



Manifesto

Federation of Associations for Hunting
and Conservation of the EU



2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009



Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU

- **FACE**, as a hunters' Federation, **defends** and **represents** the collective interests of its Members at European and international level.
- **FACE**, as a conservation NGO, **promotes** hunting in accordance with the principle of **wise and sustainable use** of natural resources, for conservation and management of wildlife, for the protection, creation and restoration of habitats, for Biodiversity and as a tool for rural development
- **FACE** currently (2004) counts *Full Members* in 32 European countries: **Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.**
- **FACE** (*Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU*) is a non-profit-making, non-governmental international association with its headquarters in Brussels. Founded in 1977, it represents the interests of some seven million European hunters through its Members, representative national hunters' associations from 32 countries. Its *Secretariat*, based in Brussels, is responsible for the day-to-day management, for coordination of activities, projects and programmes and for the preparation and implementation of policies adopted by the *Board* and *General Assembly* (current President: Gilbert de Turckheim from France). The *Secretary-General*, Dr Yves Lecocq, and its team maintain regular contacts with the various European institutions, national officials, international NGOs and the media. One of FACE's main tasks is to provide an 'early warning system' for its members, to ensure that they are kept fully up-to-date on relevant legislation and developments.
- **FACE** is recognised by the *European Commission* as the representative body for Europe's seven million hunters. It is consulted by the relevant Commission *Directorates-General* and *Units* during the preparation, elaboration and monitoring of EU legislation dealing with hunting, wildlife management, nature conservation, firearms, wild animal health, game meat hygiene, etc.
- **FACE** works closely with *Members of the European Parliament*. Since 1985, it provides the *Secretariat* for the Parliament's 'Hunting' *Intergroup*, a platform for contact between the European Parliament and civil society.
- **FACE** has been granted observer status by the *Council of Europe*, in particular for meetings of the *Standing Committee of the Bern Convention*, which seeks to conserve wild species and their habitats.
- **FACE** is also an observer at international conventions such as the *Bonn Convention on Migratory Species* (CMS), the *African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement* (AEWA) and the *Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species* (CITES).
- **FACE** actively supports and participates in a wide range of conservation projects and initiatives, in partnership with national and international organisations. These contribute to raising awareness amongst the public about the important role sustainable hunting plays in conservation.

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MEMBER OF: the World Conservation Union (IUCN) | the Natura 2000 Users' Forum | the European Countryside Movement (ECM)

Preamble



The advent of a *new* and expanded European Union, made up of 25 Member States, presents a tremendous challenge and opportunity for the defenders of the countryside in general, and for the hunters in particular.

With over 7 million people participating in hunting, this community is one of the best organised networks, looking after territories all over Europe's countryside.

Having a very keen interest in nature and managing natural areas, hunters are also objective partners of

the new policy for rural development, which is being developed as part of reform of the CAP.

Beyond the significant political force that hunters represent through their structured organisations, it is the socio-economic weight of the hunters' community as well as its role as a meeting platform between town and countryside that are to be considered as assets for rural development.

This European Parliament needs to take into account this hunters' community, with all its ecological, economic and social diversity, in particular to soothe some of the current fears of this 'Europe of hunters'.

It will be up to the elected MEPS of tomorrow, and particularly to those – numerous – who will join the '*Hunting, Countryside and Biodiversity*' Intergroup, to defend and promote the traditional forms of wise use of natural resources, one of them being hunting, so that these uses become a significant asset for the preservation of biodiversity and for the conservation of nature.

The European hunters and their representative body, FACE, present in this Manifesto their objectives for the years to come, as well as some of their concerns and aspirations that the next European Parliament should have to deal with and resolve.

Gilbert de TURCKHEIM
FACE *President*



The European hunter and politics

A vote for reason!

There are some seven million hunters in the *European Union*. These men and women come from a wide range of social classes and backgrounds. Contrary to some views, the majority of hunters in Europe are middle class people, farm workers, small business owners, teachers, pensioners and other *average* citizens. They live in villages, smaller towns or larger cities. But what they share is an active interest in nature and its wildlife, and a deep commitment to the countryside, its inhabitants, culture and traditions.

