



Sustainable Hunting Intergroup celebrates the bonds between hunting and culture

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In the final meeting of the Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity & Countryside Activities Intergroup prior to the elections to the European Parliament in June 2009, Members of the European Parliament experienced the special bond that exists between hunting and culture across the whole of Europe. Over the centuries hunting has influenced many types of cultural activities from painting, sculpture, literature, cuisines to music, photography and cinema. It was also an opportunity for FACE, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU, to bestow upon Dr. Michl EBNER (EPP-ED, IT), Intergroup President-Coordinator the first honorary membership to FACE for his dedication to hunting.

Together with the three day exhibition that was set up in the halls of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and at the initiative of Dr. EBNER, an exceptional experience has collected all these elements under one roof. In his last meeting as Intergroup President-Coordinator, Dr. EBNER introduced four experts on the subject, Gilbert Titeux – Writer (France), Mag. Hubert. J. Flörl – Sculptor (Austria), Marco Zeni – Writer (Italy), and Claude d'Anthenaise - Curator (France), who spoke to MEPs about how hunting has acted as the Muse for artists. According to Dr. EBNER, "It was the intention to bring together hunting & culture in the European Parliament in order to celebrate the successful legislative period. Having discussed Cormorants, Seals, Trapping, Game damages, Hunting traditions and much more over the last years, today it is time to draw the attention to art and to show how the 25 000 year old tradition was and is expressed in art".

In the first presentation, Gilbert TITEUX (France), former Director of the Federal department of hunters from Lower Rhine (Bas-Rhin) and former professor from 1990 to 2005, spoke of the views on the Franco-Germanic representation of the hunt in painting from the 19th century. Holding a significant place in the world of painting in both France and Germany, hunting was able to cross the divide that in many respects separated the two sides of the Rhine.

Sculptor Mag. Hubert FLÖRL (Austria), graduate from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, traced the origins of art in Europe, from the early cave paintings in Altamira and Lascaux to the Greek and Roman gods to the advent of the camera. For him, there existed a strong link to hunting that has persisted over the centuries within all media, found in the depictions of hunting by many renowned artists.

Speaking afterwards, Writer Marco ZENI (Italian) drew the attention to the work of Mario RIGONI STERN, a well known artist, who passed away last year. In order to express his profound knowledge of nature and hunting, his passion for the symbiosis of human and nature as well as his good collaborations with all circles of society, Zeni remembered Stern's work and traces still visible.

Finally, chief curator of the "Musée de la Chasse" in Paris and in charge of the renovation of the "Musée international de la Chasse" of Gien castle, Claude d'ANTHENAISE, examined the role of hunting as an experience of meaning and asked how it could be incorporated into the intellectual field that is essentially a practical experience. For him, the answer is through art. Art is a continuation of a form of commemoration of the animal, just like for the hunter the displaying of trophies, he argues.

At the inaugural cocktail to the hunting and culture exhibition held on Wednesday evening in the Parliament, an event co hosted by Véronique MATHIEU (EPP-ED, FR) who provided game meat, FACE President Gilbert de TURCKHEIM awarded Dr. EBNER the first honorary membership to FACE. In his address, Mr. de TURCKHEIM spoke of Dr. EBNER's thirty years of dedication including the past five years as Intergroup President-Coordinator. He said, "this award, which was unanimously agreed upon by all 36 Member Associations at FACE's April General Assembly, is a special way of thanking him and keeping in contact with him for it is his character and spirit we would not want to lose".

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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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For more information about FACE and the Intergroup, visit www.face.eu or contact publicaffairs@face.eu

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