

THE BIODIVERSITY MANIFESTO



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in Europe and worldwide. Despite that some major progresses were made such as the establishment of the Natura 2000 network¹, the overall target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010² was not reached. The barrier was converting the endorsement of the 2006 EU Biodiversity Action Plan into real commitment for change. Learning from this failure the European Commission tabled an ambitious but more realistic set of targets to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020³, which was adopted by the European Parliament resolution in April 2012.

Coming at the mid-term period of the current strategy, it is useful to examine both the remaining and the winning efforts. Since 2011, the European Commission has taken steps to improve the European governance and to efficiently implement the current strategy through the creation of new working groups and initiatives as well as the involvement of various stakeholders. There are also new environmental, social and economic tools emerging to deal with biodiversity loss. Whilst more is required, together we are making a difference.

The value of biodiversity encompasses a plurality of perceptions, practices, knowledge and cultural values that call for tolerance and mutual respect in order to work together. Socio-diversity echoes biodiversity. Biodiversity and nature should not be sanctified but socialised. Managing biodiversity does not only entail the management of all biological entities but also the management of social diversity.

Hunters share a passion for nature, 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 biodiversity⁴.

Michl Ebner
President
(MEP 1994 – 2009)

THE BIODIVERSITY MANIFESTO

1. HABITATS

Protecting habitats is a fundamental means to conserve wild flora and fauna, thereby maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ultimately it is through individual actions at grassroots level that a difference can be made.

Through the Habitats Directive⁵, the European Union (EU)⁶ has achieved a great deal by identifying the 231 most important European habitat types also included in the creation of the Natura 2000 network. Now it is necessary to ensure that this work has not been done in vain by conducting more actions for our most fragile and valuable habitats without excluding the more common ones.

Agriculture which accounts for about 50% of the European land area has shown worrying declines in biodiversity⁷. Whilst potential exists through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)⁸ reform, action is still needed on the ground. Hunters continue to play a pivotal role in putting biodiversity-friendly measures in place within farmland habitats.

FACE and its Members urge policy makers to draw upon a combination of innovation, science and perhaps most importantly local knowledge to conserve Europe's most important habitats. There is a need to communicate to the public the importance of conserving the wider countryside and restore common habitats which are principally close to them. For this, all stakeholders need to recognise the multi-functionality of Europe's rural areas and to find ways to work together to conserve habitats.

Across Europe, hunters are doing just this through cooperation with others, particularly farmers, foresters and landowners. Hunters will continue to work hard, invest time and money in their efforts to conserve local hunting areas and ultimately Europe's habitats.

ACTION POINTS

FACE will :

1.1 - Develop strategies and policies to **address habitat provisioning** within the Common Agricultural Policy (through Pillar 1 and Pillar 2).

1.2 - Continue to collaborate with farmers and conservation organisations to **maintain and restore farmland biodiversity** through local actions.

1.3 - Work with landowners, forestry interests and conservation organisations to develop policies and strategies that seek to achieve a **balance in the management of forest ecosystems** that is positive for biodiversity.

1.4 - Continue efforts at the local level to **maintain and restore wetlands**.

1.5 - Collate and communicate best practice examples of habitat conservation by hunters in forest and agricultural landscapes as well as wetlands.



2. SPECIES

While maintaining the habitats in good condition is critical for fulfilling the general ecological requirements of species, there are circumstances where certain species need particular attention. Endangered species require special protection regimes or Invasive Alien Species (IAS) need certain measures of regulation or control. All this of course necessitates careful decision making so that species which require specific attention can be prioritised.

The IUCN Red List⁹ provides an assessment of extinction risk for species at a global level and provides useful supporting information to establish priorities. Initiatives have also been taken to assess certain species groups at EU Level (e.g. mammals, reptiles, butterflies)¹⁰. Unfortunately this focus can obscure the fact that nature is dynamic and not all species can thrive at once. Fluxes need to be carefully managed to ensure that the diversity of nature is retained.

