



30

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary
of the Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



*30 years
of collaboration*



Introduction

For over 30 years the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) has been an innovative force behind conservation legislation and policies in Europe, during which time, FACE has been closely involved with the activities of the Council of Europe in the domain of nature conservation. FACE has participated as an observer at all meetings of the Convention's Standing Committee since 1983 and has been involved in many of its activities and actions.

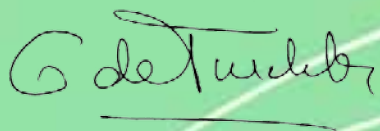
For FACE, the Bern Convention remains as innovative and important as it was 30 years ago and continues to fulfil its role as an essential and pragmatic Pan-European legal instrument for the conservation, management and sustainable use of wild species and their habitats. FACE and its Members in 36 Council of Europe countries share with the Bern Convention a desire to encouraging trans-border cooperation, for conservation. Together with its Members, FACE initiates and supports wildlife conservation activities, habitat protection and restoration, research, monitoring and data collecting projects and awareness raising programmes. It continues to advocate proper enforcement of relevant legislation and to oppose all forms of illegal taking or unsustainable hunting practices.



More recently and with a particular focus on hunting FACE has contributed actively to the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, drafted by a Working Group with the assistance of IUCN/SSC-ESUSG and CIC. This Charter was adopted by the Standing Committee in November 2007. It “promotes principles and guidelines intended to ensure that hunting and hunting tourism in Europe are practiced in a sustainable manner, while avoiding negative impacts on biodiversity and making a positive contribution to the conservation of species and habitats and the needs of society” – see also T-PVS (2007) 7.

Since then, FACE has continued to give wide promotion and support to the Charter, in particular by publishing in 2008 a special condensed edition which was widely distributed among stakeholders throughout Europe. FACE and its Members use this Charter to guide their actions and also endeavour to implement its 12 Principles.

By using the 12 Principles of the Charter, we illustrate with one example for each Principle how hunters, through the Bern Convention, contribute to nature conservation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G de Turckheim". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Gilbert de Turckheim, FACE President

Principle 1

Favour multi-level governance that maximises benefit for conservation and society

FACE and its Members advocate the principle of subsidiarity, in recognition of the diversity of hunting systems in Europe that have arisen over centuries from different social, economic and cultural conditions and most importantly from different bio-geographical conditions. At the same time, FACE works as a conduit to feed information back and concerns of Europe's 7 million hunters to policy makers at an international level.

Example:

The Sustainable Hunting Intergroup

Since 1985, FACE has run the Secretariat of the Sustainable Hunting Intergroup in the European Parliament. This Intergroup offers a platform for rural stakeholders, not just hunters, to share their concerns and ideas primarily to EU policy makers. This Intergroup does however also recognise multi-level governance and brings together national and international policy makers. In the past the Intergroup has discussed and taken position on wide ranging issues from specific ones like Large Carnivores and Cormorants to more general topics (e.g. rural development) and international issues (e.g. CITES).



Launch of the new "Hunting" Intergroup for 2009-2014 term.

Principle 2

Ensure that regulations are understandable and respected

Whilst FACE is not directly responsible for legislative and regulatory initiatives, we work closely with competent authorities to ensure that legislation is comprehensible and relevant for conservation at all levels. In addition, FACE assists local stakeholders to understand and implement such legislation. By advocating the involvement of hunters in regulatory processes, we ensure their active participation in conservation.



Example:

AEWA

The African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) applies in most Council of Europe Countries and the requirements of this Agreement are binding in countries that have ratified. FACE was actively involved in the negotiations and establishment of the AEWA and has since acted as an observer to the Technical and Standing committees as well as the Meeting of Parties. FACE works closely with the AEWA Secretariat with range states and other conservation organisations to ensure that regulatory provisions are developed and implemented in order to maximise the conservation of species. One of these issues includes the phasing out of lead shot in wetlands that FACE strongly advocates and continues to promote.



FACE CEO (left) with Guy-Noël OLIVIER (OMPO) at AEWA MOP 4

Principle 3

Ensure that harvest is ecologically sustainable

One of the primary objectives of FACE is to promote hunting, in accordance with the principle of wise and sustainable use of natural resources as a tool for conservation of wildlife and biodiversity and for conservation, improvement and restoration of habitats.

