achieve these common, so important goals.”

Greece – Game Guard Body⁸

In cooperation with Hellenic Hunters Confederation More than 1,200,000 inspections have been carried out in 12 years, and in excess of 18,000 violations. Over this time there has been a 48% reduction in the number of recorded offenses. What is most commendable is that hunting licences contribute to all of the costs of this Game Guard. Up to 7 million euro annually, including salary of 400 guards.

In addition the Game Guard provides a volunteer service to the State during the outbreak of bad weather conditions, natural disasters, forest fires, fire protection, etc.



Malta – major improvements

The Maltese government, together with its Wild Birds Regulation Unit, and enforcement bodies have made major reductions in levels of illegal killing of birds. This has been assisted by high penalties for infringements; fines between EUR 250 and EUR 15,000, permanent or temporary revocation of hunting licenses depending on gravity of offences, and possible imprisonment for up to 2 years.

Statements from NGOs recognise that the situation is changing in Malta:

“There was a significant decrease in the number of illegal hunting (and trapping) incidents witnessed during 2014 spring hunting season compared to previous years; the illegalities in 2014 were 29% of the number of illegalities in 2013” (BirdLife Malta Report 2014)

“We have never observed such few hunting violations as this season. Despite the result of the referendum on spring hunting it appears significant changes are taking place on Malta.” (Committee Against Bird Slaughter - spring report 2015)

Tackling Illegal Killing of Migratory Birds CMS COP 11, Quito 4-9 November 2014

The Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP11) was held in Quito, Ecuador from 4 to 9 November 2014. FACE was present at this meeting to participate in decisions concerning the conservation of migratory birds, including support for a resolution, on the Prevention of the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (CMS Resolution 11.16).

This resolution highlights that illegal killing of birds is an important factor hindering conservation efforts, and having adverse impacts on legal hunting and other activities. It also acknowledges *the role of legal and sustainable hunting of birds in sustainable livelihoods and conservation of habitats and the role of the hunting community in promoting and encouraging compliance with the law and sustainable hunting practices.*

A central action requested by this resolution is the creation of an Intergovernmental Task Force to address Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) in conjunction with CMS, AEWA, the Bern Convention, involving Parties, including the European Union, and other stakeholders, with specific reference to BirdLife International and FACE. This is recognition of the role of both organisations in the Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020 for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds, and the EU Roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds (2012) under the Birds Directive.

Some months later in May 2015, at a conference organised by FACE and the Hunting Intergroup, on Combatting Wildlife Crime, the European Commission announced for the first time that it would be providing financial support for the MIKT Task Force. This funding will help support a 3 year post for a Coordinator of the Task Force to be based at the CMS Secretariat in Bonn.

Communication plays an important role in action towards illegal killing of birds and FACE continues to use the principles set out in the Bern Convention Recommendation No. 155 (2011): (i.) this is about illegal killing of birds, not legal hunting; (ii.) zero tolerance of illegal killing of wild birds; (iii.) recognition of legal hunting and sustainable use. In this respect FACE welcomes that in the CMS Resolution it is acknowledged that there is a role for the hunting community in tackling this important issue.

We must not forget that hunting is a highly regulated activity throughout Europe and imposing stricter regulations on the majority of responsible hunters will not improve the situation. It is much better to improve enforcement of existing regulations and promote good communications. At the same time, we must not forget that enforcement is only one side of the coin and that working with local communities and hunters organisations is critical. Finally forming partnerships between governments, agencies and NGO is important for building trust and pooling resources.

Below are some highlights of national level actions with involvement from the FACE Membership.

¹ <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu>

² Sustainable Hunting Initiative on Birds Directive http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/index_en.htm

³ EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform.htm

⁴ The State of Nature in the EU http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/pdf/state_of_nature_en.pdf

⁵ Guide to Sustainable Hunting under the Birds Directive (EC 2008)

⁶ <http://face.eu/about-us/resources/news/hunters-call-on-the-eu-for-more-recognition-of-their-environmental-role>

⁷ <http://pinkfootedgoose.aewa.info/>

⁸ <http://www.face.eu/about-us/resources/news/game-guard-body-of-hunting-organisations-in-greece-tackles-illegal-killing>

⁹ http://www.wetlands.org/Portals/0/SustainableWaterbirdHarvesting_2015_02_26%20final.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.artemis-face.eu/>

Workshop On Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds

The Waterbird Harvest Specialist Group (WHSG) met in Kalø in Denmark from 17-19 March 2015, to plan for the revision of the AEWA Guidelines on Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Waterbirds, which will be completed later this year. Getting this project started has been a challenge but thanks to support from, Aarhus University, the Fondation François Sommer, and the Danish Hunters' Nature Foundation who sponsored the meeting, the work is now underway. If successful, the Guidelines, covering the entire flyway, will be submitted to the next AEWA Meeting of Parties in November this year.

Since the re-launch of the WHSG, progress has been made into introducing the concept of adaptive harvest management into species conservation activities of AEWA, building upon the Svalbard Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) Management Plan. Just this month the report "Towards sustainable management of huntable migratory waterbirds in Europe"⁹, was completed which synthesises the concepts of adaptive harvest and puts them into a European context. It also provides an update of the status of AEWA waterbird populations listed in Annex II of the EU Birds Directive.

Amongst other issues, the report demonstrates "that that an informed approach to setting allowable harvests does not require detailed demographic information. Essential to the process, however, are estimates of either the observed growth rate from a monitoring program or the growth rate expected under ideal conditions. In addition, periodic estimates of population size are needed, as well as either empirical information or reasonable assumptions about the form of density dependence. We show that such information exists for many populations, but improvements are needed to improve geographic coverage, reliability and timely data availability."

The report also addresses the need for better availability of hunting bags or harvest data to assess sustainability and, regulate hunting accordingly. To achieve this, it recommends that the process of annual reporting of such information should be gradually introduced throughout the EU and the AEWA region. To facilitate research into hunting bag data, FACE continues to develop its dedicated Artemis information portal¹⁰.

In conclusion, achieving adaptive harvest management at EU level, is far from an impossible task. The scientific principles are well founded and concept understood by hunters, what is now needed is political will from governments to support and promote sustainable management of waterbirds.

LARGE CARNIVORES

Large carnivores occur in a great diversity of ecological, conservation, socio-cultural and political situations in Europe.

This can help to explain the different attitudes towards large carnivores which sometimes divide society. In Europe's densely populated multi-functional landscapes, humans and large carnivores need to find a way to coexist. This coexistence gives rise to challenges, as well as opportunities.

Recent data indicates that most large carnivore populations in Europe are stable or increasing. While this trend provides a reason to celebrate, many conflicts arise. This evokes a number of questions, for instance about current management and damage compensation schemes, as well as their legal status in certain geographic ranges.

The European hunting community is a very active player in large carnivore conservation, directly contributing to their monitoring as well as to the management of their habitats and prey across our continent. Hunters are one of the main stakeholders in Europe. Hunters are - and must be - part of the solution.

With this in mind, FACE works at several levels and promotes large carnivore management and conservation based on scientific knowledge on populations, as well as taking into account the human dimension so as to effectively reduce conflicts:

EU Action on large carnivores

The European Commission (DG ENV – Nature Unit) initiated the EU Action on Large Carnivores. This is a process of dialogue with and between the different stakeholders who have an interest in large carnivores. The overall objective is to identify practical approaches to help ensure the maintenance or achievement of the favourable conservation status of Europe's large carnivores (Bear, Lynx, Wolf and Wolverine) and to secure their coexistence with humans by reducing conflicts. FACE is an active partner in this initiative.

Large carnivore knowledge base

FACE Members encompass a great amount of knowledge and expertise for a better future for Europe's large carnivores. For any large carnivore policy development and implementation – whether within FACE, the EU or Council of Europe levels – FACE ensures that it has adequate in-house expertise and knowledge base on ecological, legal and socio-economic aspects.

FACE Working Group on Large Carnivores - WGLC

FACE set up its network of large carnivore experts from all around Europe, forming the WGLC. This Group is instrumental in maintaining and further developing FACE's knowledge base and in coordinating the FACE input for the EU Action on large carnivores.

Strategic projects

To implement the FACE position, FACE facilitates or contributes to national and regional large carnivore initiatives and projects. A recent example is the wolf mediation project MediaLoup led by the French Hunters' Association (FNC) and its Departmental Associations.

Strategic partners

Partnerships lie at the heart of all FACE work on large carnivores. Through various fora (such as the EU Action on large carnivores and the Rural Coalition) and bilateral exchange, FACE collaborates extensively with the scientific expert community (e.g. the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe, LCIE) and various stakeholders such as the farmers and landowners (e.g. Copa-Cogeca and ELO) and environmental NGOs (e.g. WWF).



The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores

Following the launch of the platform in June 2014, the initiative moved outside Brussels with the organization of 2 regional workshops, to address issues of concern at national level and foster relations between stakeholders.