FACE and its Members urge policy makers and conservation organisations dealing with species conservation to make decisions based on the best scientific knowledge and wise judgement for the benefit of the concerned species as well as the interacting species. As hunters we will continue to work with positive incentives to conserve not only huntable species but all species.



ACTION POINTS

FACE will :

2.1 - Encourage hunters to continue engaging in **programs to monitor and assess the status** of huntable and other wild animal species, and **implement appropriate conservation measures.**

2.2 - **Highlight best practice** amongst hunters with regards to species' identification programs, harvest regulation schemes (such as bag limits), restoration and conservation.

2.3 - Communicate to hunters the necessity to **identify, control and avoid the introduction of alien animal and plant species.**

2.4 - **Contribute to policy formulation** for issues such as the control of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and large carnivore conservation.

2.5 - Promote the development and implementation of management and action plans especially for species considered to be at risk.

2.6 - **Contribute to the formulation of guidance documents** on issues such as hunting during periods of severe environmental conditions (e.g. extreme cold or dry weather, forest fires, oil spills and epizootics).

2.7 - Continue to **contribute to the conservation of endangered species** (e.g. lesser white fronted goose, lesser kestrel, Iberian lynx).

2.8 - **Collaborate for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory birds and the conservation of habitats along their flyways** (especially within the framework of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, AEWA).

2.9 - **Promote the sustainable use and ecologically balanced control** of widespread opportunistic species and generalist predators (e.g. fox, corvids, mustelidae).



3. PROTECTED AREAS

The importance of Protected Areas for nature and biodiversity cannot be overstated; in particular the Natura 2000 network provides an excellent basis for nature conservation in the EU. In the meantime, the Birds¹¹ and Habitats Directives leave rooms for flexibility allowing the socio-economic activities inside Natura 2000 sites, unless they negatively impact on the conservation of the species or habitats for which the sites were designated. However, this latter concept is often not well interpreted, understood or received at local levels.

As the European landscape is predominantly anthropogenic, protected areas cannot be stand-alone refuges but must integrate into the multifunctional landscape. Some of the most important wildlife sites in Europe have survived the pressures of development and destruction due to the interest of wildlife uses such as hunting. Unfortunately, hunting is often an easy activity to limit and prohibit for local authorities within protected areas.

Conservation will be best served by ensuring more pragmatic approaches to protected areas at national levels. We highlight that protection is only a part of conservation and is not conservation in itself.



ACTION POINTS

FACE will:

3.1 - Engage in dialogue facilitation and conflict resolution between stakeholders within protected areas.

3.2 - Continue to promote hunters' engagement in the management of protected areas in collaboration with the relevant competent authorities and other stakeholders (especially in regards to Natura 2000).

3.3 - Collate best practice examples to its hunting community and the public.

3.4 - Continue to promote the application of IUCN guidelines for protected areas¹⁴.

4. SUSTAINABLE USE

In recognising that humans are a part of nature both the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹² and the EU consider that biological resources must be used in a sustainable manner.

More specifically the EU, the Council of Europe¹³ and the CBD as well as other major international environmental agreements (Convention on Migratory Species, CMS¹⁴; African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, AEWA¹⁵; etc.) all recognise the legitimacy of hunting as a use of nature.

In this respect the Council of Europe together with a wide range of stakeholders has produced the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity outlining a comprehensive set of principles and guidelines for sustainable hunting¹⁶.

Finally, the EU has also promoted dialogue on the sustainable hunting of birds through the Sustainable Hunting Initiative¹⁷. Conservation will be advanced if the EU develops and adopts strategies which are informed by the Sustainable Hunting Initiative's experience. These strategies should support the recognition and further involvement of wildlife users in conservation policies and actions.

