



Hunting abroad Position of FACE

Introduction

Hunting “abroad” is by definition no absolute concept. Indeed, a hunter from a small country or a border region may well hunt regularly on a “local” site and properly manage there “his” game-species, and nevertheless practice hunting in a country different from the one he is living in. And in the same way, a hunter from a large country may be considered as a “hunting tourist” in his own country when he is invited to hunt on an estate more or less far from his home, one which he doesn’t manage himself and for which he is not familiar with the landscape, the wildlife or the local practices and customs. It is estimated that up to half of the 7 million European hunters will hunt - more or less regularly or occasionally – as guests in another area than their own.

But regardless if hunting is practiced by a hunter in his own village or on his own land, or else in a foreign country (including in other continents), in all cases it needs to respect certain main principles for wildlife management and wise and sustainable use.

Conservation through sustainable use

Wild “game” species constitute a wild living resource. The use – in particular through hunting – of such renewable natural resource, on the condition it is sustainable, can contribute to the conservation of biological diversity (species and habitats). This principle has been formally recognised in the *Policy Statement* of the *World Conservation Union IUCN*, adopted at the *World Conservation Congress* in October 2000 in Amman, Jordan. This Statement explicitly recognises that the sustainable use of wild living resources constitutes “*an important conservation tool*” and this “*because the social and economic benefits derived from such use provide incentives for people to conserve them*”. This principle is fully applicable to the use through hunting of all game species, such as large herbivores (often causing serious damage to farming and/or forestry) but also carnivores – Bear, Wolf, Lynx, small game and waterfowl.

This principle has already been expressed in **Resolution 882** *on the importance of shooting for Europe’s rural regions*, adopted in 1987 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. There is no doubt that hunting, in particular by foreign hunters, constitutes for many countries with an economy “in transition” an important source of income for rural development but also for the financing of conservation programmes (including enforcement of legislation, monitoring of wildlife populations, research, damage compensation, education and awareness raising projects for local communities, etc.).

But for hunting to be considered as wise and sustainable, it needs to be guaranteed that only the “interest” is used and not the “capital” of game-species.

Wildlife: a common heritage and a shared responsibility

Competent authorities – at national, regional and local level – must create and maintain the appropriate legal and administrative framework (including monitoring and enforcement systems) to guarantee the sustainable character of the use of biological resources through hunting. Such framework will have to be accompanied by measures of information, education and awareness raising for all socio-economic sectors concerned (hunters' organisations, travel agencies, hunting area managers, local authorities, etc.)

For hunting tourism (which is indeed a particular form of *eco-tourism*), the different stakeholders – in first instance the commercial organisers, agents and representatives – must also implement the principle of sustainable use and inform their clients about it. This implies in particular the strict application of all relevant legal and administrative provisions (including international rules, such as CITES and the other wildlife legal instruments, conventions, agreements, etc.)

Particular attention should be given to the hunting of migratory species (mainly birds) by foreign visitors, for which international coordination, monitoring and management planning might be required.

Hunters, visiting another country or region to hunt there, should behave themselves as guests and strictly adhere to all relevant legal and administrative rules, while respecting the traditions, customs and socio-cultural sensitivities of the local populations.

(Adopted by the FACE Board on 04.09.04)