

Intergroup  
SUSTAINABLE HUNTING, BIODIVERSITY & COUNTRYSIDE ACTIVITIES  
Intergroupe  
CHASSE DURABLE, BIODIVERSITÉ & ACTIVITÉS RURALES  
Intergruppe  
NACHHALTIGE JAGD, BIODIVERSITÄT & LÄNDLICHE AKTIVITÄTEN  
Interguppo  
CACCIA SOSTENIBILE, BIODIVERSITÀ & ATTIVITÀ RURALI  
Intergupo  
CAZA SOSTENIBLE, BIODIVERSIDAD & ACTIVIDADES RURALES

## Meeting of 23.02.2005

### MEPs

AYUSO GONZÁLEZ M<sup>a</sup> Pilar (EPP-ED / Es)  
BACO Peter (NA / Sk)  
BERLATO Sergio (UEN / It)  
BUSK Niels (ALDE / Dk)  
CAPOULAS SANTOS Luis M. (PES / Pt)  
DEGUTIS Arunas (ALDE / Lt)  
DESS Albert (EPP-ED / DE)  
EBNER Michl (EPP-ED / It)  
EK Lena (ALDE / Sw)  
FARAGE Nigel (IND/DEM / UK)  
FJELLNER Christopher (EPP / Sw)  
FRIEDRICH Ingo (EPP-ED / De)  
GLATTFELDER Béla (EPP-ED / Hu)  
GOUDIN Hélène (IND/DEM / SW)

### Represented

De POLI Antonio (EPP-ED / It)  
NICHOLSON James (EPP-ED / UK)

### Assistants

ARMSTRONG Gillian (assistant J. NICHOLSON)  
BENSMARINE Stéphane (*Chief of Staff* V. MATHIEU)

### Observers

BUTLER Ken (*National Gamekeepers Association*)  
CARETTA Maria Cristina (CONFAVI)  
GIRARD Ronan (ELO)  
HOGG Alex (*Scottish Gamekeepers Association*)  
HOGGARTH Tim (FACE)  
KLEIS Wolfgang (EJAK)  
LATRONCHE André (UNADGCP)

### Secretariat

LECOCQ Yves (FACE)

GRABOWSKI Dariusz (IND/DEM / Pl)  
HELMER Roger (EPP-Ed / UK)  
HEDKVIST PETERSEN Ewa (PES / Sw)  
HUDGHTON Ian (Greens / UK)  
LEHTINEN Lasse (PES / Fin)  
LULLING Astrid (EPP-ED / Lu)  
MATHIEU Véronique (EPP-ED / Ft)  
NAVARRO Robert (PES / Fr)  
PARISH Neil (EPP-ED / UK)  
PURVIS John (EPP-ED / UK)  
RÜBIG Paul (EPP-ED / At)  
SCHIERHUBER Agnes (EPP-ED / At)  
SEEBER Richard (EPP-ED / At)  
STURDY Robert (EPP-ED / UK)

### Apologized

BLOOM Godfrey (IND/DEM / UK)  
DEPREZ Gérard (ALDE / Be)  
GRANDES, Luis de (EPP-ED / Es)  
HOPPENSTEDT Karsten F. (EPP-ED / DE)  
Von WOGAU Karl (EPP-ED / De)

CRAWFORD Judith (assistant J. PURVIS)  
MICH Paola (assistant M. EBNER)  
TOSO Alberto (assistant A. DE POLI)

MONSON John (SCI)  
NODDER Charles (*National Gamekeepers Association*)  
SCHOCH Liliane (COMURNAT)  
de TURCKHEIM Gilbert (FACE)  
ULLMANN Norbert (SCI)  
Von WÜLFING Goddert (DJV)  
WADDELL Lindsay (*National Gamekeepers Association*)

ESPÁRRAGO Manolo(FACE)

## 1. Opening remarks and introduction

M. EBNER, in his capacity as President of the Intergroup, opens the meeting and welcomes all MEPs present or represented, as well as the invited speakers and the experts.

He indicates that so far 73 MEPs have joined the Intergroup.

He also announces that an additional meeting of the Intergroup might be held during the March plenary session in Strasbourg in order to review with A. SCHIERHUBER her *Rapport* on the future Regulation “Rural Development”, as this is a topic of great interest for the Intergroup. Members will be informed of this meeting as soon as possible.