It was regrettable that at the beginning of 2015 one of the founding members of the platform, Copa-Cogeca, felt it necessary to step down from the platform in view of better voicing the interests of the farming community, and due to concerns that dialogue on legislative changes would not be sufficiently covered. In response a joint letter from IUCN, WWF, ELO, CIC, EUROPARC, and FACE, was sent to Copa-Cogeca requesting them to reconsider their participation, in order to pursue the mission of the platform, 'promote ways and means to minimize, and wherever possible find solutions to, conflicts between human interests and the presence of large carnivore species, by exchanging knowledge and by working together in an open-ended, constructive and mutually respectful way'. While Copa-Cogeca remained with their decision, they continue to engage with the issue, an example being their participation at the FACE conference on 'The return of the wolf to the European Landscape – challenges and solutions' (see next section), where they provide details on pressures to livestock in France, and the difficulties that farmers face.

Regional Workshop in Bulgaria 22 April 2015

The Platform's first regional workshop which focused on the Balkans and the Carpathians, was hosted by the International Council of Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) in conjunction with their General Assembly in Pravets, Bulgaria.

This well attended workshop, gathered both regional and international expertise, focusing on 3 sessions; Transboundary co-operation, shift from conflict to co-existence, and key actions on large carnivore populations. FACE was represented at the event by its vice-president, Dr. Attila Kelemen, who provided a presentation on the evolution and management of large carnivores from the perspective of hunters in Romania. His presentation provided details of population trends for Brown bear, Wolf and Lynx since the 1950, which have remained largely intact or increased.





Today Romania has the highest density of large carnivores in the EU, with populations measured in thousands for all 3 species, but remarkably, relatively low levels of conflict. The main concerns of hunters are the deterioration of habitat, and impact on game in general. In conclusion Dr. Kelemen expressed that large carnivores must be protected and preserved, including through hunting, especially where viable populations are located, or in the case of problem individuals, and that management solutions should be tailored to national conditions. This example illustrates the compatibility of hunting of large carnivores with their conservation and maintenance of favourable co-existence.

Regional workshop of the EU Large Carnivores Platform 8 October 2015, Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland

Following the Annual Meeting of the Platform in June 2015 the European Commission and members of the Platform have realized the need to have stronger focus on socio-economic issues. As a result this theme was central to the regional workshop in Finland, hosted by the Reindeer Herders' Association. Through a series of convincing presentations the message was clear; reindeer herders have always lived with large carnivores but the current population levels and the excessive workload linked to the compensation system, is creating severe difficulties. Around 4000 to 5000 reindeer are found killed by large carnivores in Finland each year, it is estimated that only one fifth are found therefore the total numbers are closer to 20 – 25 000. Because of this pressure, some areas are witnessing the abandonment of herding, despite the fact that there are young people wishing to take up herding and the market for meat and other reindeer products is successful.

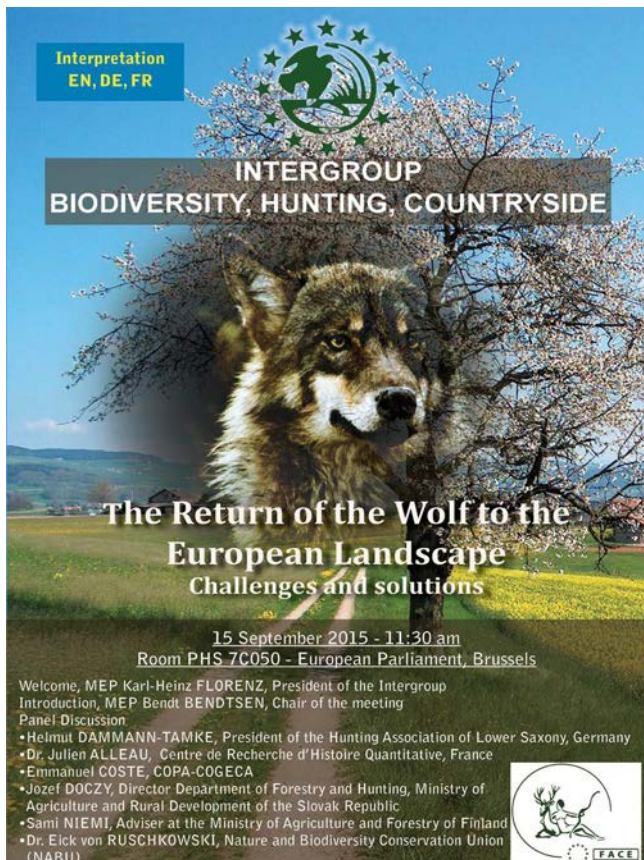
It was good for the participants to see the reality of living with large carnivores, and to realise that there are other priorities which need to be considered. We hope this is a start to more balanced discussions on large carnivore management.

Other issues discussed were the need for good monitoring as a base for policy making, where the IUCN specialist group (LCIE) expressed interest in working with FACE to encourage greater collaboration with hunters for monitoring efforts. Several recommendations were also presented on innovated approaches to developing management plans and the need for local level collaboration and deliberation to find practical solutions and improve communication of accurate information on large carnivore populations.

The Return of the Wolf to the European Landscape: Challenges and Solutions

Wolves are making their comeback to the European landscape. While the increase of the European wolf population is certainly a success story due to the good implementation of the Habitats Directive, the presence of this large carnivore raises new challenges in places where it had not been sighted for almost a century and asks for solutions to the growing number of conflicts it is causing. Hailed by some and feared by others wolves are contributing to a heated debate between those whose livelihoods are affected by wolves, those who welcome them and policy makers involved in the governance of their populations.

As conflicts between wolves and humans are increasing in many EU countries due to growing wolf populations, the Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” held a conference on September 16, 2015 in the European Parliament, seeking to better understand the challenges and solutions to this situation. The conference brought speakers from different EU Member States with a range of views and experiences on wolf conflicts and the challenges arising from their growing populations into new territories.



Interpretation
EN, DE, FR

INTERGROUP
BIODIVERSITY, HUNTING, COUNTRYSIDE

The Return of the Wolf to the European Landscape
Challenges and solutions

15 September 2015 - 11:30 am
Room PHS 7C050 - European Parliament, Brussels

Welcome, MEP Karl-Heinz FLORENZ, President of the Intergroup
Introduction, MEP Bendt BENDTSEN, Chair of the meeting
Panel Discussion

- Helmut DAMMANN-TAMKE, President of the Hunting Association of Lower Saxony, Germany
- Dr. Julien ALLEAU, Centre de Recherche d'Histoire Quantitative, France
- Emmanuel COSTE, COPA-COGECA
- Jozef DOCZY, Director Department of Forestry and Hunting, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
- Sami NIEMI, Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland
- Dr. Eick von RUSCHKOWSKI, Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)

FACE

The growing numbers of wolves are increasingly resulting in conflicts, such as attacks to livestock, prompting some Member States to call on the European Commission to review their legal status under the Habitats Directive. Article 19 of the Habitats Directive makes provision to adapt the legal status of protected species to technical and scientific progress, but has never been applied. Communities in remote areas and whose livelihoods are affected by wolves are calling on policymakers to take stock of a daunting situation and adopt measures for the sustainable governance of wolf populations at regional level.

A compelling case study was presented by Helmut DAMMANN-TAMKE, President of the Hunting Association of Lower Saxony, who described the situation in Germany, where wolves, previously absent for more than a century, are now increasing their population at a yearly rate of 30%. Germany's modern landscape with densely populated areas faces the challenge of balancing nature protection obligations and people's acceptance of wolves. He called on EU policy-makers to review the protection status of wolves considering their improved population status and the need to adopt management measures taking into account the behaviour of habituated individuals.

Other presentations, such as the one by Sami NIEMI, Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland and Jozef DOCZY, Director Department of Forestry and Hunting, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, focused on illustrating the experiences in management methods adopted in countries such as Finland and Slovakia aimed at reducing human-wolf conflict.

Everyone agreed that effective management and conflict resolution need sound and objective scientific underpinning. Scientific clarity about the behaviour, risks, population status, threats and all other related aspects is essential for any informed debate on the matter. This point was stressed by Stefan LEINER, Head of the Biodiversity Unit, Acting Director for Natural Capital, DG Environment, European Commission, who speaking on the positive results in terms of the comeback of endangered species in Europe, said that “the most challenging issue is the return of large carnivores into areas where they have been absent for hundreds of years. Among these species the wolf is the one whose return has resulted in the most severe conflicts.”

Karl-Heinz FLORENZ, President of the Intergroup said: “Wolves are welcome, but a peaceful coexistence requires

coordinated and reasonable management, which takes into account the needs and interests of the local people. How this can be achieved is the main question.”

In his closing remarks, MEP Bendt BENDTSEN, who chaired the conference stated: “The growing wolf population and its geographical spread is new in Europe. As a policy-maker, it is my belief that wolves must be monitored to gather fact-based grounds upon which to make our decisions. I believe that the wolf population should be regulated on a pan-European level, and as a Member of the European Parliament, I am of the opinion the Habitats Directive should be reviewed to allow a better regulation of the wolves”.