Example:

ARTEMIS – Centralising Bag Statistics in Europe

This project run by FACE addresses the growing demand for information on hunting bag statistics in Europe. It promotes the centralisation of national bag statistics for scientific interpretation and provides a platform for the sharing of expertise on methodology used to collect data. It is recognised that hunting bag statistics are crucial for the improving knowledge on the interactions between hunting activities and game populations, and ensuring the continued inclusion of hunting within the domain of sustainable use of natural resources. www.artemis-face.eu



Launch of Artemis project in presence of Commissioner DIMAS. Athens, 2006.

Principle 4

Maintain wild populations of indigenous species with adaptive gene pools

Wild populations of indigenous species in their natural environment are essential for the type of sustainable hunting advocated by FACE and its Member. In this respect, we have a long history of working with national and international authorities to manage risks associated with invasive alien species. Currently, there are a number of ongoing control activities in which hunters are involved; these include Ruddy Duck, Sacred Ibis and Raccoon Dog. We also work to ensure that indigenous populations are viable and encourage trans-boundary cooperation, this is particularly the case for large carnivores.

Example:

Managing Large Carnivores

FACE was actively involved in the finalisation of the Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores produced by the EU and endorsed by the Council of Europe. In particular, FACE Members are working with the Guidelines to ensure reasonable and pragmatic conservation of Large Carnivores. There are also local examples of good trans-boundary cooperation, such as the DinaRis Project the management of lynx between Slovenia and Croatia, which was developed and managed in association with the Slovenian Hunters Association (http://www.dinaris.org/Glavna_stran).



Principle 5

Maintain environments that support healthy and robust populations of harvestable species

FACE promotes incentives to motivate hunters to help conserve habitats and landscapes with their associated fauna, which is what they do anyway. FACE is involved in the promotion of the Natura 2000 network and Emerald Network as well as the concept of developing a coherent Green Infrastructure for Europe. FACE also promotes best management practices by hunters. FACE's Members actively monitor wild species such as through the WILD system in Germany or the Green Shoots Programme in the UK

Example:

7

Hunting, an Added Value for Biodiversity

FACE published a booklet "Hunting, an added value for biodiversity" with details on some of the best examples of conservation projects lead by hunters' organisations in Europe. Some of these demonstrate targeted species conservation efforts. The series of case-studies presented are divided into sections: Forests, Wetlands, Coastlines, Agricultural Habitats and Mountains, covering the diversity of habitats found in Europe. The publication is available in English, French and German versions.



Principle 6

Encourage use to provide economic incentives for conservation

Conservation worldwide is under funded and this is certainly the case in Europe, however, hunters expect and do pay towards conservation of wildlife both directly and indirectly. Whilst recognising that certain endangered species may require special attention FACE advocates the principle of if it pays it stays on the basis that provision for some species benefits most. Hunters pay their way directly by contributing through various licences, fees etc and indirectly through voluntary contributions of time and money. It has been estimated that hunters in Europe contribute some 8 billion EUR towards the economy, much of which goes back to local conservation and rural communities in one form or another (GEMCONBIO, 2008).

Example:

Hunters Pay their Way

In the UK alone the shooting industry is worth some 1.8 billion EUR to the UK economy where 480,000 shooters and their shoot providers;

- Support the equivalent of 70,000 full time jobs
- Spend over 2.3 billion EUR on goods and services
- Spend 280 million EUR directly on conservation
- Volunteer 2.7 million days for conservation.

(<http://www.basc.org.uk/en/>)



Principle 7

Ensure that harvest is properly utilised and wastage avoided

FACE has systematically promoted the “production” by hunters of wild game meat as a valuable and high-quality food resource, according to agreed standards of public health and hygiene. To that end, it has contributed significantly to the drafting, adoption and implementation of EU rules on food of animal origin (such as Regulation 853/2004) as well as on Animal By-Products.

Example:

Establishing Good Hunting Practises

In relation to the newly adopted EU Animal By-Products Regulation, FACE has played a key role in drafting a project for a reference document for good hunting practice in relation to the handling of animal by-products during hunting operations. This document, while taking into consideration the various aspects of hunting practices in Europe, has the form of an European code laying down the different hunting stages (from the small-scale rearing of some game birds by a hunters' club, to the local delivery of game meat in small quantities, to the preparation by a hunter of his roebuck trophy). It is based on a realistic risk analysis and feasibility in the light of practical hunting conditions.



