



“The role of hunters in Wolf management”
« «Le rôle des chasseurs dans la gestion du loup »
"Die Rolle der Jäger beim Wolfmanagement"

Minutes – Procès verbal – Protokoll

Strasbourg, 20.05.2010
Room / Salle / Raum LOW S2.2 - 09h30-10h30

1. Opening remarks / Mots de bienvenue / Begrüßung

MEP Véronique MATHEIU (FR) welcomed participants of the Intergroup and introduced the chair of the meeting, Intergroup Bureau Member MEP Ioan ENCIU (RO), as well as the Co-Host MEP Giancarlo SCOTTÀ (IT). They welcomed the speakers and participants and introduced into the important issue.

2. Interventions/ Presentations/ Präsentationen

2.1. Slovak management of large carnivores

The Chair, Mr ENCIU, gave the floor to Imrich SUBA, Secretary-General of the Slovak Hunting Union, who held a presentation on the Slovak management of large carnivores, with a focus on the wolf. In the 1920s there was a low presence of wolves in Slovakia. Management measures have increased the numbers, which today evolve between 600 to 700 individuals. Last year, 130 wolves were hunted in the country. The hunting period spanned from the beginning of November to the end of January. In 2009, 1447 cases of damage worth approximately 510 000 EUR could be attributed to wolves. It is to be noted that damage on game being caused by the wolf is not reimbursed by the State. Mr I. SUBA drew the attention of participants to the fact that two other species of carnivores, occasionally causing some problems to man, are also present in Slovakia, namely the bear and the lynx. To hunt any of the around 1400 bears present, you will need a special permit, since it is a legally protected species. Last year, 36 attacks against humans caused by bear were counted, two of which ended with injury. Regarding the lynx, hunters wish to put quotas with support from European decision-makers. There are currently around 1500 lynx in Slovakia.





Mr I. SUBA called upon MEPs to “protect nature for people and not against people”.

The Presentation is available at the Secretariat.

2.2 The Swedish hunters role in wolf management

The Chair gave the floor to Gunnar GLÖERSEN, Game Manager for the Swedish Hunters' Association.

Mr GLÖERSEN informed the participants how the Scandinavian wolf population, being isolated from the Finnish and Russian populations, is heavily inbred. This inbreeding is a major concern for the future favorable conservation status of the population. In the early 1970s, the wolf was extinct from Scandinavia. In 1991 an immigrating wolf wandering in from Finland adding to the already present two wolves in Sweden. From these three wolves, the entire today's population of around 210-230 wolves originates. When discussing wolf management, there is a need to put them in a wider large carnivore context, taking into consideration that other large carnivore species are living in the same area and have a compounding damaging effect on livestock, game and livestock. There are 3000 bears and between 1500 and 2000 lynx in Sweden. In addition there are 700 wolverines, a species that in the EU appears only in Sweden and Finland. Swedish hunters are involved in the monitoring together with county administrative boards.

In 2009-2010, over 120 000 km² were monitored by hunters for wolves and lynx. Regarding the recent hunt for wolves, the main reason for the government to give a quota was, in the light of the inbreeding problem, gaining acceptance by local people and hunters for relocation and/or introduction of new wolves. Before 2015, 20 new wolves will be introduced into new areas. The hunt itself does not improve the genetic situation, but creates the paramount acceptance for relocation/introduction.

The temporary level of wolves set by the government until 2012 is 200-210 individuals for the whole of the Swedish territory. In the light of these considerations, scientists working for the government recommended 30-48 wolves to be taken for 2010. The quota was finally set to 27 wolves. Approximately 10 wolves died from other than human causes that year. During the hunt, all known “immigrant” wolves with valuable DNA have been protected. Only heavily inbred wolves were killed.

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The hunt was strictly controlled. Every hour the hunters had to check if there were still wolves to be hunted; for this purpose a SMS system was used. Only four percent of all hunters registered. As a result of the limited hunt, the locals feel stronger confidence in government.