According to the last report, under the Habitats Directive the wolf population in the EU is estimated to be at around 10,000 individuals (2007-2012), with most populations being stable or increasing. In the same report, Favourable Conservation Status was achieved in 58% of individual assessments at Member State level, while 33% were considered ‘Unfavourable-inadequate’, and 9% as ‘Unfavourable-bad’, in relation to trends in population, distribution and habitat status.

Dr. Julien ALLEAU from the Centre de Recherche d’Histoire Quantitative of the Caen University referred to Macedonia and Finland where “the relationship between humans and wolves are less conflictual as their populations have remained present for a long period.” This demonstrates that coexistence between humans and wolves is possible where management measures are in place.

Emmanuel COSTE from Europe’s farmers’ association COPA-COGECA, which abandoned talks with the European Commission on human-large carnivores conflicts earlier this year, represented the view of the livestock breeders saying that European policy-makers should better recognise the needs faced by this industry, which is confronted with increasing attacks and damages due to the strong adaptive capacity of wolves to modern farming practices.

Views from the European Parliament

MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz

The wolf is back! Around 10.000 wolves are currently living in the European Union’s landscapes, this number showing an upward trend. Extinct or close to extinction in large areas of Europe since the 19th century, strictly protected under national, European (Habitats Directive) and international law, and currently making such a successful comeback, that a simple “Welcome, wolf!” is no longer an adequate reaction to this development. So here is where the “challenges” begin.

In now 26 years of being a Member of the European Parliament, I definitely found myself in the middle of highly ferocious, emotionally heated-up discussions more than one time. However, it still surprised me, that the successful return of a species, which once was native in these areas, would cause such an outrageous war of opinions. The wolf seems to have become a symbol for the general question and contrary conceptions on how humans should treat nature and how our economic and social interests should be put in relation to the objectives of nature and species conservation.

MEP Bendt Bendtsen

In the country where I am from, wolves have for centuries not been part of our wildlife, but have now in small numbers re-entered. Estimates show there are about 10.000 wild wolves in Europe. In this context, the 12 wolves that were registered in Denmark in the second half of 2014 is a small number. Yet it should not be taken lightly - they cause alarm and concern. In the centuries since the wolves have last been here, Denmark has changed, and the wolves do not necessarily fit in a modern society with some densely populated areas.

The growing wolf population and its geographical spread is new in Europe. As a policy-maker, it is my belief that the wolves must be monitored so we have fact-based grounds upon which to make our decisions. I believe the population should be regulated on a pan-European level, and as a Member of the European Parliament, I am of the opinion the Habitats Directive should be reviewed to allow a better regulation of the wolf population.



BIODIVERSITY

A high-angle photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered in vibrant green moss of various shades and textures. Large, grey, textured rocks are scattered throughout, some partially covered in moss. A small, clear stream flows through the scene, its water reflecting the surrounding greenery. The background shows the lower trunks and roots of trees, suggesting a dense, mature forest.

Hunters share a passion for nature and biodiversity, their primary concern being far greater than their future ability to hunt but the ability for generations to come to appreciate nature in the raw. This is why hunters engage every day right across Europe to conserve nature and biodiversity.

The Eu Biodiversity Strategy 2020

The European Commission has adopted an ambitious new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020. There are 6 main targets and 20 actions to help Europe reach its goal. Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the EU, with around one in four species currently threatened with extinction.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto

The EU leaders and the European Commission have adopted an ambitious new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 includes 6 main targets and 20 actions to enable Europe reach this goal. Both the CBD and the EU Biodiversity Strategy emphasise the need to engage a broad variety of stakeholders - including local communities - in the planning and implementation processes. Hunters can therefore play an important role in these processes.

While facing the development of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, FACE and its Members adopted the Biodiversity Manifesto (BDM) which reflects the active commitment made by European hunters to biodiversity conservation, ensuring the sustainability of hunting for future generations.

By addressing 34 actions in 8 sections, the main objectives of the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto are:

- to demonstrate the role and contribution of hunting for biodiversity to policy makers and the public, and
- to promote the coordination and enhancement of this contribution in line with international conservation priorities

The Biodiversity Manifesto also provides a framework for all communications on hunting-related conservation issues.

In order to reach those objectives, FACE launched the Biodiversity Manifesto Working Group in January 2014, made up of experts from national hunting associations (from Belgium - Flanders, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

By meeting two times a year, the Working Group supports the collation of relevant examples to feed into the process while providing FACE with expertise on the assessment and reporting of the results.

The 34th action point from the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto engages FACE to set in place a system for regular reporting and review our Manifesto to ensure that the hunters' contribution to the conservation of biodiversity is in line with decisions taken by the European and Global Community and remains focused on agreed priorities and public needs.

It was therefore decided to develop a yearly reporting process in order to demonstrate the progress made under the action points of the Biodiversity Manifesto.

The 2014 report was highlighting case studies and best-practice examples of actions conducted by hunters to the conservation of birds.

In 2015, while facing the Mid-term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, FACE has decided to demonstrate how the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto and hunters' activities contribute to the implementation of the strategy.

The 2015 report of the Biodiversity Manifesto, to be published in December 2015, will present the assessment of around 180 case studies while demonstrating how rural actors, and more specifically hunters, (can) contribute to the implementation of the various targets and actions set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The FACE Biodiversity Manifesto offers a relevant framework for such an assessment as it is directly related to 4 of the 6 targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

As a way forward, FACE has started working on the development of an online database and website devoted to the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto in order to launch an efficient procedure for gathering, assessing and communicating hunter's contribution to nature conservation.



The Mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy

The Mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, published by the European Commission on 2nd October 2015, presents mixed results of achievement and indicates that more efforts are still necessary to improve the state of nature at EU level.

Local improvements and success stories are highlighted several times as important examples and messages to provide while being unfortunately not enough for influencing the global trends.

Although it seems that progress has been made at EU level for developing new policies, improving the knowledge base and providing guidance, an important gap remains in implementing the various measures.

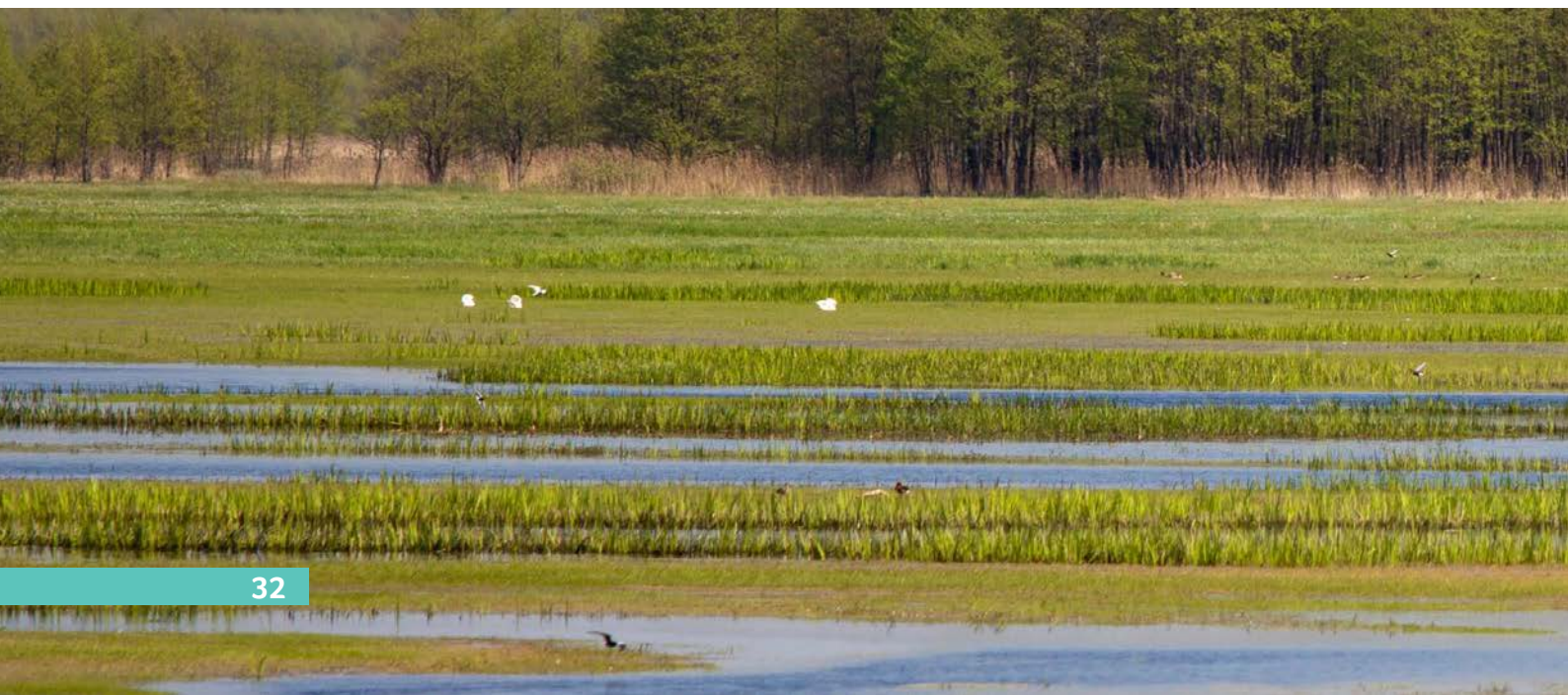
The progress made under financing opportunities and stakeholders' engagement is also acknowledged within the report. Though the FACE secretariat would recognise this success to be highlighted at EU level, important gaps remain for local stakeholders and rural actors to develop relevant partnerships and have access to funding.