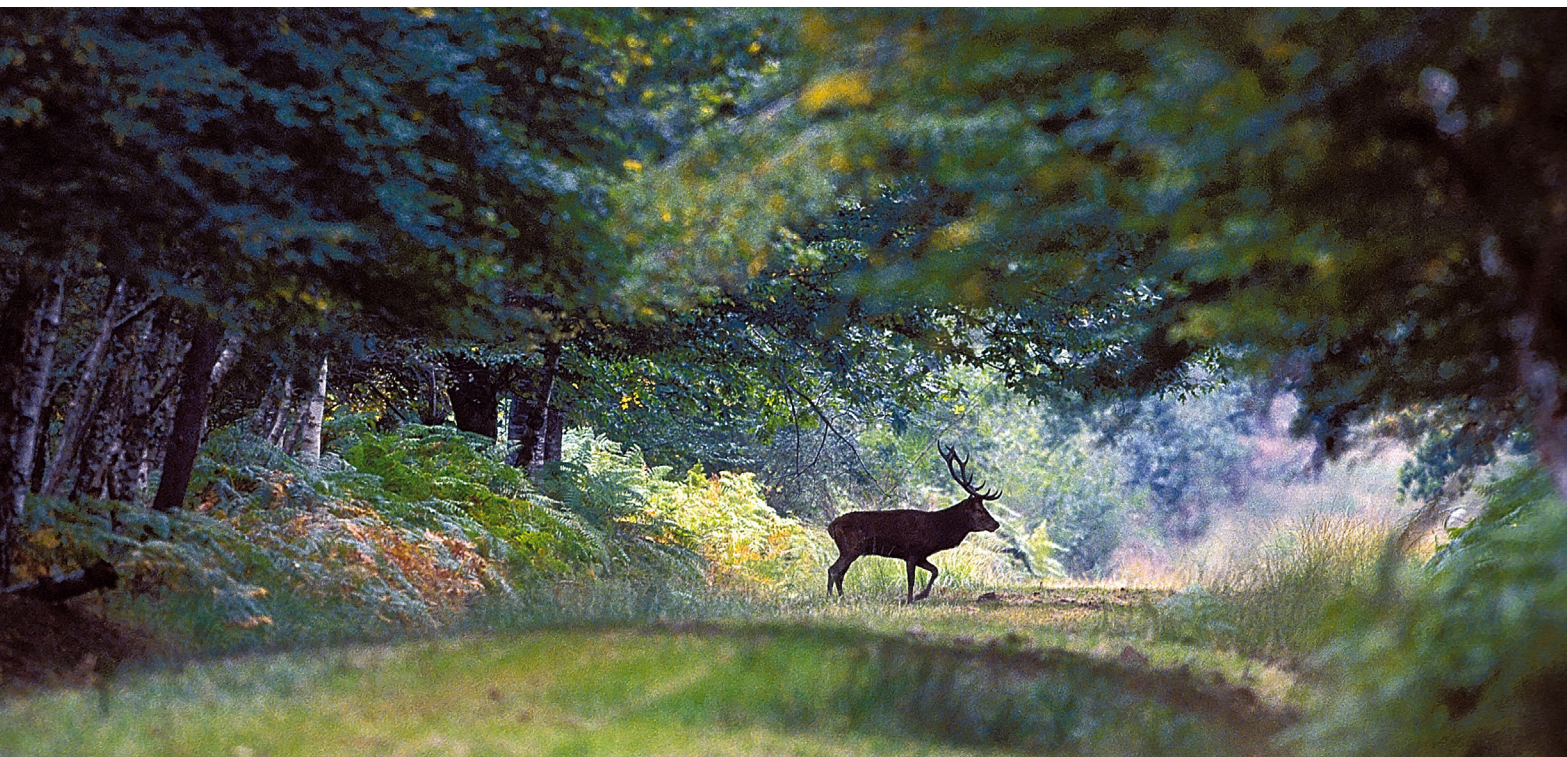
FACE and its Members urge other conservation NGOs and civil society groups to join with hunters and other wildlife users and their organisations in a constructive dialogue to focus on enhancing their contribution towards nature conservation through sustainable utilisation. We will continue to maintain and further enhance sustainable use through hunting as a tool for conservation.

ACTION POINTS

FACE will:

4.1 - Create better understanding of sustainable use principles and their implementation, as promoted by the Addis Ababa Principles of the CBD and the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity of the Council of Europe.

4.2 - Lead efforts for a new sustainable wildlife use initiative, complementary to the Sustainable Hunting Initiative that has a credible representation and support from wildlife users.