Another thing they have in common is that, when it comes to using their democratic right to vote, they vote for reason. Politically speaking, these people belong – just as do all other citizens in their neighbourhood or working environment – to the full width of the spectrum: their sympathy goes from leftwing parties over the centre to more rightwing or conservative tendencies. But when it comes to vote in the European elections, which – much more than local, regional or national elections – focus on environmental, rural development and animal welfare issues, hunters are likely to follow other criteria. They will vote for people’s representatives who it can be expected to take responsible decisions, based on objective, factual evidence. The fact is, however, that there are too many people – even in the European Parliament – who think they know what takes place, obtain their information from views issued by organisations or movements who, in turn, rely to a surprising extent on press reports of particular incidents which, in their turn, are based on misconceptions.

The hunting instinct is deep and fundamental in our European society. While ‘only’ seven million EU citizens actually practice hunting, anthropologists and sociologists believe that at least 50 % of Europeans still recognise this natural instinct in themselves, even if most of them sublimate it through other outlets. But not all people are hunters, or like the idea of hunting. It is and remains an emotive subject. Yet the objection to hunting is essentially a personal one. But from a point of view of democracy and tolerance, people should be allowed to disagree. Indeed, in a pluralist society, when there are no objective sound reasons for banning or restricting a particular form of behaviour, those who do not share it should have no right to dictate their will on purely personal grounds.

Hunters make an important contribution to the preservation of the countryside and of biodiversity. Alongside other conservationists, concerned farmers and rural landowners, foresters, anglers and land-managers, they take a stand against the destruction of our natural environment

dictated by the imperatives of a society in which urban values, urban views and – too often – urban prejudice, well-intended though it may be, take precedence over sound knowledge of wildlife and nature. According to a *Eurobarometer* survey in 2003 however, public opinion in the EU considers hunting as the *least* important threat for the environment, far less than for instance intensive farming, mass tourism or industrial development.

Hunters from the 25 Member States of the EU – together with their relatives, friends and other supporters of the countryside, in total well over 20 million voters – will actively participate in the European elections in June and use their vote to send political representatives to Strasbourg and Brussels from whom they may expect understanding of and sympathy for rural and wildlife management issues. A number of these key-issues are briefly presented in this Manifesto.

We at FACE look forward to meeting these political representatives – re-elected MEPs returning to Strasbourg and Brussels, or newly elected ones going there for the very first time – from July 2004 onwards and renewing or establishing a constructive and fair relationship with them during their five-year parliamentary mandate.

Dr. Yves LECOCQ
Secretary-General

Anders GRAHN
Public Affairs Officer



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FOR CONSERVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE USE

To ensure the conservation of our wildlife is an important responsibility towards future generations for politicians and other decision makers, both at European as well as national level. This objective is achieved through the integrated management of nature.

Indeed, depending on how the different users of renewable natural resources – farmers, foresters, hunters, etc. – choose to operate in practice, they may be *destroyers* or *creators* of nature. How to deal with this apparent duality? By applying the ‘polluter pays’ principle or by rewarding the manager for the services he provides to society? In reality, both options are not so contradictory as may seem, as they can be combined by embedding one into the other: a legal framework laying down the limit between good and bad practices... and grants for those who choose to do more than merely the required minimum for the environment.

In particular it is necessary to take fully into account the natural processes that will lead to a ‘win-win’ scenario whereby the social and ecological functions of natural habitats are properly guaranteed, alongside their economic functions. The efforts undertaken by the managers of natural resources to implement such sustainable practices need to be recognised, for instance through financial support schemes and/or tax incentives. But those who have not yet integrated these objectives into their activities should be encouraged, directly or indirectly, and by different means (such as information, training, research, development...), to do so.

An illustration of the level of what may be required to finance the full scale of these measures, is the amount anticipated for the maintenance of the NATURA 2000 Network (some 15 % of the territory of the EU), namely between 3.4 and 5.7 billion € per year. Considering that ‘nature’ represents about three quarters of the size of the EU, huge areas will remain *outside* the NATURA 2000 Network, and these will also have to be used in a sustainable way.

All this shows clearly that in the long run, nature *conservation* is in principle only possible if it is itself a ‘by-product’ of the *use* of natural resources. The *sustainable use* of natural resources, in conformity with the global environmental objectives, should in fact become a fundamental principle of the environmental policy of the EU.