Principle 8

Empower local stakeholders and hold them accountable

FACE promotes the utilisation of local knowledge and monitoring for the management at local level, as it is most rapidly adaptive. However, FACE closely monitors management and conservation goals on higher levels (EU, CoE, AEWA, etc.) and promotes to streamline these along with local management practices.

Example:

Promoting Conservation Areas

FACE is in favour of the Natura 2000 and the Emerald Networks, as these encourage the involvement of local people in management. Since 2006, FACE has been conducting a series of workshops to raise awareness amongst national hunting organisations and local hunters on the concept of these networks. Along with the workshops, FACE has published and distributed information material, such as a Natura 2000 handbook for hunters and, under contract from the EU Commission, has held numerous workshops to raise awareness on Natura 2000 and conservation areas.

10



Natura 2000 workshops
in Poland and Hungary



Principle 9

Competence and responsibility are desirable among users of wild resources

The activity of hunting requires a high level of expertise, which may be achieved through a variety of educational methods. FACE and its Members promote the maintenance of good standards through hunter training programmes best adapted to national or regional conditions, and to a cross section of society which makes up the hunting community. It is crucial that for hunting practices to be ecologically and socially sustainable, hunters are advised to be responsible and competent in the methods and equipment they use.

Example:

Hunter Training

FACE was involved the drafting of principles in the Council of Europe Recommendation - No. R (85) 17 to Member States on the training of hunters - which remain valid today. Appendix 1 of the Recommendation provides suggestions for the content for theoretical exams for hunters, and Appendix 2, "suggestions for a code of conduct for hunters" listing principles and good practices for hunting. These are aimed at encouraging hunters to adopt practices and attitudes that will result in greater respect for ecological considerations and more sustainable hunting.



Principle 10

Minimise avoidable suffering by animals

One of the principle aims in hunting is to ensure that any killing of game or other animals is conducted quickly and efficiently. Other than promoting and respecting this code of practice, FACE and its Members communicate methods and developments in equipment to minimise avoidable suffering by animals. In addition, FACE cooperates and offers expertise in the drafting of rules and regulations to govern such methods.

Example:

Supporting High Standards

FACE has supported the development of international agreed standards on trapping methods. This has included working with the International Organization for Standardization ISO through its Technical Committee TC 191 (where FACE had observer status) to agree acceptable trapping standards from a point of view of animal welfare. More recently FACE has been involved with the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) which was negotiated between the EU, Canada, Russia and the US. In connection with the AIHTS, FACE has conducted two reviews on the state of art of trapping methods used in the EU, under services contracts for the European Commission's DG Environment, the latest in 2007 that covered the EU 27, the Russian Federation, Canada and the USA.



Principle 11

Encourage cooperation between all stakeholders in management of harvested species, associated species and their habitats

FACE closely cooperates with a number of stakeholders such as conservationists, farmers, anglers, landowners and other resource users, as well as with authorities (mediation) and state agencies. With some stakeholders, FACE has signed Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding, and carry out joint projects and initiatives. This has always been done with the aim to improve management of biodiversity and to promote the wise and sustainable use of natural resources.

Example:

The FACE BirdLife Agreement

After several years of existence of the Birds Directive, there had been controversy and confrontation between FACE and BirdLife International on the interpretation of the text. After the launch of the Sustainable Hunting Initiative by the Commission, FACE signed a joint Agreement with BirdLife International (the FACE-BirdLife International Agreement on the Birds Directive) in 2004. Since then, both organisations meet at least twice a year to discuss progress on the ten points of the Agreement, to find common understanding and progress conservation.



Principle 12

Encourage acceptance by society of sustainable, consumptive use as a conservation tool

By implementing and promoting Principles above FACE spends a tremendous effort to ensure the long-term acceptance by society of the conservation benefits derived from harvesting wild species.





FACE

The **Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU** (FACE) is an international non-profit making, non-governmental organisation that acts in the interests of over 7,000,000 European hunters. FACE was founded in 1977 in Brussels, Belgium and still has its headquarters there today. It represents its Full Members that are the national hunters' associations within 36 states of the European Union and other Council of Europe countries, as well as its four Associate Members. It promotes hunting and wildlife management, in accordance with the principle of sustainable use, as a tool for conservation and rural development. Furthermore, FACE has been a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) since 1987.

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