From FACE's point of view, the conclusions set in the mid-term review are correct and reflect the issues related to processes being too much in line with the top-down approach; while a lot of processes are developed and finalised at EU level, the uptake at national and regional levels is not efficient, often due to a lack of alignment with their circumstances.

For a better implementation of the measures, FACE has three priorities:

- Creating awareness among the EU institutions and Member States on both the issues related to local implementation and the actions already undertaken by local actors should be strengthened
- Coordination of nature conservation actions conducted at regional and local level should be enhanced in order to push for a bottom-up approach in policy making that would take more account of local conditions when implementing measures.
- Highlighting that implementation and enforcement should focus on conservation priorities as identified in the mid-term review i.e. preventing habitat loss and degradation, rather than stricter measures for legitimate practices under the Nature Directives such as hunting, which contributes to conservation.

FACE will continue to follow the developments made under the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 while implementing these priorities, notably through the Biodiversity Manifesto process.



Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy and its designated sites now cover almost 20 percent of EU land surface.

The success of these areas requires the support of land users, in fact, many of our valuable habitats are the result of traditional land use and some of the most important wildlife sites in Europe have survived the pressures of development and destruction due to the interest of wildlife recreational uses, such as hunting.

The Commission wishes to play its role in promoting cooperation and exchange of experience between all actors involved in the management of Natura 2000. Therefore, the biogeographical process has been developed involving a series of seminars, one for each of the nine biogeographical regions or for a group of regions. By identifying common objectives and priorities and enhancing cooperation and synergies, the Commission wants to ensure that the potential of the Natura 2000 network is fully exploited.

In 2014, the EU Commission and Member States agreed on a new organisation of the Biogeographical Process being simpler and more practical. The objective of this new organisation is twofold:

- setting the basis for an on-going process, where challenges and issues on management and conservation objectives are discussed between all people concerned by Natura 2000
- achieving measurable outcomes

It is also meant to mobilise greater inputs from strategic stakeholders and increased participation from practitioners.

In October 2015, the EU Commission made a proposition to the “Expert Group on the Management of Natura 2000” on the organisation of review seminars as a follow-up of the seminar meeting conducted in each biogeographical region.

The main objective of the new seminars is to review the results of the process to-date, but to do so with a view to the future developments to be made.

FACE is taking part in the discussions on the organisation of the Review Seminars in order to get the Natura 2000 Users (hunters, lands owners, foresters, etc.) more recognised and involved in the technical discussions.

In the meantime, the development of the Guidance on Natura 2000 and Forests , which FACE closely followed and actively contributed to, was finalised and published in 2015.

Hunting is referred to several times in the document regarding the multifunctional role of forestry and the socio-economic benefits of hunting (along with other non-wood activities).

It is generally recognised that hunting is compatible (and very often beneficial) to Natura 2000 designated forests – as the activity does not cause ‘deterioration of the habitats or habitats of species or any significant disturbance of such species’.



French hunters from Lozère are the winners of the « socio-economic benefits » category of the Natura 2000 Award 2016

On Thursday the 21st of May 2015, the European Commission hosted the second Natura 2000 award Ceremony in Brussels which aims to recognise excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and conservation achievements, showcasing the added value for local economies, and increasing public awareness of Europe's valuable natural heritage.

Twenty-three finalists were nominated amongst five categories: conservation, socio-economic benefits, communication, reconciling interest/perception and, cross-border cooperation and networking. Thereafter, a jury selected one winner per category which was officially announced during the ceremony.

In 2015, the French Hunting Federation of Lozère, under the joint association of the Syndicat mixte du Grand Site des Gorges du Tarn, de la Jonte et des Causses, and their project "Cultures : many benefits between nature and culture" won the award for the socio-economic category.

Indeed, 25 breeding bird species of community interest, including four species of vultures, are real economic and cultural vectors of this region of the Grands Causses, recognized since 2011 as world heritage of humanity by UNESCO.

This project has been recognised as a great example demonstrating that nature conservation and economic development go hand in hand and that hunters are part of the solution.

Knowing that this type of best-practice example is not rare in the hunting community, this rewarding should encourage European hunters to apply for the next Natura 2000 award 2016.

The Natura 2000 Users Forum

The Natura 2000 Users' Forum brings together FACE and foresters (the Confederation of European Forest Owners, CEPF), farmers (Copa-Cogeca), anglers (European Anglers' Alliance, EAA) and landowners (European Landowners' Organisation, ELO).

Our organisations represent environmental, socio-economic and socio-cultural activities linked to rural areas - areas which host the largest proportion of the EU biodiversity. Together we represent over 45 million EU citizens which own, manage and use land and the renewable natural resources.

The Forum helps policy-makers in policy development and implementation of the EU Nature Directives, especially concerning Natura 2000 and understanding local socio-economic situations. It has proven to be a good platform to address EU policy-makers with the joint messages.

A meeting was organised in February 2015 gathering for the first time the Head of Units Nature and Biodiversity from DG Environment, their team and the Natura 2000 Users Forum. This was the opportunity to discuss issues identified by the Forum with aims to improve dialogue and involvement of local actors in the European processes.



The MAES Process

Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy calls Member States to: (a) Map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services in their national territory by 2014 (b) Assess the economic value of such services, and promote the integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national level by 2020.

The European Commission's MAES process is highly relevant for other actions from the Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy: "Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services"; Identification and assessment of ecosystem services provide relevant data for the implementation of the Green Infrastructure and No Net Loss initiatives.

Following the adoption of an analytical framework, the EU Working Group MAES decided to support the implementation of Action 5 by testing it based on the outcomes of six thematic pilots.

As results, the working group developed a review of national and European data and indicators to assess the condition of ecosystems, to quantify biodiversity and to map and assess their services.

Hunting is by itself one of the various ecosystem services. Being of course a provisional source of game meat, it is above all a cultural service provided by nature and allowing hunters to pursue their passion. Therefore, there is scope for hunters to provide data that can feed into the MAES process leading to hunting being taken into account when assessing an ecosystem.

Consequently, hunting is recognised as part of the indicators identified by the European Commission for assessing ecosystem services and the FACE Secretariat is involved in the MAES WG, so as to contribute to the data gathering and to evaluate the economics of the ecosystem services linked to hunting. Currently, there is no European overview of the ecosystem services related to hunting and the information available for the EU indicators may differ from a country to another.

The FACE secretariat is planning to implement a European process in order to identify the existing data and gather as much information as possible on hunting and ecosystem services so that it is taken into account in the assessment conducted by the Member States.

Some of the information needed for assessing the cultural service related to hunting is directly in line with the economics of hunting. Through the expenditures made by hunters, which thereafter can have an impact on the socio-economic aspects of a society, it is possible to evaluate hunting as a cultural service provided by nature.

In 2014, the FACE Secretariat has finalised the "Framework for Assessing the Economics of Hunting" that aims to better understand the economics of hunting with a purpose of feeding into the evolving MAES process.

On Tuesday 4th of November 2014, the FACE Secretariat organised a workshop with researchers of the University of Stirling and the interested FACE Members. Different issues were discussed such as the type of methodology needed for conducting a study at European level on the economics of hunting, the types of methodology applicable to the FACE Members and how it would be possible to related the data to the MAES process.

Finally, FACE is involved in a Horizon 2020 project called OPERAs and has participated since 2013 at the Meeting of the Users Board. This project aims to bridge the gaps between ecosystem science and practice by focusing on ecosystem services and natural capital science while enabling stakeholders to apply these concepts in practice.

FACE was invited as part of the stakeholders in order to bring some feedback as well as the perspective of the land users concerning the various processes and tools OPERAs is trying to develop. Those tools may be very relevant for the land managers who wish to conduct studies and project linked to the evaluation and monitoring of ecosystem services.

Green Infrastructure

In the EU, many ecosystems have been degraded, largely as a result of land fragmentation. With the Biodiversity Strategy 2020, the EU and its Member States committed to maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services and restoring degraded ecosystems by incorporating a concept of Green Infrastructure in spatial planning.

