

FACE PRESS RELEASE

European Federation for Hunting and Conservation



Unworkable proposal on restricting lead shot over wetlands approved by EU REACH Committee

Brussels, 4 September 2020 - Europe's hunters have lost a significant amount of trust in Brussels decision-making, not because of the intention to phase out lead shot over wetlands, but because of an unacceptable proposal. The REACH committee vote took place on 3 September via an online meeting with the European Commission and Member State representatives.

At an early stage, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) Enforcement Forum [stated](#) that the proposed definition of a wetland would not only *"pose serious problems from the enforcement perspective"* but also *"nearly unresolvable situations for enforcement"*. During the formal decision-making process, it is a requirement to consult this forum, but its advice was disregarded, as were several other recommendations.

With regards to the definition of wetlands, ECHA's Committee for Socio-economic Analysis (SEAC) stated that the inclusion of peatlands would cause several difficulties in identifying wetlands in the field *"for those shooting to know whether they are in compliance with the restriction or not... e.g. in landscapes with a large number of smaller puddles and/or more or less dry peatlands"*.

ECHA's SEAC committee also highlighted problems with banning possession/carrying of lead shot near wetlands as did ECHA's Enforcement Forum. The Forum's advice highlighted *"serious doubts about "possessing" [i.e. carrying] being covered by... REACH"* as those articles are *"addressing manufacture, placing on the market or use by economic actors but not possession [...] by a member of the general public"*. Why was this advice ignored?

Despite four failed attempts, the proposal was submitted again to the REACH Committee rather than ensuring the final text was workable for Europe's hunters, sports shooters and farmers. In times like this, it is essential for the European institutions, in particular the European Commission to try to build trust with Europe's citizens rather than creating widespread confusion and legal uncertainty.

What will change?

23 Member States have already banned use of lead shot for hunting over in wetlands to help conserve waterbirds, so normally not a huge difference will result from this decision if agreed by the European Parliament and the Council. The main problem is that Member States will have to amend their current (workable) legislation to comply with the regulation, but millions of citizens and enforcement officers will be completely confused about what the regulation means, including those competing in competitive clay shooting.

Referring to the decision, FACE's Secretary General, Dr. David Scallan stated: *"This multi-million euro five year decision-making process could have been agreed years ago with a sensible proposal. Instead, essential advice from EU agencies was ignored, trust in EU decision-making was damaged, and widespread legal problems will follow for Europe's 7 million hunters"*.

Next steps:

The proposal will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council for a three-month scrutiny procedure. The European Parliament's job – as representatives of Europe's citizens and as the only directly elected EU institution – is to carefully exercise its scrutiny prerogatives. It has the power to reject this unworkable proposal, to ensure the problems are fixed thereby contributing to proper legislation.

FACE will continue to engage in this topic in the coming months to ensure that a sensible outcome is reached.
##ENDS##

NOTE TO EDITORS: FACE is the European Federation 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 37 European countries including the EU-28. FACE is supported by 7 associate members and is based in Brussels. FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use and has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987. Visit www.face.eu
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