

Intergroup  
FIELDSPORTS, FISHING & CONSERVATION  
Intergroupe  
CHASSE, PECHE & ENVIRONNEMENT  
Intergruppe  
JAGD, FISCHEREI & UMWELT  
Intergruppo  
CACCIÀ, PESCA & AMBIENTE

**15.12.2004**  
**Constitutive meeting**

**MEPs/MPE/MdEP**

ASHWORTH Richard (EPP / UK)	HELMER Roger (EPP / UK)
AYUSO GONZÁLEZ María del Pilar (EPP / ES)	JEGGLE Elisabeth (EPP / DE)
BERLATO Sergio (UEN / IT)	KLASS Christa (EPP / DE)
DAUL Joseph (EPP / FR)	LEHTINEN Lasse (PES / FI)
GRANDES PASCUAL Luis (EPP / ES)	LULLING Astrid (EPP / LU)
DEGUTIS Arunas (ALDE / LT)	MATHIEU Véronique (EPP / FR)
DESS Albert (EPP / DE)	MAURO Mario (EPP / IT)
EBNER Michl (EPP / IT)	MAYER Hans-Peter (EPP / DE)
FRIEDRICH Ingo (EPP / DE)	PEK Bogdan (IND/DEM / PL)
GAHLER Michael (EPP / DE)	PIEPER Markus (EPP / DE)
GLATTFELDER Béla (EPP / HU)	RÜBIG Paul (EPP / AT)
GOMOLKA Alfred (EPP / DE)	SCHIERHUBER Agnes (EPP / AT)
GRABOWSKI Dariusz Maciej (IND/DEM / PL)	SEEBER Richard (EPP / AT)
	STURDY Robert (EPP / UK)

Represented

Apologised

de VEYRAC Christine (EPP / F)  
HOPPENSTEDT Karsten Friedrich (EPP / DE)

**Assistants**

AUSSEDAT Jean (stagiaire V. MATHIEU)	LINDEMANN Julia (assistant H.-P. MAYER)
BENSMÁINE Stéphane ( <i>Chef de cabinet</i> V. MATHIEU)	MATYSIAK Marcin (assistant B. PEK)
GILLES Sabine (assistant V. MATHIEU)	MICH Paola (assistant M. EBNER)
	SZYMCZAK Marek (assistant M. GIERTYCH)

**Observers**

BOSTEELS Jean-Louis (B)	LEBERSORGER Peter (A)
CARETTA Maria Cristina (CONFAVI)	MARRACHI Massimo (I)
FUZIES Pierre (F)	de TURCKHEIM Gilbert (FACE)
GIRARD Ronan (ELO)	

**Secretariat**

Y. LECOCQ (FACE)

M. ESPÁRAGO (FACE)

## 1. Opening remarks and introduction

M. EBNER, in his capacity as acting Chairman and outgoing Coordinator of the Intergroup during the 1999-2004 term, opens the meeting and welcomes all MEPs present or represented, as well as G. de TURCKHEIM, President of FACE (the Federation representing 7 million hunters in 34 European countries).

He expresses his satisfaction for the fact that so far 62 MEPs have given their formal support to the new Intergroup and can therefore be considered, under the new EP Rules governing the establishment of Intergroups, as members. As he regularly receives new requests from colleagues to join the Intergroup, he expects that the total membership will exceed 10% of the total number of MEPs. He confirms that three Political Groups (EPP-ED, UEN, IND/DEM) have officially given their support to the re-constitution of the Intergroup and he thanks all colleagues having made this possible. He wishes to thank in particular Mrs V. MATHIEU, Mr S. BERLATO and Mrs H. GOUDIN for their active support in their respective Groups.

R. STURDY stresses the political importance of the Intergroup to defend and promote hunting in the UK and he wonders if this particular Intergroup is now not the largest one in the EP.

M. EBNER believes that this can not be yet be stated as not much is known about the composition and strength of other newly reconstituted Intergroups, but he is convinced that the "Hunting" Intergroup is probably one of the oldest and most active ones.

R. HELMER considers this as an important point and he asks that the Secretariat prepare a short note on this aspect with the precise data.

The Secretariat proposes the following statement:

*Since it was set up in 1985, the "Fieldsports" Intergroup has been operational without interruption, conducting in average six plenary meetings in Strasbourg a year and addressing a wide range of issues related to the countryside, conservation and all fieldsport disciplines. Its meetings bring together MEPs from virtually all Political Groups and Member States, and resulted in a number of essential political initiatives, such as the Written Declaration of 2000 on bird conservation, supported by almost half of all MEPs. Recently it was reconstituted, with the official support of three major Political Groups (UEN, IND/DEM and EPP-ED - of the latter, no less than 115 out of 207 Members gave their vote to this Intergroup, so that it came out 5<sup>th</sup> of 38 Intergroups having asked to be recognised). Currently, the Intergroup counts 62 Members but new ones are joining regularly, so that it may be expected it will eventually represent over 10% of all 723 MEPs. All this makes the "Fieldsports" Intergroup one of the oldest and most active Intergroups in the European Parliament.*

M. EBNER confirms that next year the Intergroup will have existed for 20 years and that it would be a good idea to mark this with an appropriate event. It would anyway be useful to have then a report with an overview of all activities and initiatives of the Intergroup over these two decades. He refers in this respect to the proposed "linking" of the Intergroup with similar structures in national / regional Parliaments in the Member States.