Green Infrastructure concept is meant to help reconnect existing nature areas and improve the overall ecological quality of the broader countryside. A green infrastructure will also help maintain healthy ecosystems so that they can continue to deliver valuable services to society (including cultural services). Therefore, it is a tool that uses nature to provide ecological, economic and social benefits.

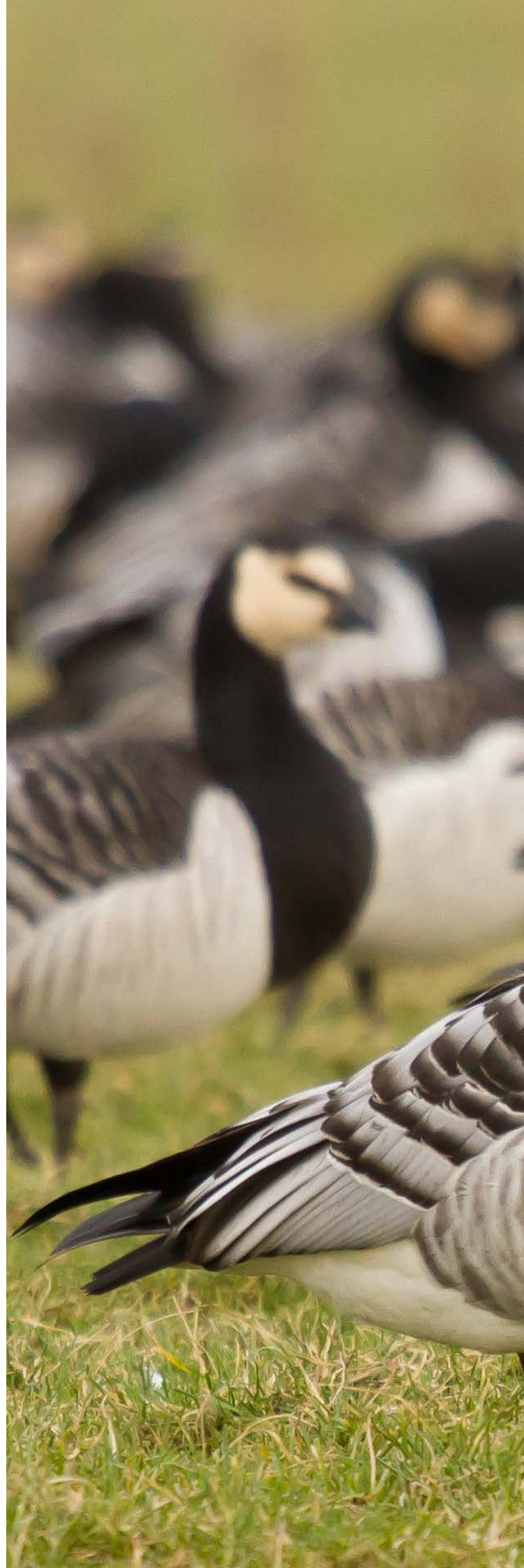
In 2014, the EU Commission launched the new Working Group on Green Infrastructure (GI) Implementation and Restoration (GIIR), which aims to support the implementation of actions of the GI Strategy as set out in the Communication (Green Infrastructure — Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital - COM(2013) 249 final) and to provide a platform for sharing best practices on GI deployment.

Due to lack of participation from the Members States and despite a large attendance of the stakeholders (including FACE), the EU Commission raised the option of closing the GIIR Working Group. However, the Nature Directors, in the frame of the meeting in Latvia on 28th-29th of May 2015, have decided to maintain the GIIR WG operational.

FACE actively contributes to the work of the GIIR Working Group in order to bring hunters' perspective on Green Infrastructure Implementation.

During 2014-2015, FACE conducted raising-awareness activities on how hunters' (can) contribute to Green Infrastructure and restoration implementation. While having attended the CEEweb academy on Green Infrastructure in October 2014 and having made a presentation during the 4th GIIR Working Group meeting (May 2015), the FACE secretariat published in December 2014 an information note on "European hunters' contribution to Green Infrastructure".

Hunters could definitively play a role in GI implementation through their practical experience in the field work while GI would in the meantime benefit hunting activities. However, many environmental NGOs and policy makers are still unaware of the opportunities arising from the collaboration with hunting associations. On the other hand, hunters need to learn more about the concept of Green Infrastructure and its potential benefits.





No Net Loss

Action point 7b) of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 requires the European Commission to carry out further work with a view to proposing by 2015 an initiative to ensure there is no net loss of ecosystems and their services (e.g. through compensation or offsetting schemes).

In preparation of the initiative, the EU Commission set up in 2013 the EU ad-hoc Working Group on No Net Loss (NNL), in which FACE was involved, to collect views from Member State representatives, stakeholders (industry, farmers, environmental NGOs, etc.) and experts on such an initiative. Furthermore, the EU Commission instigated a study led by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) to identify policy options for this initiative; the report was published by end of January 2014.

This was followed by a public consultation in order to have the opinion of all types of organisations and sectors concerned by the NNL initiative.

FACE informed and encouraged its Members to take part of the public consultation. As a result the hunters' involvement in the consultation was highlighted in the Summary overview made the EU Commission on the results of the public consultation:

“Other hunters associations representing regional, national or EU level positions were generally supportive of the need for a No Net Loss initiative, a focus outside the Natura 2000 network and the inclusion of offsetting in a future initiative on NNL. Emphasis was placed on the need to involve local actors and in particular hunters. These groups were not supportive of new legislation at the level of the EU but underlined the need to ensure effective implementation of the legislation and policies already in place.”

While planning to start developing the No Net Loss initiative in 2015, the European Commission has decided to postpone such development due to the launch of the Fitness Check of the EU Environmental Legislation.

FACE will continue to get involved in the No Net Loss process and initiative development in order to provide the EU Commission and stakeholders with hunters' perspectives. In that purpose, an information note on “European hunters' contribution to No Net Loss” was published in December 2014 that demonstrates how hunters can contribute to the implementation of No Net Loss principles.

Invasive Alien Species

The Convention on Biological Diversity recognises Invasive Alien Species (IAS) as one of the key threats to biodiversity and as a result the EU in its “Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020” has included a specific objective to develop an EU policy on Invasive Alien Species: *By 2020, Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and their pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and pathways are managed to prevent the introduction and establishment of new IAS.*

After the finalisation and approval of the EU regulation No 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species in 2014, the EU Commission is now focusing on the implementation of the new legal text. The Commission has therefore taken the step forward for the elaboration of the IAS list of Union concern which is meant to be officialised by February 2016.

We must acknowledge that in the past, through animal collectors and hunting interests, a number of species were brought into Europe and later released or escaped, some of which are now in at least part of their range considered invasive. For this reason we take our responsibilities seriously and have committed to do so in the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto.

We do not consider that hunting is any longer a high-risk pathway (especially falconry); nonetheless we have committed to work with the Council of Europe Bern Convention with the Code of Conduct on Hunting and Invasive Species.

FACE together with its Members and IAF (International Association of Falconry) prepared a “Report on Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS”, which was submitted to the Bern Convention Secretariat in December 2014 and is publicly available. The report shows the contribution and the activities that hunters together with falconers are already carrying out.

Properly trained hunters could indeed be effectively involved in monitoring programmes of IAS distribution and could play a fundamental role in terms of surveillance on new IAS arrivals or introductions, to support an early detection and rapid response system or to raise awareness on IAS.

In June 2015, FACE had the opportunity to attend the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species established by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in 1992.

This provided FACE with the opportunity to have feedback from some countries on the implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS while the strategy that the Bern Convention, and more particularly the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species, should adopt in response to the EU regulation on IAS was discussed.

FACE has also been accepted to be part of the new EU Working Group on IAS which aims to discuss and work on:

- assisting the European Commission by providing high-level expertise in relation to the implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS;
- coordinating activities and exploiting links between the different activities and discuss cross-cutting issues;
- facilitating the cooperation and exchange of good practices between the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders.

While the development of the IAS list of Union concern was a closed process, FACE will closely follow further developments following the adoption of the list as well and the work undertaken by the EU Working Group on IAS.



Natura 2000 and Forests

The forestry sector incorporates approx. 50% of the Natura 2000 network and 42% of EU's land area. On the 1st of October 2015, FACE Wildlife Policy Officer, Dr. David Scallan, attended the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Nature 2000 and Forests. The purpose of the meeting was to seek and exchange views on the recently published Guidance document on Natura 2000 and Forests. This is a process, which FACE has been following for some time.

At the meeting, the European Commission (EC) presented the forestry-related findings from the recent Article 17 reporting (2007-2012) under the Habitats Directive, while making relevant links to targets within the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The Article 17 reporting indicates that the conservation status of forest habitats is not good and that there is still much to be done if the targets set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Forest Strategy are to be reached by 2020. In this context, only 15% of the assessments were in favourable conservation status, while 80% were 'unfavourable'.