4.3 - **Encourage the collection of hunting and population statistics and facilitate research** to assess the sustainability of hunting practices.

4.4 - Seek ways to **involve and organise local hunters, their knowledge and experience** in promoting good management and best practice for the implementation of EU Nature and Biodiversity Policies.

4.5 - **Raise awareness amongst the public on the wise use of huntable species**, with emphasis on wastage prevention and the health benefit of wild game meat.



5. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Europe is the most fragmented continent of the globe¹⁸. Whilst protected areas such as Natura 2000 sites are an important backbone for conservation, the wider landscape is also crucially important for providing nature with enough resilience when facing environmental changes and instability. As development continues and the stock of nature is depleted, nature flexibility is reduced. The conservation of the wider landscape is crucial for supporting ecosystems, providing connectivity, flexibility and resilience.

The Green Infrastructure concept¹⁹ 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. Therefore, it is a tool that uses nature to provide ecological, economic and social services and benefits.

Whilst specific measures such as green bridges are important, it is the management of the wider countryside that is required for successful conservation. This is where hunters have a vital role to play as they are managing a substantial part of the countryside in collaboration with landowners, farmers, foresters, local communities and other stakeholders. Though it is managed primarily for huntable species, this has positive effects for a wide range of other species and habitats.

More should therefore be done to identify and promote the role of hunters in the cooperative management of Green Infrastructure. This should be supported by incentive measures for hunters and their local organisations to ensure that these areas are managed as part of wider landscape management objectives.



ACTION POINTS

FACE will :

5.1 - Continue to **promote the sustainable management of hunting areas**, whenever possible within voluntary cooperation and coordination schemes (such as Game Management Units, Conseils cynégétiques or Hegegemeinschaften) which maintain a fundamental green infrastructure for the conservation of nature at a landscape level, thus **securing ecosystems, increasing landscape connectivity and its capacity to respond to environmental change**.

5.2 - Actively **demonstrate and explain ‘tried-and-tested’ management measures** undertaken within hunting areas that underpin a green infrastructure.

5.3 - Actively **contribute to the policy development for a Green Infrastructure** within the EU.

6. ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

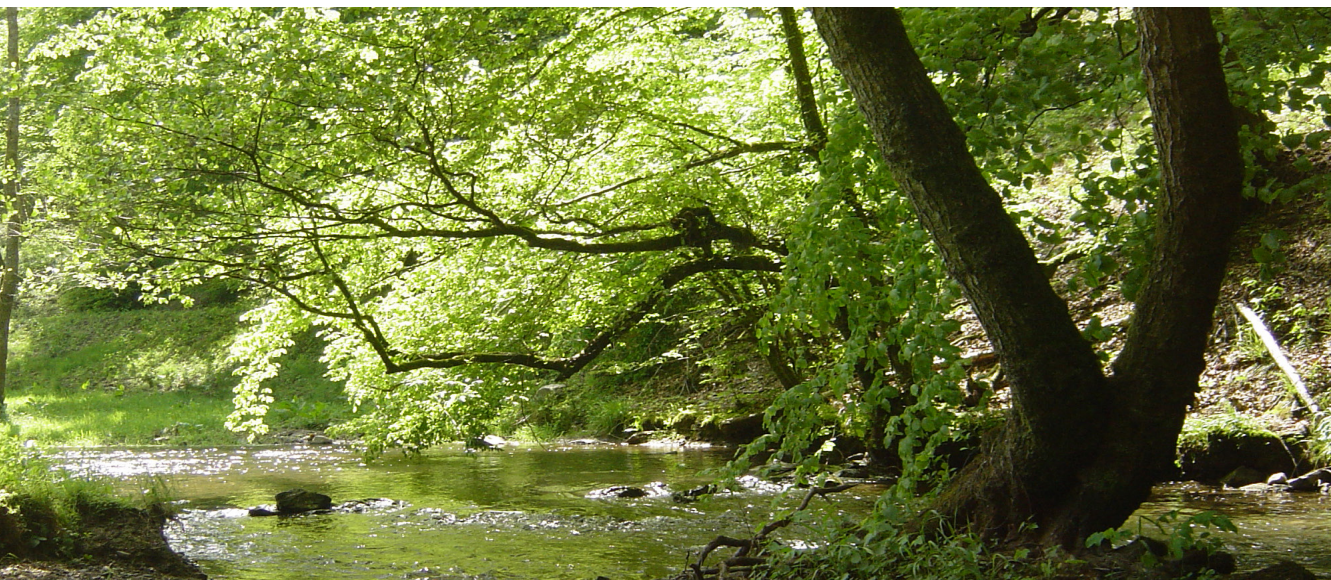
Every day all of us use environmental resources both directly and indirectly, consumptively and non-consumptively. Our lives depend on nature, not just for the life-giving services it provides (such as water and air purification) but also for our wellbeing and recreation.

