



Sustainable Hunting Intergroup considers role of hunters in biodiversity

Strasbourg, 25.11.2009

The **Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity, Countryside Activities & Forestry** Intergroup met for its first official thematic meeting since the Parliamentary elections back in June 2009. The reconstitution of this Intergroup is vital as it maintains a close link between the Members of European Parliament and representatives of civil society for the purpose of nurturing debate on the future conservation of the countryside, by hunters in collaboration with other stakeholders. Chaired by Robert STURDY (ECR, UK), the focus of the meeting was on the role of hunters in biodiversity. With many in agreement that the European Union is not going to reach its targets for “halting biodiversity loss by 2010”, and with new goals and visions for biodiversity being set, it is important that we consider the wider countryside. The President of the Intergroup, Mme Véronique MATHIEU (EPP, FR) outlined the importance of Biodiversity and drew attention to next year being the International Year of Biodiversity, to which hunters are contributing.

To open the session, Tamás MARGHESCU, former IUCN Regional Director Europe, asked the MEPs and other guests whether hunting and biodiversity are a contradiction, to which he suggested they are not as hunters were in fact the first biodiversity conservers, as game species are an essential part of a (healthy) ecosystem. The economic value of hunting, he pointed out, is quite large, and that nature conservationists and hunters are often the same actors. By engaging with hunters, MARGHESCU concludes, there are potentially 7 million biodiversity managers already on the ground taking action. Joseph Van der STEGEN, European Commission, DG Environment, B3, underlined the important contribution of sustainable hunting in the conservation of biodiversity. Together with a couple of other Conservation NGOs, FACE would be a fruitful contributor of statistics and data which would help the Commission to get a balanced picture of nature development and in the context of Natura 2000. In her presentation, Geva BLACKETT, speaking on behalf of the Invercauld estate in Scotland outlined the importance of biodiversity for the Scottish countryside, and the benefits that hunting provides, such as economic, the management of species and the control of invasive alien species. She presented the Wildlife Estates initiative launch by ELO, a project that aims to create a label to recognize good and exemplary management of territories in the EU where there is land managed for hunting and fishing activities. Angus MIDDLETON, FACE CEO concluded by pointing out that over 65% of the EU land area is managed by hunters, for hunting and conservation. This is done in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders and if the EU is to progress its ambitious targets for biodiversity, then hunters must be accepted as partners in conservation.

After the first meeting of the Intergroup Bureau, two more MEPs have joined the Bureau. The composition of the “Sustainable Hunting” Intergroup Bureau is as follows:

Président: Véronique MATHIEU (EPP, FR)

Co-President: Robert STRUDY (ECR, UK)

Secretary General: Markus PIEPER (EPP, DE)

Vice-Presidents: Luis Manuel CAPOULAS SANTOS (S&D, PT), Béla GLATTFELDER (EPP, HU), Sergio BERLATO (EPP, IT), Elisabeth KÖSTINGER (EPP, AT), William The Earl of DARTMOUTH (EFD, UK), Lena EK (ALDE, SE) and Ioan ENCIU (S&D, RO).

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PRESS RELEASE
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FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the E.U.) hosts the Secretariat of the Intergroup which is run in conjunction with ELO (European Landowners Organisation) for cross cutting issues on Agriculture and Forestry.

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FACE acts in the interest of over 7,000,000 European hunters in 36 European countries, promotes hunting in accordance with the principle of wise and sustainable use of natural resources. Its objectives are the conservation and management of wildlife, the protection, creation and restoration of habitats, and the use of biodiversity as a tool for rural development. Since 1987, FACE is a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

ELO provides support to the Intergroup **Hunting, Biodiversity, Countryside Activities & Forestry**. ELO is a unique federation of 67 national associations across the EU27 which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. ELO is the only organisation able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. Its purpose is to promote a dynamic, prosperous and sustainable countryside based on high environmental standards, economic viability and social fabric.
nature@elo.org ; www.elo.org

Both organisations are partners of the IUCN Countdown 2010 initiative.

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