



“Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities” Intergroup examines “Damages by wildlife”

Strasbourg, 19.11.2008

At the initiative of MEP Véronique MATHIEU (EPP-ED/FR), the Intergroup devoted its last meeting before the end of the year to the topic of damages likely to be caused by wildlife and to the need to establish a balance – in particular through hunting – between game populations and various socio-economic interests. After an introduction by Intergroup President Michl EBNER (PPE-ED, IT), Mrs MATHIEU, *First Co-president* of the Intergroup, chaired the exchange of views between MEPs present on this issue for which she had invited two keynote speakers.

B. GUIBERT of the French Hunters' Federation FNC presented the situation in his country, where hunting bags for ungulates (Red and Roe deer plus Wild boar) have virtually increased tenfold over a 30 year period, with a parallel strong increase in damages caused to farming and forestry. He pointed out, however, that hunting also generates a significant income for forest owners (72.5 million € annually) and that hunters pay, directly or indirectly, the bill for damages to farming.

Professor H. NAVEAU, representing the *European Landowners Organisation* (ELO), focused on the aspect of damages to forestry and advocated a reduction of hoofed game populations, although the situation may strongly differ from one Member State to another, and even within one country.

In their interventions, several participants did put these positions in a wider perspective and stressed the need to find realistic balances, whilst also taking into account the expectations of the (mainly urban) public at large regarding wildlife.

Following the Intergroup meeting, FACE President Gilbert de TURCKHEIM opened the exhibition set up in the European Parliament by his organisation, illustrating in an attractive manner the possible interactions between over-abundant wildlife and different human activities (farming, forestry, animal breeding, fisheries, traffic). A great number of visitors were so able to better understand the need to seek, through a process of dialogue, solutions to re-establish the balance between sometimes contradictory interests, including those of hunters.

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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.

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