Developments in environmental economics such as the Stern Review²⁰ and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study²¹, have started to show the immense value of ecosystem services to society. At the base of these findings is the need for functioning ecosystems.

In Europe, most ecosystems have strong anthropogenic drivers and require active management, both to conserve and enhance their functioning. We recognise the important role of protected areas, especially the Natura 2000 network, in providing a backbone for ecosystems, but also draw attention to the wider European landscape. It is often hunters as both users of ecosystem services and in part managers of ecosystems that actively conserve this wider landscape, contributing to ecosystem resilience and restoration.

At EU level, we welcome and encourage the development of tools assessing ecosystem services and including this perspective in nature conservation as well as valuing nature in EU accounting²². However, the latter should be carefully conducted so that the process is not reduced in putting price tags on nature.

On one hand, nature dependent policies such as those relating to Agriculture (Common Agricultural Policy, CAP), Forestry (broad array of Community policies²³) and Fisheries (Common Fisheries Policies, CFP²⁴) are systematically revised to address conservation needs but on the other hand, they should also maintain the ability of people in those sectors to sustain their livelihoods as with any other sector of society.



ACTION POINTS

FACE will :

6.1 - Endeavour to **improve information on ecosystems and the services that they provide** by continuing to be involved in collaborative research and monitoring that contributes to the placing of a true value on biodiversity assets.

6.2 - Endeavour to **improve understanding of the importance of healthy and resilient ecosystems and the services that such ecosystems provide**, by collaborating in awareness raising programs as well as educational activities, both for hunters and the public.

6.3- **Advocate that the conservation work that local hunters carry out** contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of functioning ecosystems.

6.4 - **Actively support and promote the work of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)³.**

7. INVESTING IN NATURE

Society does not invest sufficiently in nature. However it is not simply a question of making funds available for nature, it is also about being able to deploy them to where they are most needed. The EU and its Member States make available financial resources for the environment which are generally well used although limited.

Hunters have long paid their way both financially and in kind. Hunters and other wildlife users invest considerable time and effort in carrying out conservation work all year round. This not only has positive impacts on the environment but also improves our knowledge of nature. It has been estimated that hunters in the EU alone spend annually some 16 billion €, a good portion of which goes back to nature²⁵. In the course of carrying out wildlife management activities hunters in many countries offset costs that would otherwise have to be covered by tax payers, by compensating for damages and managing wild populations.

Furthermore, hunters and other wildlife users ensure that nature has a value through the services and wellbeing it provides, not just in Europe but worldwide. As it is the recognition of the real value of nature that will drive investment, these values often make the difference between ongoing conservation of wildlife and its destruction. FACE and its Members will continue to invest their resources in nature and maximise the benefits, through the following actions;

ACTION POINTS

FACE will :

7.1 - Improve the understanding of how hunters spend their resources within the context of ecosystems, so that investments in nature can be better targeted and valued.

7.2 - Examine and promote economic tools (e.g. biodiversity banking, fiscal incentives, subsidies, funding mechanisms) to support conservation measures associated with sustainable uses such as hunting, to provide sustainable solutions for biodiversity conservation.

7.3 - Encourage actions associated with hunting through rural development programs creating jobs, businesses and other economic activity that sustains nature.



