



20.02.08

Joint meeting of the “Sustainability” Intergroups

Under the chair of MEPs M. EBNER (It) and L. M. CAPOULAS SANTOS (Pt), the Intergroups on “Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities” and on “Sustainable Development” organised their second joint meeting, this time on the topic of *EU Upland Game Conservation and Rural Development*. Speakers, representing the *British Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)* and the *Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA)*, presented the Scottish management model for wildlife species (in particular Grouse) in upland areas, where sustainable hunting plays an important role for the income and employment of rural communities. Next to socio-economic benefits, this kind of upland use and preservation of heather landscape (as well as of other low fertility areas) contributes to the conservation of habitats, and thus to biodiversity. On behalf of the *World Conservation Union (IUCN)*, Prof R. KENWARD presented the main nature policies and legislative framework regarding the conservation of biodiversity and habitats, which also ensure sustainable hunting. He particularly mentioned the *European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity*, adopted in 2007 by the Council of Europe within the scope of the BERN Convention – see also the Di@ry of 23.11.2007. The *Charter* identifies for each of 12 major *principles* a set of specific *guidelines* for governmental authorities responsible for hunting legislation and policies, as well as for hunters and for hunting tourism operators (agencies, hunting organisers, etc.).

This session was preceded by a business lunch where the different concepts, problems and political views in the field of sustainable land use (like hunting) were discussed by MEPs, experts and stakeholders. The FACE *Public Affairs Officer* participated in this meeting, pointing out opportunities and risks when launching political initiatives on the subject of sustainable hunting.



Left to right: R. KENWARD (IUCN), IG President MEP M. EBNER, IG Chairman MEP L.M. CAPOULAS SANTOS, G. BLACKETT (SRPBA), IG President MEP S. STEVENSON, A. SMITH (GWCT)