In summary, the EC Guidance document on Natura 2000 and Forests stresses the following points:

1. Forestry management and Natura 2000 are compatible;
2. Forests and foresters play a major role in achieving N2K and EU Biodiversity objectives;
3. Better synergies need to be enhanced between various stakeholders;
4. There needs to be better integration of forest and N2K plans;
5. Clear conservation objectives are essential.

Hunting is referred to several times in the document (thanks to previous input by FACE). Regarding the multifunctional role of forestry, the socio-economic benefits of hunting (along with other non-wood activities) are mentioned. For example, the document states: *"Some conservation measures may even lead to certain economic benefits in the short or longer term (e.g. creation of better hunting conditions for game species, reduced game damage)"*.

With regard to the "further integration of Natura 2000 and forest management plans", hunters may need to be aware of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, specifically: *"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives"*.

The Guidance document states (emphasis added): *"Examples of plans likely to have a significant impact on a site are: new forest management plans for Natura 2000 forests with significant transformations of forest stands with regard to species composition or rotation periods or other significant changes in forestry regime, significant changes to hunting plans for large game, etc."*

Generally, hunting is compatible (and very often beneficial) to Natura 2000 designated forests – as the activity does not cause 'deterioration of the habitats or habitats of species or any significant disturbance of such species'. However, in some (probably very few) cases, a new hunting management plan or a significant change to a hunting plan may need to be screened (Step 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process) to exclude any negative effects or the likeliness of negative effects on the qualifying interests of a Natura 2000 site. Here, the EC stressed the necessity for good cooperation with relevant Ministries at Member State level regarding Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.



INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

With the transboundary nature of many of the world's environmental problems, an increasing number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements exist with implications for national and regional policies. These Agreements inform the global agenda, establish conservation principles and provide tools for cooperation.

As the EU often forms an influential block at these meetings, it is vital that FACE follows and contributes to these meetings to represent the interests and insights of European hunters. This ensures FACE is informed of international conservation trends, learns about other conservation experiences, stands up for the interests of hunters, raises the profile of hunters as conservationists, as well as finding ways of working with other conservationists.

FACE, with its Members cover and actively participate in key International Agreements, providing relevant expertise, coordination, synergies and awareness.

Much of our work on International agreements is done in collaboration with our partners. This work links directly to our nature and wildlife conservation work. It is applied to our European policy work and by FACE Members at national level.

CITES - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

CITES is mainly relevant to hunters in relation to the import/export of hunting trophies, but also as one of a number of key international agreements setting the global conservation agenda, establishing conservation principles and providing the tools and means for cooperation.

CITES currently has 181 Parties, including the 28 EU Member States which during COPs, held every 3 years, are expected to speak with one voice and to vote as a block. The EU itself became the 181st Party in 2015.



CITES seeks to regulate international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants at sustainable levels to ensure that this trade does not threaten their survival.

SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL - SCI

with members in 103 countries, is a leader in protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. SCI works closely together with its sister organisation, the SCI-Foundation (SCIF). SCIF funds and manages worldwide programmes dedicated to wildlife conservation and outdoor education. Both organisations are key partners, and FACE continues to enjoy cooperating with both on a very wide number of issues, ranging from purely hunting-related to global conservation issues. During the reporting period FACE and SCI have especially collaborated in gaining positive recognition of hunting as an essential tool for conservation within CITES and the European Union and in identifying measures and strategies to best engage legal wildlife users, local communities and range country management authorities in community based programs designed to conserve wildlife, reduce illegal killing and trade in wildlife, and restore habitat.



The social and economic benefits derived from sustainable use, including revenues from trophy hunting, provide sustainable incentives for local people to conserve wildlife.

Combating Wildlife Crime

Why involving local communities and hunters are key to success.

Africa is facing its biggest poaching crisis ever. In Europe, illegal wildlife practices still pose a challenge across the continent. The European Parliament's Intergroup 'Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside' held a meeting in Brussels on 12 May 2015 with the objective of identifying measures and strategies to effectively combat wildlife crime, and more specifically how to best engage legal wildlife users to assist the relevant authorities in reducing the practice of illegal killing and trade in wildlife, both in Europe and globally.

The meeting was organised by FACE under the auspices of the Intergroup President MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz (EPP, Germany) and it was chaired by MEP Renata Briano (S&D, Italy).

MEP Florenz stressed that "meaningful conservation and enforcement must take into account that in areas where emblematic wild species, such as the rhino and elephant, have true monetary value they are managed and protected against poaching, mostly with the active collaboration of local stakeholders".

MEP Renata Briano pointed out that "poachers are the worst enemies of the hunters". "Hunting is a legal and perfectly legitimate activity that enables a better management of the environment. Hunters are key partners in the combat against wildlife crime both through the important funding they raise and their work in the field".

In the panel, presentations were given by invited experts from the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), FACE and the European institutions.

Rolf BALDUS (CIC) spoke of his 13 years of experience of working for Africa's oldest game reserve, the Selous in Tanzania. He explained why sustainable use – such as trophy hunting – is needed despite, or perhaps because of, the current crisis we are facing. However, this requires decision makers to depart from the mainstream ideas of today's Western urban policy makers of imposing protectionism and blanket bans on wildlife use in African countries.

Cy Griffin from FACE spoke of FACE's work with Birdlife International to tackle illegal killing of migratory birds in Europe. Campaigning is important to achieve this, but careful choice of language is vital. If hunting in general is blamed it only serves to polarise views between organisations. If done well, with recognition of the positive role of legal hunting and sustainable use, then it more likely that responsible hunters will stand against the minority that act illegally.

On the wider debate FACE commended the outcomes of the symposium led by SULi and other partners - Beyond enforcement: engaging communities in tackling wildlife crime (Feb 2015, South Africa) - using the Mali Elephant Project as an example to demonstrate the value of connecting or reconnecting local people with wildlife. This initiative was also successful in stopping poaching, but remarkable in that it was achieved with virtually no funding, and no political will. Perhaps we need to ask why it worked while other high level attempts have failed.

At the event, the European Commission announced for the first time publicly that they will develop an EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking, which will encompass both the domestic and the global dimensions of the problem. Later in the year, FACE submitted written comments on the draft EU Action Plan via the Commission's Better Regulation website. A Communication on the Action Plan is to be presented by the Commission in early 2016, and the Plan is to be implemented jointly by the EU (Commission services, EEAS, Europol, Eurojust) and its Member States until 2020.



FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

FACE and its Members seek to ensure that hunters can acquire, possess, use and travel with firearms and ammunition safely and without unjustified bureaucracy, costs or restrictions.

Many of these aspects are presently covered by EU law, either through full harmonisation or minimum rules.

Furthermore, FACE aims to facilitate processes to ensure that hunters have information on and access to ammunition which is available, affordable and safe to use for the purpose intended.

The revision of the EU Firearms Directive

A year of tragic events leading to a rushed proposal by the European Commission.

On 7 January 2015 Europe woke up to a new terrible reality. Terrorists attacked the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris. Armed with assault rifles and other weapons, they killed 12 people and injured many others. France and Europe were shaken to discover the terrible effects of religious radicalisation.

On 11 January, about two million people, including more than 40 world leaders, met in Paris for a rally of national unity.

Before the Charlie Hebdo attack, there was no real political will to amend the Firearms Directive. One of the main reasons being that the legal basis of this legislation is the regulation of civilian firearms circulation inside the EU internal market. And there was no indication that the Firearms Directive required an update.

Previously Cecilia Malmström, who had been European Commissioner for Home Affairs until 2014, had made an attempt to establish a link between illegally and legally owned firearms stating that “legally owned weapons in the EU continue to feed the illegal market”. In the Communication “Firearms and the internal security of the EU: protecting citizens and disrupting illegal trafficking” DG Home had announced its intention to combat illicit firearms trafficking in the European Union, improve rules on deactivation, destruction and marking procedures of firearms, as well as on alarm weapons and replicas. But in 2014 with the end of Mrs Malmström’s term, the Commission considered the political loop closed.



While Malmström's objective had been to reduce the diversion of firearms into criminal hands, under new pressure from a traumatized public opinion, Jean-Claude Juncker's Commission published a new Communication in early 2015, the EU Security Agenda, aimed at tackling terrorism and preventing radicalisation, disrupting organised crime and promising to review legislation on firearms with proposals in 2016. Therefore, FACE had been expecting proposals to be made in the Commission's Work Programme for 2016, to be published in October 2015.

The political pressure inside France was however growing. On 8 October 2015 the Council of EU pushed by France, reached conclusions inviting the European Commission to "present a proposal to revise Directive 91/477 (the Firearms Directive) at the latest at the beginning of 2016 in order to strengthen the firearms legislative framework, for example to improve the sharing of information on firearms, reinforce their traceability, to standardise marking and to take into account the illegal trafficking through the Internet and Darknet".