Finnish picture: Juha Siekkinen, Finnish Wildlife Agency, Project manager of “Life+ Return of Rural Wetlands”

8. HUNTERS FOR NATURE

Biodiversity is nature. Nature needs people who understand its complexity and are willing to work with it. Across Europe, millions of hunters work for nature conservation, mainly by undertaking actions at local and regional levels.

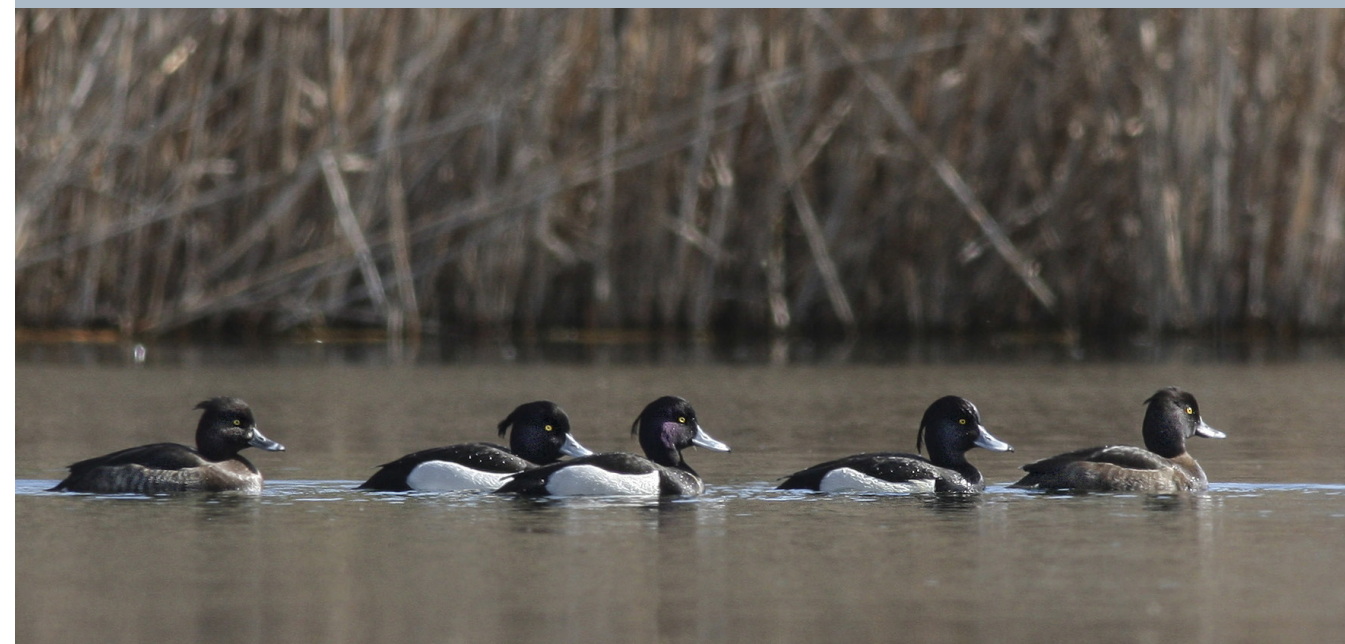
With our collective effort we ensure that we can continue to hunt, and - more importantly - to show that we care. Hunters contribute to biodiversity in a wide variety of ways. In an increasingly urbanised world they retain a link to nature regardless of where they live. Hunters carry with them traditional knowledge and practices that are still relevant today in the conservation of nature. “Reading” the environment is a rare skill these days and one that is increasingly confined to hunters, other field naturalists and land managers.

At the same time hunters have adapted and contribute to our contemporary knowledge of nature and biodiversity through monitoring and research. Hunters give time and money for conservation activities throughout the year and often this takes place in common areas that would otherwise be overlooked but where conservation is actually needed.

This Manifesto is our commitment to making sure that hunting is sustainable and in doing so, contributing positively to biodiversity conservation and our shared heritage – Nature!



8.1 - We will 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.