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

M. EBNER invites Members to comment on the Draft *Rules of Procedure* he prepared, together with the Secretariat, and which were circulated recently in five languages.

**A slightly amended version is attached.**

He believes there is a need to agree on a suitable name for the Intergroup, in order to involve as many MEPs as possible in its work, including those (the vast majority!) that do not hunt but have nevertheless an active interest in wildlife conservation and the countryside. He refers in this respect to the *Countryside Alliance* in the UK, which has been successful in rallying a significant proportion of public opinion behind its cause.

R. HELMER confirms that the “evolution” of the *British Field Sports Society* into the *Countryside Alliance* has been a good move from a public perception point of view. He feels on the other hand that a change of name should not result in any confusion about the main priority of the Intergroup, namely to promote hunting as a tool for conservation and rural development in the EU.

R. STURDY states he joined the Intergroup as soon as he became MEP, ten years ago. He believes that it is necessary for all Fieldsports disciplines to be united within one organisation – such as is the case for instance in France, and not as it is the case in the UK!

S. BERLATO would like to have a bit more time to study the proposed *Rules of Procedure* and to have an opportunity to possibly suggest some amendments. He too feels that the choice of a new name for the Intergroup is important and that while there should remain a link with the previous name, it would also be useful to show that the Intergroup is not dealing *only* with hunting.

V. MATHIEU would like to see the concept of “*sustainable* hunting” incorporated in the title of the Intergroup. She believes that those MEPs already in favour of hunting will continue to support the Intergroup, whatever its full name may be, but that it is important to get the support from other MEPs.

Y. LECOCQ from the Secretariat mentions that there is a translation and perception problem with the concept of “Fieldsports” or “Country Sports” outside of the UK and points out that it would therefore be preferable only to use the more generally accepted term of “hunting” in the title and in all official documents of the Intergroups.

R. HELMER admits that this is maybe a problem for non-native English speakers in the EU and that in Europe, the term “Hunting” covers in fact all Fieldsports disciplines, but in that case he would like to see an explicit reference to it in the English text of the *Rules of Procedure*.

A. SCHIERHUBER wonders if a reference to the countryside or to rural development should not come first in the official denomination of the Intergroup. There should also be a reference to the concept of “sustainability”.

L. de GRANDES states he is a hunter and that he is not ashamed to admit that, but he believes that the name of the Intergroup should reflect the essential role of hunting for the conservation of biodiversity and rural development (for instance, in the framework of the new *Common Agricultural Policy*). Members should therefore make the right choice so that the title of the Intergroup expresses these concerns and makes it clear that hunting is much more than such hunting.

M. EBNER thanks his colleagues for the constructive and helpful comments. He believes it is fair to give members more time to examine the proposed *Rules of Procedure* but he hopes that they can be adopted at the next plenary meeting of the Intergroup (scheduled for the February session of the EP in Strasbourg). He therefore invites Members to submit their comments in writing to him by the 15<sup>th</sup> January, so that the *Bureau* may already have a first discussion on this issue and that the Secretariat can produce the different translations.

As far as the new name of the Intergroup is concerned, M. EBNER agrees with all interventions made and he feels that this name should reflect these concerns, but at the same time remain short and “users’ friendly”. He hopes therefore that a majority of Members will accept the following title: *Intergroup “Countryside, Biodiversity & Sustainable Hunting”*.

### **3. Election of the Members of the Intergroup Bureau**

According to M. EBNER, it is necessary to proceed already to the election of a *Bureau* for the Intergroup, even if formally speaking the *Rules of Procedure* regulating this aspect still have to be adopted. He therefore invites Members to make nominations for the different functions of the *Bureau*.

A. SCHIERHUBER wants to nominate M. EBNER for the election of *President-Coordinator* of the re-constituted Intergroup, this in the light of his excellent record as *Coordinator* of the previous Intergroup during the 1999-2004 term. She is seconded by R. HELMER and R. STURDY.

M. EBNER thanks these colleagues for their trust and declares he is willing to accept to be nominated. Having been himself a Member of the Intergroup for ten years, and its *Coordinator* for five years, he would like to continue giving his time and energy to this body. He refers to the work undertaken by so many MEPs in relation to the *Written Declaration* of autumn 2000 on the “Birds” Directive, which failed narrowly to get the support of 50% of the EP but which nevertheless resulted in increase awareness within the European Commission to properly address the problems all Member States have with this Directive. This lead directly to the launch by the Commission of the *Sustainable Hunting Initiative* and to the *Agreement* between FACE and *BirdLife International*.