FACE reacted quickly setting up a Firearms Expert Group and calling a meeting which took place in Brussels on the 9th of November 2015 to devise the FACE strategy which would tackle the now certain re-opening of the Firearms Directive in 2016.

Again, history took everyone by surprise with the terrorist attacks in Paris of the 13th of November 2015. Only 5 days later the European Commission tabled a rushed proposal for a revision of the Firearms Directive.

FACE immediately reacted questioning whether the proposals would contribute to the combat against terrorism and radicalization. While supporting the European Commission's initiatives in the fight against terrorism and illegal practices, FACE nonetheless questioned how the Commission's proposal to further restrict the lawful possession of firearms by hunters and sports shooters would prevent terrorists from committing atrocities.

Although some points could generally be considered acceptable, such as the better tracing of firearms and improved

transboundary cooperation between police forces, FACE harshly criticized the European Commission for the absence of an impact assessment, which made it impossible to estimate the consequences of the proposed amendments on criminal activities, as well as on the lawful use of firearms.

The experts of the FACE Firearms Expert Group had analysed the amendments and identified the critical areas for hunters and sport shooters soon presenting the Commission with the comments.

The establishment of the FACE Firearms Expert Group proved to be the appropriate tool to share information about the application of the Firearms Directive in different Member States and to devise a common position and joint strategy.

FACE was able to draft solid documents tackling all critical aspects of the revision and bringing valid arguments to defend semi-automatic rifles of category B7 sales by means of distance communication, exception for young hunters, time limited validity of licences and sound moderators. Another problem was represented by the proposal to standardise medical tests, de facto ignoring that Member States had implemented effective and secure procedures to ensure the monitoring of firearms owners.

The engagement with other stakeholders was also part of the FACE strategy. The European Shooting Sport Forum, composed of hunters, sport shooters, industry, collectors and dealers, was used as a coordination platform for the drafting of a common position that would represent a strong unified political message for policymakers and that would constitute the corner stone of a joint campaign of legal firearms users against unjustified restrictive measures.

In spite of the unpredictable unrolling of tragic events FACE and the Members of the Firearms Expert Group had laid the groundwork for the real efforts in terms of lobbying that would need to be done in 2016.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Hunters monitor the health status of animals living in the wild (Swine Fever, Rabies, Avian Influenza amongst others) and so play a key role in protecting public health and that of domestic (farmed) animals. In this way, hunters are key partners of European (EU) and international (OIE) initiatives against transmissible diseases (zoonosis).

FACE informs EU policies to make them workable for hunters in the field and provides guidance to hunters on how best to comply with administrative procedures linked to game meat, human and animal health.

New Seal Trade Regulation Blocks Sustainable Use And Obliges Waste of Natural Resources in The Eu

On 6 February 2015, the European Commission presented a proposal to ban trade in products from seals taken in EU waters by removing the Marine Resources Management (MRM) exception from the general seal trade ban of 2009. This proposal sets a dangerous precedent for sustainability and environmental ethics by encouraging the hunt of seals in EU waters, while at the same time restricting the use of what is being hunted - thus endorsing waste of the Union's natural resources. The Commission argued its proposal was part of a package to conform to a report in May 2014 by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In the EU, seals are hunted as part of the sustainable management of marine resources, notably to protect against damages to fisheries. In 2012, a European Parliament resolution "urge[d] the Commission to take measures to reduce the negative effects of seals on fish stocks". Fishermen report that, where passive gears such as hooks and nets are being used, up to 90-95 % of the catch is taken by seals. Against this background, record-high hunting quotas for seals have been set this year by the Member States where seals are hunted.

The Commission proposal explicitly recognised the importance of this hunt. However, in an act of remarkable contradiction, it removed one of the strongest incentives for

hunters to participate, namely to be able to trade the excess of fur, fat and meat from this abundant natural resource.

In 2009 when the European Parliament and Council of the EU adopted Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products, the idea of a blanket ban was explicitly rejected by both institutions, mainly with the situation in the EU Member States around the Baltic Sea in mind. Some of the arguments used in favour of continued trade were the non-commercial character of the hunt, tradition, the need for managing marine resources, to protect fisheries and the principle of sustainable use and non-wastage of a natural resource, to which the EU and its Member States are legally bound, inter alia under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

After months of negotiations, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the proposal amending Regulation 1007/2009 on trade in seal products during an informal trilogue meeting on 25 June.

Instead of rethinking the entire seal trade ban or follow the Report of the International Trade Committee, which proposed a new derogation in order to avoid discarded seals, the EU legislator finally gave into the pressures of North-American animal rights NGOs by eliminating completely the MRM exception. Nevertheless, the new agreed text acknowledges, in its 4th recital, that the removal of the exception may create problems in the Member States concerned and therefore should be taken into account when the Commission shall "assess the functioning, effectiveness and impacts of th[e] Regulation in achieving its objectives". On 8 September, the European Parliament adopted the compromise text after a heated debate in the plenary, where notably Nordic MEPs raised their voices against the inconsistencies of the proposal, which was followed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Council of the European Union on 23 September.

While FACE regrets the final outcome and the ban on perfectly sustainable trade, we welcome the review clause inserted in the modified Regulation to look into the consequences of such a ban. FACE will remain extremely vigilant so that the orchestrated campaign that led to the adoption of the Regulation will not be repeated for other sustainable use practices or species, which would damage the EU's reputation as a leading actor on sustainability worldwide.

Animal Welfare

European Commission Confirms: No EU Mandate to Regulate The Welfare of Wild Animals in Relation to Hunting

FACE has consistently held that the EU has no competence to regulate the welfare of wild animals in relation to hunting and that the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 never altered this fact.

It was therefore welcomed that the Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Karmenu Vella, in a written reply of 9 September 2015 to a Parliamentary question by Italian EPP MEP Fulvio Martusciello, clarified that hunting practices involving species of no EU conservation concern nor protected under EU nature legislation are matters of national competence.

Furthermore, FACE very much appreciated that the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, in a written reply of 20 April 2015 to a Parliamentary question by Italians EFDD MEPs, reaffirmed that even though Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires in particular for the Member States to pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals in the context of certain of the Union's policies, it does not have a general application and does not apply to areas where the Union has no legal base to harmonise in the field of animal welfare, such as the field of environment.

Hopefully, this admirable clarity will help settling the issue of where the legal competence to regulate wild animal welfare, including for wild game, belongs. That is, in the national parliaments, which are best placed to deal effectively with these issues – not in the EU Institutions. This is important, as political decisions affecting the great diversity of European hunting cultures and traditions should be taken as close to the citizens as possible.

In this regards, the hunting associations are constantly updating at the national level their codes of ethics and conducts.



EU Wildlife Health Conference, May 2015

Hunters identified as key partners

The European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) with the cooperation of the Directorate General Environment (DG ENV) organised a one-day conference in Brussels on 5 May, with the focus on wildlife and the issues of animal health, welfare, environment and species conservation. FACE was represented in the final round-table discussion by former FACE Secretary-General Yves Lecocq, himself a doctor in Veterinary medicine. The conference audience – consisting of the authorities of Member States, international organisations, scientists, industry stakeholders and NGOs – were moreover offered insight into what European hunters do for conservation, disease prevention and control, by paying a visit to FACE's information stand in front of the meeting room.

While it was generally recognised by numerous speakers, including the European Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), that hunters play an important role in disease monitoring and control, a more heated debate arose concerning the issue of whether hunters, in order to maximise hunting opportunities, are drivers of wildlife overpopulation that in turn could be said posing a threat to farmed animals.

In his intervention Dr Yves Lecocq regretted that wildlife sometimes becomes a scapegoat or alibi, being blamed to act as a reservoir for diseases, when in reality poor biosecurity measures or even illegal movements of live or dead domestic and wild animals contribute to the problem.

The Commission very bluntly clarified to animal rights organisations at the round-table that if they intend to ask for EU action to ban certain categories of animal use based on health arguments there must be an added value with EU intervention. Ideological, non-scientific policies will not be pursued by the health services of the Commission, DG SANTE.

This message from the Head of Animal Health Unit was welcomed by FACE, particularly as earlier during the conference a senior Commission official from the Animal Welfare Unit had referred to the so-called "five freedoms" – specifically developed for domestic animals – in relation to wildlife. For wild animals, welfare first of all plays a role at the level of the population – only afterwards for individual specimen.



New EU Animal Health Law

New Regulation on the prevention and control of contagious animal diseases

On 1 June 2015, the European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the outstanding issues concerning the proposal for a regulation on an animal health law during an informal trilogue meeting. This law will become applicable 5 years after its entry into force. Throughout the legislative process, FACE worked constructively with the EU institutions to secure a reasonable text for hunters.

All farmers, other animal owners and traders (including hunters and sport shooters) will be obliged to apply the principles of good animal husbandry and a prudent, responsible use of veterinary medicines. The agreed text states that all disease control measures will have to take animal welfare into account and spare targeted animals, including stray animals, any avoidable pain, distress or suffering. However, this Regulation does not contain provisions which regulate animal welfare itself.