ENDNOTES

¹ **The Natura 2000 network** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

² **EU Biodiversity Action Plan** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index_en.htm

³ **Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, European Commission** - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

⁴ **Case studies examples - Hunters for conservation** - <http://www.face.eu/nature-conservation/hunters-for-conservation>

⁵ **Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, European Commission** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

⁶ **Gateway to the European Union** - <http://europa.eu>

⁷ **Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target, European Environment Agency** - www.eea.europa.eu/publications/progress-towards-the-european-2010-biodiversity-target-indicator-fact-sheets

⁸ **The Common Agricultural Policy after 2013, European Commission** - <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/>

⁹ **The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species** - www.iucnredlist.org

¹⁰ **European Red List** - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/>

¹¹ **Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm

¹² **The Convention on Biological Diversity** – <http://www.cbd.int>

¹³ **The Council of Europe** – <http://www.coe.int>

¹⁴ **The Convention on Migratory Species** – <http://www.cms.int>

¹⁵ **African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement** – <http://www.unep-aewa.org>

¹⁶ **European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity**, Council of Europe 2008, Nature and environment, No. 150.

¹⁷ **The Sustainable Hunting Initiative, European Commission** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/index_en.htm

¹⁸ **Millenium Ecosystem Assessment** – <http://www.maweb.org>

¹⁹ **Green Infrastructure, European Commission** - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm

²⁰ **The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change** - http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4/3/executive_summary.pdf

²¹ **The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity** – <http://www.teebweb.org>

²² **The EU process of Mapping and Assessing Ecosystems and their Services (MAES)** - <http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes>

²³ **EU Forest policies, European Commission** - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/fpolicies.htm>

²⁴ **Common Fisheries Policies, European Commission** - http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/index_en.htm

²⁵ **GEM-CON-BIO, FP6 Project, European Commission** – http://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/47150_en.html

FACE MEMBERS

- Albania - Federata e Gjuetareve te Shqiperise
- Austria - Zentralstelle Österreichischer Landesjagdverbände
- Belgium - Royal Saint-Hubert Club de Belgique / Hubertus Vereniging Vlaanderen vzw
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
 - Lovački Savez Herceg-Bosne (LSHB)
 - Lovački Savez Republike Srpska (LRRS)
 - Savez Lovačkih organizacija BiH (SLOBiH)
- Bulgaria - Съюз на ловците и риболовците в България
- Croatia - Hrvatski Lovački Savez
- Cyprus - ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ ΚΥΝΗΓΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΤΗΡΗΣΗΣ ΑΓΡΙΑΣ ΖΩΗΣ
- Czech Republic - Ceskomoravská Myslivecká Jednota
- Denmark - Danmarks Jægerforbund
- Estonia - Eesti Jahimeeste Selts
- Finland - Suomen Metsästäjäliitto
- France - Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs
- Germany - Deutscher Jagdverband e.V.
- Greece - ΚΥΝΗΓΕΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ
- Hungary
 - Országos Magyar Vadászkamara
 - Országos Magyar Vadászati Védegylet
- Ireland - National Association of Regional Game Councils
- Italy - FACE Italia
- Latvia - Latvijas Mednieku Asociācija
- Lithuania - Lietuvos mediotojų ir žvejų draugija
- Luxembourg - Fédération Saint-Hubert des Chasseurs du Grand-duché de Luxembourg asbl
- Malta - Federazzjoni Kaċċaturi Nassaba Konservazzjonisti
- Montenegro - Lovački Savez Crne Gore
- Netherlands - Jagersvereniging
- Norway - Norges Jeger-og Fiskerforbund

- Poland - Polski Związek Łowiecki
- Portugal
 - Confederação Nacional dos Caçadores Portugueses (CNCP)
 - Federação Portuguesa de Caça (FENCAÇA)
- Romania - Asociația Generală a Vanatorilor și Pescarilor Sportivi din România (AGVPS)
- Serbia - Lovački savez Srbije
- Slovakia - Slovenský Poľovnícky Zväz
- Slovenia - Lovska zveza Slovenije
- Spain - Oficina Nacional de la Caza
- Sweden - Svenska Jägarförbundet
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