



## “Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities” Intergroup discusses *Hunting in the Mediterranean countries*



From left to right:

M. MARRACCI  
MEP M. EBNER  
MEP L. de GRANDES  
N. PAPADODIMAS

Strasbourg, 12.03.2008

Chaired by its Co-president MEP Luis de GRANDES (ES), the Intergroup “*Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities*” discussed the issue of “Hunting in the Mediterranean countries”. Attended by MEP mainly from Central and Southern Europe, as well as high-ranking hunting representatives from various EU Member States, Nikolaos PAPADODIMAS, President of the Greek Hunters Confederation (and Vice-President of FACE) and Massimo MARRACCI, in his role as Secretary-General of the *European Association for Traditional Hunting* (AECT) presented their positions concerning the different approaches to hunting and their relation to the concept of sustainability.

In his presentation, N. PAPADODIMAS underlined the positive contributions of the hunters’ community to the conservation of biodiversity and habitats in the Mediterranean countries, where hunting, coming from a long-standing tradition, provides many socio-economic benefits. It is not only in Greece that the main interest of hunters lies in the conservation of nature and diversity of species. As bird-hunting is one of the most practised types of hunting in the southern European countries, the 1979 EU “Birds” Directive with its sometimes unclear regulatory provisions, resulted in unjustified restrictions. He advocated therefore the prompt recognition of the “Guidance document on hunting” under the “Birds” Directive in order to achieve clarification of decisive questions on sustainable hunting of birds.

M. MARRACCI, who supported the views of the previous speaker, explained that southern Europe does not only offer valuable historical and cultural sites but also an important rural culture, which includes hunting. He reminded the audience that a significant part of wildlife research, in particular that on migratory birds, has been initiated by hunters, which is why it currently enjoys favourable public attention. It is further up to the hunters to commit themselves to the preservation of their cultural heritage and to appropriate public information on hunting.

In the discussion that followed, L. de GRANDES referred to the fact that development (agriculture, industry, infrastructure, urbanisation, etc.) increasingly reduces wildlife habitats, and that small game in particular, such as the Spanish red-legged partridges, would suffer from this loss. In his opinion, agricultural land use could be adapted through relatively simple measures, like a restriction on agricultural activities (e.g. harvest) at night time. For him, the main threat for hunting is a misinterpretation of conservation policies. The exclusion of human beings from ecosystems would be a major mistake and lead to degeneration of nature and to disruption of the natural cycle. Rural people and hunters are not longer willing to accept “pseudo” conservation measures.

Since 1985, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU has provided the Secretariat for the Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities” Intergroup at the European Parliament. FACE works closely with MEPs from different political groups, who have a common interest in promoting wildlife conservation, sustainable hunting and fishing, and sustainable management of the countryside and its traditions.

**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

Contact:

FACE - Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU  
For more information about FACE and the Intergroup, visit [www.face.eu](http://www.face.eu) or contact [publicaffairs@face.eu](mailto:publicaffairs@face.eu)