

“PERSPECTIVES ON COMBATING ILLEGAL KILLING: THE ROLE OF HUNTERS”

27 June 2017 - European Parliament, Brussels

Brussels, 28 June 2017 – On Tuesday 27 June, the conference “Perspectives on Combating Illegal Killing: The Role of Hunters”, organised by **FACE**, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU and hosted by MEP **Karl-Heinz Florenz** at the European Parliament in Brussels, discussed the contribution of hunters in combating illegal killing.

MEP **Karl-Heinz Florenz**, President of the Intergroup ‘Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside’ and Chair of the meeting, stated that: “Hunters have an important role to play in tackling illegal killing, through their involvement in enforcement activities, communication and awareness-raising”. He added that: “It’s important to recognise the distinction between illegitimate illegal practices and the legal sustainable use of wild resources”.

Marita Arvela, Policy Officer at the Environment Directorate-General's Nature Unit of the European Commission, gave a perspective from the European Commission. She referred to FACE’s positive involvement at international level stating that: “It is in hunters’ own interest to actively fight against illegal killing and to respect a zero tolerance approach on illegal killing via increasing awareness, communication campaigns, and training.”

Dr. Mari Pohja-Mykrä, Senior Researcher at the University of Helsinki warned that certain weaknesses in large carnivore conservation policies have led to a form of political dissent and resistance against dominant conservation regimes. She stated: “In Finland the illegal hunting of large carnivores has been carried out by a particular social group with the support of community members, and hunting violators have been viewed as benefactors by many of their fellow citizens”. She discussed how these acts are manifested as a rural defiance “against the authorities and illegitimate conservation regimes applied at the EU level”.

Julia Newth, Senior Ecosystem Health Officer at Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) discussed a collaborative project led by WWT and involving international partners aims to reduce the illegal shooting of Bewick’s swans across their range. She referred to initiatives to date, which have involved engagement with Russian hunters through social surveys and workshops to determine motivations for hunting swans and awareness raising within hunting communities across the flyway. In autumn 2016, the profile of this issue was considerably raised throughout Europe by [Flight of the Swans](#), which involved WWT’s Sacha Dench flying the length of the Bewick’s swan’s migratory route by paramotor”.

Michele Sorrenti, Scientific Country Manager at the Italian Hunting Federation presented the current situation with regards to ongoing efforts including awareness-raising, voluntary enforcement, education and communication to combat the illegal killing of birds in the Mediterranean Region, with a special focus on Italy.

Johan Svalby, Senior Advisor for International Affairs to Safari Club International described the effectiveness of hunting in combatting illegal killing in Africa. He referred to a number of cases whereby hunting operators employ, train and outfit local residents to patrol for and apprehend poachers. For example, it was a hunting concession in Zimbabwe that discovered and later financed the apprehension of the poachers who poisoned elephants in Hwange National Park in 2013. “Without hunting concessions, there will be no revenue for local communities to fight poaching and to protect their wildlife” he stated.

The meeting acknowledged the valuable role of hunting communities in promoting and encouraging compliance with the law as well as the need to continue to adopt a zero tolerance policy towards illegal killing.

In conclusion, the need for continued efforts in fighting illegal killing was acknowledged as well as the need to recognise that hunting is part of the solution to eradicate illegal killing through greater enforcement, awareness raising and education.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

FACE is the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU. 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 36 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. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting-related matters from international conservation agreements to local implementation issues with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe. www.face.eu

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS, QUOTES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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