## 2. Discussion & final adoption of the *Rules of Procedure for the Intergroup*

M. EBNER invites the Members to express their opinion on three options for a new Intergroup title:

*Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside / Rural Activities*

*Countryside, Biodiversity & Sustainable Hunting*

*Biodiversity, Sustainable Hunting & Countryside / Rural Activities*

R. HELMER is of the opinion that concept of “Sustainable Hunting” should come first in the Intergroup’s name to clearly demonstrate its main interest. He further prefers the expression “*Countryside activities*”.

The Intergroup Members unanimously decide to adopt the following title:

**“*Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities*” Intergroup**

M. EBNER then invites Members to give their opinion on his proposal to add underneath the name of the Intergroup the following reference to the general topics the Intergroup may deal with:

**“*wildlife management, angling, forestry & nature conservation*”**

This proposal is unanimously adopted. The new *Rules of Procedure* of the Intergroup (attached) are also adopted in their entirety.

## 3. Election of additional members for the *Bureau*

M. EBNER informs Members that he has received four new candidacies for the *Bureau*. These come from A. DESS (EPP-ED, Germany), L. EK (ALDE, Sweden), L. LETHINEN (PES, Finland) and A. LULLING (EPP-ED, Luxembourg). He thanks these colleagues for their interest and their willingness to commit themselves and he expresses his support to their candidacies, as they will bring a better political and geographical representation to the *Bureau*

H. GOUDIN wonders if there is already a Member of the IND/DEM Group in the *Bureau*.

M. EBNER confirms that at the previous meeting of the Intergroup D. GRABOWSKI, Polish MEP of the IND/DEM Group, was elected Co-President.

The Intergroup unanimously elects these four new *Bureau* members.

The final Intergroup *Bureau* is therefore constituted as follows:

<i>President-Coordinator:</i>	M. EBNER (EPP-ED / I)
<i>First Co-President:</i>	V. MATHIEU (EPP-ED / F)
<i>Co-Presidents:</i>	S. BERLATO (UEN / I)
	A. DESS (EPP-ED / D)
	L. EK (ALDE / SW)
	D. GRABOWSKI (IND/DEM / POL)
	L. de GRANDES (EPP-DE / ES)
	L. LETHINEN (PES / FIN)
	A. LULLING (EPP-ED / LUX)
	R. STURDY (EPP-ED / UK)

#### 4. Private gamekeepers in the EU

V. MATHIEU takes over the Chair of the meeting and points out that the topic of private gamekeepers is the first “technical” one to be dealt with by the Intergroup since its reconstitution. She underlines the importance “on the ground” of the work and missions of private gamekeepers and she invites the three representatives of this sector to make a brief presentation of their activities, concerns and expectations.

W. KLEIS, President of EJAK (*European Conference of private gamekeepers*) notes that, although the legal competences and the training of gamekeepers may vary considerably from one country to another, they all share a great motivation for their profession. He further underlines the educative role of gamekeepers to increase awareness among the public at large. W. KLEIS also reminds participants the importance of gamekeepers for the conservation of declining species (such as the Black grouse or the Capercaillie), *inter alia* through the control of their predators, which in most cases are “opportunistic” species. In this respect, trapping constitutes an essential tool, often reserved to gamekeepers.

(The full text of this speech is available in French upon request from the Secretariat)

K. BUTLER, President of the *National Gamekeepers Organisation* (UK), presents the key role of gamekeepers for wildlife management. This includes in particular ensuring sustainable game harvests, creating proper habitats for wildlife, controlling (not eradicating!) “opportunistic” species and rearing game birds to restock territories. Gamekeepers contribute also to the conservation of “non-game” species, and scientific studies prove that where gamekeepers are at work, there is more biodiversity. K. BUTLER further favours a flexible approach to allow gamekeepers to use the derogations of the “Birds” Directive. Finally, he calls on the EP to take account of FACE position paper on the Proposal for a Directive on “trapping”.

(The full text of this Report is available upon request from the Secretariat).

A. HOGG, President of the *Scottish Gamekeepers Association*, completes the information and points of view expressed by the two previous speakers by giving some details about the situation in Scotland, a region enjoying great natural beauty and diversity and where hunting plays an important role for the conservation of environment and the rural structures. In this respect, the contribution of gamekeepers is essential.

N. PARISH is aware of the decline of many species, such as Sparrows. Intensive farming methods are probably partly to blame for that, but the impact of birds of prey (in particular Sparrow-hawks) is also often mentioned as a cause. It may therefore be necessary to have a possibility to regulate certain species of birds of prey, when the level of their populations requires that.

In the UK, there is a risk that the ban on hunting with hounds is followed by actions against other forms of hunting, including shooting. In his opinion, gamekeepers are in a good position to present to the public at large, as well as to the politicians, the positive role that hunting may play for nature conservation.