The Presentation is available at the Secretariat

2.3. The European Hunters - GILBERT DE TURCKHEIM

The Chair gave the floor to Gilbert DE TURCKHEIM, President of FACE.

He underlined the importance of hunting and hunters in the management of wolves. Reminding participants that the wolf is recolonising areas in Europe, he explained that hunters are affected by the presence of large carnivores, but that hunting could also benefit from the presence of these animals. The urban society, creating an idealistic, non-real picture of rural society, needs to better understand to seek acceptance amongst local people for its suggestions affecting these areas. The President presented three wishes by FACE in relation to large carnivores:

- 1) An excellent management is necessary, respecting the needs of rural society;
- 2) An equilibrium must be established between those who have a great love for large carnivores and those who have to live with them;
- 3) Hunters must be involved contributing to the long-term management of large carnivores.

The speech of the President is available at the Secretariat

3. Discussion

MEP Gaston FRANCO witnessed that the wolf has come into France and regretted that there is a myth that the wolf has been introduced by man. In his commune, a wild park has been established. He sees the problems arising between

He has established a world park in his commune. Pointing out that problems arise between the animal breeders/farmers and hunters on the one hand and the large





carnivores on the other, he expressed a particular interest in working on this problem at an European level.

The Intergroup President, V. MATHIEU, thanked Mr. SUBA for his presentation, and noted that hunters are not reimbursed in Slovakia for damages caused by large carnivores.

Having thanked also Mr. GLÖERSEN for his presentation, she concluded that in Sweden there are very stringent rules related to the hunt on wolves. In her view, the SMS system, might be difficult to apply in France. Interested in knowing more, she expressed an interest to go to Sweden to witness with her own eyes the Swedish wolf hunt.

She concluded that hunters are in heart of this kind of management.

The FACE President thought that the emotional charge might be somewhat higher in France than in Northern Europe in relation to the wolf. As regards the EU, he drew the participant's attention to the fact that the Commission attacked Finland over their management plan for wolves, a couple of years ago, but that Finland won the case.

In his view, hunting has become almost secondary in some societies, but in northern Europe people have found pragmatic ways of regulating even the large carnivore issue.

The chairman, I. ENCIU, told participants that the wolf has always represented a strong symbol in Romania; it was a symbol of war. It seems that the wolf does not cause much damage in Romania, since it lives away from people. He invited people to come hunting in Romania to see with their own eyes what the situation is like.

On a question from the audience if there have been any problems with the Commission in relation to the Swedish wolf management, Mr GLÖERSEN responded that the Swedish Hunters Association hope that the Commission will not interfere with the Swedish government's policy in this regard, since that would seriously jeopardize the acceptance for wolf management by local stakeholders leading to a halt in the introduction of non-inbred wolves.





4. Any other business – Divers – Verschiedenes

V. MATHIEU informed participants that many Member States have introduced exemptions under the newly adopted Implementing Regulation, 185/2010, on aviation security, allowing the transport of ammunition in hold baggage. The Intergroup was first alerted by FACE about this topic.

5. Next meeting – Prochaine réunion – Nächste Sitzung

The next Intergroup meeting will take place on 7 July and be chaired by MEP Luis Manuel CAPOULAS SANTOS. The theme will be Agriculture and have the presence of Hon. Commissioner Dacian CIOLOS.

The Intergroup meeting closed at 10h26.

Presence:

MEPs:

Véronique MATHIEU

Ioan ENCIU

Giancarlo SCOTTÀ

Gaston FRANCO

Sergej KOZLIK

Luis CAPOULAS SANTOS

Augustin DIAZ DE MERA

Markus PIEPER

Speakers:

Gunnar GLÖERSEN

IMRICH SUBA

Gilbert de TURCKHEIM





Assistants/advisors:

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Intergroup/Intergroupe/Intergruppe at the European Parliament

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Johan SVALBY

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