



PRESS RELEASE

FACE: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR HUNTING & CONSERVATION

Halting Europe's Biodiversity Crisis: The Role of Rural Stakeholders

While many of the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 are not being achieved, as highlighted by the Mid Term Review, MEPs, policy-makers, hunters and other rural stakeholders discussed ways of incentivising policies to more efficiently halt biodiversity loss within the EU.

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 27 January 2016 – Today, **MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz**, President of the Parliamentary Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside, chaired the conference “The Mid-Term Review: The Role of Hunters and Rural Stakeholders in Financing Biodiversity Conservation”, organised with the support of FACE (the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation).

The purpose of the meeting was to better understand which policies can contribute to halting the ongoing loss of biodiversity within the EU in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The conference highlighted the role that hunters and other rural stakeholders play in biodiversity conservation when faced with the appropriate instruments and incentives. Among the speakers were Dr **Justin Irvine** from the James Hutton Institute in Scotland, **Konstantin Kostopoulos**, Advisor at ELO, Dr **David Scallan**, Wildlife Policy Officer at FACE and Dr **Norbert Lins**, German MEP and Shadow Rapporteur for the Report on the Mid-Term review of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

A particular focus was set on the financing of biodiversity with regard to the targets set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. Several research projects, including the HUNT (Hunting for Sustainability) project and the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto (BDM), were discussed, demonstrating the engagement of European hunters in biodiversity conservation. The high number of best-practice examples gathered in the BDM Report present a clear overview of the hunters' role in conservation within protected areas, for species, habitats, green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

MEP Karl-Heinz **FLORENZ**, President of the Intergroup stated that *"Time is running out for biodiversity! Europe has to present results regarding biological diversity - as soon as possible! This is highly urgent as the Commission's Mid-term review at the end of last year made it clear that there is still a lot to be done if we want to reach our 2020 goals. As President of the Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside I would like to contribute to bringing together economy and agriculture, hunters and nature conservationists, in order to find common solutions, conserving our natural capital. We have to work together and every sector of stakeholders has to play its part. Economy and ecology must go hand in hand."*

Mr **Konstantin Kostopoulos**, Advisor at ELO, argued that *"The Common Agricultural Policy remains the strongest tool we have, certainly in terms of funding, that we can use to create sustainable agricultural systems that work for farmers, foresters, hunters as well as biodiversity and our ecosystems. In the coming years, we will see if the new greening approach has worked, and what more we can and should do in order to halt and reverse losses in biodiversity"*

The meeting was organised following the recognition of ongoing biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU, which have continued since the EU2010 biodiversity baseline, as confirmed by the 2015 European Environment - State and Outlook Report. This is consistent with global trends and has serious implications for the capacity of biodiversity to meet human needs in the future.

Furthermore, on the 2nd of October, the European Commission published their report on the mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (see the press release in all EU languages [here](#)).

Dr **Justin Irvine** from the James Hutton Institute stated: “*Research from the EU-funded Hunting for Sustainability (HUNT) project shows that hunting can be a force for good in conserving biodiversity because of the conservation focus many hunting systems have. Going forward, we need to promote multifunction use of the countryside and consider the social, cultural, economic and ecological functions and impacts of hunting when making important decisions about biodiversity conservation*”.

Dr. **David Scallan**, Wildlife Policy Officer at FACE, stated “*We urgently need to rethink our approach to biodiversity conservation. We know that rural stakeholders, including farmers and hunters, make huge private investments in biodiversity conservation based on their interest in hunting and/or their desire to restore wildlife. There needs to be greater flexibility within publically-funded policies and instruments at EU and Member State level to further encourage this locally-led passion for conservation*”.

*****ENDS*****

Background

The Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside Intergroup was created in 1985 and is one of the oldest and most active in the Parliament. Since 1985, The Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) provides the Secretariat for the Intergroup. The Intergroup works on issues for which the European Parliament is competent in the fields of biodiversity, hunting, angling, wildlife management, forestry, agriculture and nature conservation, taking into account the public and wild animal health and welfare. The Intergroup also addresses cross-cutting issues which have an impact on socio-economic activities in rural areas.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

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 nongovernmental organisation. FACE is made up of national hunters’ associations from 35 European countries including the EU-28. FACE is supported by 7 associate members and is based in Brussels.

FACE is the largest democratically representative body for hunters in the world.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of the International Union for the 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.

More at: www.face.eu

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