For A. SCHIERHUBER, the British example demonstrates that society needs to understand better the countryside. In Austria too, gamekeepers play an important role. She underlines the need for collaboration between gamekeepers, landowners and other countryside stakeholders and she thanks the gamekeepers for their positive contribution.

R. HELMER thanks the speakers for their valuable information and makes a further reference to the very recent ban on hunting with hounds in the UK. He indicates that despite of this ban, tens of thousands of people have just expressed their sympathy for hunting with hounds by taking part in a hunt the previous weekend. Around 72 foxes seem to have been taken in full respect of the law, taking advantage of the loopholes of this new Act banning hunting with hounds.

Another countryside activity even more severely affected than hunting with hounds is hare coursing. He mentions the existence of projects of cross border collaboration to allow the British to practice this activity in France.

R. STURDY considers that hunting with hounds has not succeeded to bring its message to the public at large and that the next target of those opposing hunting will be shooting. He requests the opinion of the professionals about the positive impact of hunting for biodiversity.

K. BUTLER and A. HOGG are of the opinion that communication efforts should focus mainly young people, in particular at schools, where pupils are often brainwashed to become vegetarians.

A. LULLING confirms that in Luxembourg there is an anti-hunting campaign, but she asserts at the same time that she owes her last re-election to the hunters, as she has been supporting them since 1989 in the European Parliament. Therefore, her advice is not to be afraid to support hunters, because, contrary to what is commonly thought, “it pays off from a political point of view”.

The *Fédération Saint-Hubert des Chasseurs du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* focuses its activities on communicating with young people, in particular by offering schools an ambulant exhibition on hunting.

H. GOUDIN informs that in Sweden the *Hunters Association* has excellent information and education programmes for school children. Being herself a hunter and a teacher, she has taught children the benefits of hunting.

W. KLEIS reminds the audience that the perception of hunting differs from one country to another. In Austria and in Bavaria, for example, the image of hunting is quite positive. In some regions, gamekeepers use suitable didactic material to undertake their role of communication and awareness increasing. He also indicates that the threat to withdraw Black grouse from the list of “game” species is certainly going to lead to a reduction of its numbers, as this will discourage hunters – the main driving force for this species’ conservation. The transfer of a species from the “Hunting” Act to the “Nature” Act may reduce in fact the degree of protection for the species, especially because the fines and penalties for those harming the species are less important.

L. EK gives some information about the education programmes in Sweden, mentioning that in Sweden the preparation for the hunting exam can take place at school. She is convinced of the educative value of hunting, illustrated in particular by the fact that statistics show that youngsters who hunt have a more responsible and disciplined attitude than others. Taking into account the positive impact of hunting for the countryside, she even thinks that the Community Structural Funds could be used to improve the situation for hunting.

A. SCHIERHUBER considers that it is necessary to focus efforts on teachers. As a farmer, she is aware that wildlife and its habitats require management, and this is precisely the role of every hunter.

In France, an association of teachers who hunt is currently being put in place and V. MATHIEU considers that this idea deserves to be exported. The gamekeeper has a key role to play to communicate with and to increase awareness among the public at large. She concludes by announcing that the Intergroup will draft a Resolution on the role of gamekeepers (attached), as this one deserves to be recognised by the European Parliament, even if from a formal point of view, the EU has no specific competence in this area. Ms MATHIEU thanks all participants for the quality of their interventions.

## 5. Next meeting

Subject to confirmation, an additional meeting “Rural Development” is scheduled for **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March**. After this, another meeting, to be chaired by V. MATHIEU, is scheduled for **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April** on the Proposal for a Directive “Humane trapping standards”.

*President-Coordinator* EBNER thanks all participants and closes the meeting.

M. E.

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## ***DRAFT***

### **Resolution on private gamekeepers**

Following their meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, MEPs, Members of the *Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities* Intergroup:

- fully acknowledge the importance of the work and the status of gamekeepers in the EU, in particular with regard to game management, wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, regulation of "pest" species, monitoring of populations and prevention of poaching or other environmental offences;
- recognise the significant contribution that gamekeepers make towards sustainable hunting and thereby to the economic and social well-being of rural communities;
- while pointing out that, in application of the *subsidiarity* principle, the EU has no specific competence in this area, encourage representatives of gamekeepers to better organise themselves at EU level, in particular to explore options to harmonise certain aspects of their profession;
- underline the essential role that private gamekeepers may play to increase awareness and to educate the public and all nature-users, and to spread efficiently the message that sustainable use is an instrument for biodiversity conservation.