Members of the Intergroup then elect M. EBNER as *President-Coordinator* by acclamation.

E. JEGGLE confirms the importance of the work of the Intergroup, not in the least because hunting still has a significant role in today’s society. She then proposes the nomination of Mrs V. MATHIEU as *First-Co-President* of the Intergroup. M. EBNER seconds this nomination.

Members of the Intergroup elect V. MATHIEU as *First Co-President* by acclamation. Resulting from a number of different nominations, seconded by at least one other Member, the Intergroup elects by acclamation the following *Co-Presidents*:

S. BERLATO, D. GRABOWSKI, L. de GRANDES, R. STURDY.

At the reception immediately following the Intergroup meeting, M. EBNER has further invited L. LETHINEN to accept a nomination as *Co-President*, this in order to guarantee a good geographical and political balance within the *Bureau*. Mrs. A. LULLING too has expressed afterwards the wish to remain member of the *Bureau*. The *Rules of Procedure* also foresee (under Rule 6) that “*at the first Intergroup meeting of each parliamentary year, participating MEPs will have an opportunity to add further members to the Bureau*”.

The current *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)
	D. GRABOWSKI (IND/DEM / POL)
	L. de GRANDES (EPP-ED / ES)
	*L. LEHTINEN (PES / FIN)
	*A. LULLING (EPP-ED/LUX)
	R. STURDY (EPP-ED / UK)

\*Pending formal confirmation at the next plenary meeting of the Intergroup

#### 4. Work Programme for the year 2005

M. EBNER invites all Intergroup Members to examine the overview he prepared, with the assistance of the Secretariat (see annex) and to let him have suggestions for possible new topics. At its meeting in January, the *Bureau* will then finalise the Programme for the first two or three Intergroup meetings, as well as a provisional programme for the rest of the year.

#### 5. Urgent legislative matters in the EP

G. de TURCKHEIM, President of FACE, briefs Members on the Commission’s Strategy aiming to halt, and if possible reverse, the lost of biodiversity by the year 2010. The 7 million European hunters are more than willing and able to contribute to this process, and this constitutes an essential element of the *Sustainable Hunting Initiative* and of the *Agreement* which was recently signed by FACE and *BirdLife International*. There remains however a major obstacle to the full implementation of this commitment, namely the ongoing interpretation problems of certain key provisions of the “Birds” Directive, resulting in unnecessary and very unhelpful court cases and legal procedures, both at EU and national level. The Commission’s *Guidance Document on Hunting* could solve most of these problems, if only it had a stronger legal basis. And this is precisely one of the *Conclusions* of the recent EU Conference, held in Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands, as it recommends including in Annex V of the “Birds” Directive a specific reference to this *Guidance Document*. He urges therefore the Intergroup to address an urgent message to the Dutch Presidency in support of its commitment to present these *Conclusions* for endorsement to the forthcoming “Environment” Council meeting (20<sup>th</sup> December in Brussels).

M. EBNER believes the Intergroup should indeed send such message to the “Environment” Council. Noting the general agreement of the Members present for such initiative and considering its urgency, he announces that he will draft and immediately forward such message to the Dutch Presidency.

In his capacity of Secretary-General of FACE, Y.LECOCQ draws the attention of the Intergroup to the Proposal for a Directive “*Humane Trapping Standards*” COM(2004)532 fin. of 30.07.2004, which is likely to have serious implications for gamekeepers, pest control (Muskrat!) and wildlife management in the EU. As this Directive will be adopted under the *Co-decision* procedure, it is essential that the EP contributes to make its provisions as realistic and applicable as possible. The *Committee on Environment* has appointed Mrs K. SCHEELE (PES / A) as *Rapporteur* but maybe other Committees (Trade, Legal Affairs) should be consulted as well, considering the possible implications for trade with for instance Canada, as well as the choice of the legal basis for this Proposal.

M. EBNER believes that this indeed would be an important topic for the next Intergroup meeting.

R. HELMER informs his colleagues that he has been appointed by his Group *Shadow Rapporteur* for this Proposal and that he looks forward receiving relevant information and evidence on the need for sustainable trapping.

#### **6. Presentation of the FACE publication “*Hunting: an added value for biodiversity*”**

Members receive each a copy of the recent FACE publication (available in English and French, with German under preparation) which illustrates a set of case studies from all over the EU how hunters contribute to maintain and improve biodiversity. This publication can also be consulted at the FACE website <http://www.face-europe.org/case-studies/default.htm> and will even be accessible soon from the European Commission’s website.

#### **7. Any other business**

No issues are raised under this agenda item.

#### **8. Next meeting**

Subject to confirmation in January, it is foreseen that the next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February** and deal with international trapping standards and the importance of trapping for wildlife management; V. MATHIEU will chair this meeting.

As all agenda items have been dealt with and nobody asks for the floor, the *President-Coordinator* thanks all participants and closes the meeting.

Manolo ESPARRAGO