One of the main provisions in this new Regulation concerns the list of contagious diseases which would be established and categorised according to specific criteria. To ensure that disease prevention and control decisions are effective, the EU legislator included provisions to involve both Parliament

and the Council in establishing and updating the list of potentially dangerous diseases, such as African swine fever, avian influenza or foot and mouth disease, in consultation with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) experts and involve stakeholders in drafting and updating contingency plans.

To tackle the problem of strays transmitting animal diseases, MEPs inserted provisions that would require all professional pet keepers (including hunters who keep hunting dogs and ferrets) and sellers to be registered and empower the Commission to ask EU member states to establish a computer database of dogs and other pets, if need be.

The new law replaces more than 50 Directives and Regulations by one single Regulation with clear principles and goals which will be easier to understand by the 25 million EU citizens affected by this legislation.

In this regards, FACE welcomes the final text and believes that it contributes in a holistic and balanced way to the effective prevention and control of animal disease occurrences in the Union. Hunters will continue to be in the frontline of monitoring the health status of animals living in the wild. They will so play a key role in protecting both the environment and public and animal health, an important task duly recognised by the new EU Animal Health Law.



HUNTING METHODS AND CULTURE



Europe is home to a rich diversity of hunting methods, traditions and cultures. These have grown naturally out of local adaptations to the environment and its species.

The richness they offer is a part of our shared heritage. This can also have practical applications in retaining local knowledge and continuing to provide recreational benefits.

The diversity of these methods, traditions and cultures gives rise to varied applications through Europe. In recognising the principle of solidarity, FACE supports the various legal hunting methods, traditions and cultures in Europe whilst fully recognising the principle of subsidiarity which defers decisions on their application to national levels.

FACE works primarily to support activities related to hunting methods, traditions and cultures, this work often being carried out by other organisations, who we view as important partners.

These include the International Union of Hunting with Hounds, the European Bowhunters' Federation, the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey and the European Association of Traditional Hunters to name a few.

In addition, our work in support of angling recognises the fact that a number of our Members are hunting and angling associations, hence this is a form of solidarity with other recreational wildlife users, with whom we share many values.

Best Practice for Trapping Mammals in Europe

Traps are used worldwide in interactions with wildlife. Trapping is a method for sustainable utilisation of natural resources. It is also used to minimise environmental damage or to assist conservation by helping to control over-abundant or alien invasive species, or for relocation. It is an equally valuable research method, for example to fit individuals with markers or transmitters to follow their movements. Since many mammals are predominantly nocturnal, or are present around buildings or settlements, trapping is often the safest method for restraint.

Without trapping, overpopulation of certain species – including invasive alien species – can occur, with serious potential consequences for human health, private property and ecosystems. FACE supports the development in Europe of certification systems for trap-types based upon international standards within the framework of the AIHTS (Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards). FACE strongly advocates international cooperation in the certification of trap types and offers its expertise in this field. In addition to trap standards, FACE recognises the importance of best practice and methods to ensure a high standard of welfare for the trapped animals. Indeed under Article 8 (b) of the AIHTS, it is indicated that ‘trappers are trained in the humane, safe and effective use of trapping method, including new methods as these are developed’.

Best Practice Guidelines on Trapping Mammals in Europe

These guidelines seek to promote a greater understanding of trapping activities and promote high standards of trapping methods.

These guidelines are meant for trappers, authorities, NGO’s and other parties interested in trapping of mammals. The information presented in this document refers to specific species and guidelines for trapping them while ensuring a high standard of welfare for the trapped animals and to ensure that any non-target captures are minimal.

Trapping is a legitimate and indispensable activity for regulating wildlife populations. To avoid that there are unjustified restrictions of this activity and to ensure that

trapping remains ecologically and socially sustainable, more needs to be done to create greater understanding of trapping activities and promote high standards of trapping methods.

To progress towards this aim FACE developed best practice guidelines for certain mammal species. The Trapping Guidelines are a series of five guidelines covering the following species: *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Martes martes*, *Ondatra zibethicus*, and *Castor fiber*.

Each of these guidelines contains information about the species, its biology, distribution, how to identify track and signs, followed by practical advice on traps and trapping methods. This work was very much a collaborative exercise as FACE teamed up with experts from its national Members, wildlife agencies, and specialists from the Union of European Trapper’s Associations.

IUHH International Union of Hunting with Hounds – Internal Meeting, 19 October 2015, Dublin, Ireland

The IUHH Meeting 2015 in Dublin was organized by FACE Ireland and chaired by Philip Donnelly, Director of Hunting with Hounds in Ireland. IUHH members from New Zealand, USA, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Ireland were present. FACE was represented by its Public Affairs Officer Cecilia Luetgebrune, who gave a short report on the most important topics, FACE had been dealing with since the IUHH meeting in 2014.

The most important topics discussed included the growing influence of Animal Rights groups, who now use high-tech equipment when secretly following hunts and in some countries strongly influence law enforcement. The opportunities and risks associated with using social media to promote Hunting with Hounds to counterweight the Animal Rights NGO’s media presence were discussed. However, it was decided to restrain from opening new Facebook or Twitter accounts in the near future.

The participants agreed that proper training and education of hunt staff by strictly implementing the respective Codes of Conduct for Hunting with Hounds is of outmost importance in order to keep a high reputation amongst farmers, landowners and, where possible, the media.

Many IUHH members expressed concerns regarding the lack of qualified junior hunt staff to secure the future of the sport, especially in countries, where Hunting with Hounds has been banned in the recent years. To kick-start the necessary change of generation within the association itself, the members agreed to each bring along one junior huntsman/woman to the next IUHH meeting in 2016.

Further topics discussed included the Animal Health and Welfare Act, the EPASE (Ethical Platform of Animal Sectors in Europe) workshop organized by FACE Europe and the EU parliamentary question on Foxhunting, which showed that the Commission regards Fox Hunting as a matter of purely national competence, but that hunters have to permanently be prepared for potential political attacks.

It was decided, that the chair of the IUHH Annual Meeting should be responsible for following up the decisions that were taken during the meeting.

International Association for Falconry And Conservation of Birds of Prey

The IAF is dedicated to the preservation of the ancient art of falconry. Preserving falconry involves maintaining not only the traditional culture that builds practical skills of empathy with animals, but also the conservation of raptors and their prey through preservation of natural habitats.

We therefore encourage falconry within the context of the sustainable use of wildlife. The IAF is made up of 110 associations in 80 countries worldwide, totaling 60,000 Members.

Following UNESCO's recognition of Falconry as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010, FACE collaborates with the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) to promote the cultural aspects of hunting, as well as on relevant technical dossiers.

European Bowhunting Federation

The European Bowhunting Federation (EBF) promotes high ethical standards in a form of hunting that is tens of thousands of years old. EBF's mission is to inform the public and to provide a base of knowledge for guiding governmental and supporting non-governmental organisations toward effective implementation of the art of hunting with the bow and arrow.

The EBF gathers 28 European national bowhunting organisations all over Europe, and is an Associate Member of FACE since 2014.

Significant for the bowhunter of today is the commitment and enthusiasm for nature as well as dedication to the weapon of choice, spending hours practising on becoming a master of the bow and the art of getting close to the prey through skill and knowledge of the animal and its environment.



Finances

FACE delivers very cost-effective support to its Members, when considering all of the work carried out by the FACE Secretariat and the fact that Membership subscriptions represent less than 10 cents per hunter.

It is in this ethos that FACE offers cost-effective and transparent management of finances to its partners, generating maximum impact with limited expenditure.



While the core funding of FACE comes from the Memberships fees, a portion of FACE's budget is also financed by the European Commission's Directorate Environment through LIFE NGO Funding.

PERIOD FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2014

INCOME

Full Membership Fees	691,524 €
Associate Membership Fees	21,000 €
Projects	11,208 €
LIFE NGO Grant	132,851 €
Subsidies & Gifts	36,000 €
Additional Subsidies	29,500 €
Operational Support	12,765 €
FACE Research Fund	27,503 €
Passion Books	18,870 €
Financial Income	20,246 €
TOTAL	1,001,466 €

EXPENDITURE

Premises	16,673 €
Consumables	3,742 €
Administration	54,120 €
Communications	152,568 €
SPA Costs	5,263 €
President & SG costs	9,533 €
Staff Payroll	634,209 €
Staff Missions	68,190 €
Staff Training & Developpement	7,357 €
Depreciation	30,136 €
Written off Trade Debtors	118,770 €
TOTAL	1,100,561 €

Transparency

FACE is fully signed up to the EU Transparency Register (Reg No 75899541198-85) which has been set up and is operated by the European Parliament and the European Commission. FACE operates by the Code of Conduct in all our relations with the EU Institutions and their Members, officials and other staff.

For more details on the register see http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index_en.htm





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