What the EU should do:

- To inform the public about *sustainable use* as a fundamental principle of the environmental policy in general and of nature conservation in particular.
- To integrate the major stakeholders in this communication effort, by letting farmers, hunters, anglers, etc. explain their motivation to conserve species and habitats through *sustainable use*.
- To encourage a synergy between all interested stakeholders, including the nature protection movement, the leisure and tourism sectors, etc.
- To bring forward the appropriate instruments to (co-) finance an integrated nature management.





FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF SECTOR POLICIES

At the Gothenburg Summit in 2002, the European Council committed itself to take all necessary measures to halt the loss of biodiversity by the year 2010. This target requires the urgent implementation of a number of concerted actions. As many economic and recreational activities are likely to have a positive or negative impact on Biodiversity, it is essential to incorporate conservation objectives in the different sector policies of the EU.

Coherence of policies should not only relate to all types of *land-use* but also, and this is important, to a wide range of *other economic sectors*, such as industry or transport. Such a global approach should replace the frequently too narrow perspective of many current Directives (including the 'Birds' and 'Habitats' Directives) and Regulations, which only address certain specific elements of the overall framework. Biodiversity needs to be a concern for all sectors if we can hope to achieve the Gothenburg objectives.



What the EU should do:

- To integrate Biodiversity-related objectives into a strategy covering all sectors in order to halt the loss of Biodiversity by 2010: *Common Agriculture Policy*, integrated product policy, trans-European networks, environmental liability, environmental impact assessments...
- To develop a global legal instrument for replacing Directives covering only a narrow segment.
- To establish a network of experts advising decision making bodies (including the European institutions).
- To involve systematically local stakeholders in these processes.



FOR A JUDICIOUS MANAGEMENT OF WILD BIRDS

Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds is one of the first environmental legal instruments of the European Community. Conceived initially for (and by) only nine Member States, the Directive, over the quarter century of its existence, had to deal with a considerable extension of its bio-geographical scope and also with significant changes in the status of many bird species. And although it resulted in a fair number of measures and initiatives for the conservation of birds and their habitats, not everything has gone in the right direction. Too often, the Directive has been interpreted in an excessively restrictive way in relation to its objectives for the conservation of natural resources (including their sustainable use), while in fact its implementation should be based on reliable scientific and technical data. It would be productive if an internationally coordinated monitoring scheme of bird populations (in particular of migratory ones), of their habitats and of their sustainable use through hunting could be established.



What the EU should do:

- To review the current system of determining hunting seasons, to be based on reliable biological data and on a reasonable legal and biological interpretation of the key provisions of the Directive.
- To draft and implement *Action Plans* for species (or groups of species) in an unfavourable conservation status.
- To develop and implement an international monitoring scheme for hunted and non-hunted birds.
- To adapt regularly the content of the Directive's annexes to the evolution of scientific and technical knowledge on the conservation status of species.
- To integrate systematically the principle of sustainable use in all *Management Plans* of protected sites (NATURA 2000 Network!), and this both at national and international level.

IV

FOR A CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN LARGE CARNIVORES AND PEOPLE

With the accession of new Member States, in particular those from Central and Eastern Europe, not only new challenges but also new opportunities will be presented to the EU in relation to its nature conservation policy. For the first time the EU territory will cover the natural distribution range of several species of large carnivores – Wolf, Brown bear, Lynx – whose populations are stable or even increasing. Until now, the EU policy for the conservation of these species has been based on a rather restrictive approach, imposing a strict protection of almost all these populations, most of the time labelled as ‘endangered’. But it will now become possible to make use of the considerable expertise of these new Member States on conservation, management but also sustainable use of these populations and to integrate these principles into proper *Management* and *Action Plans* at international level. Such *Plans* should take into account the socio-economic impact of the presence of these large carnivores in areas with a higher human population density and to propose realistic solutions to reduce potential conflicts between these species and the interests of the rural communities concerned.



What the EU should do:

- To define a policy for Biodiversity conservation, aiming at a long-term co-existence between people and large carnivores.
- To integrate in such EU policy the Member States where these species are in a favourable conservation status, taking fully into account their expertise concerning the sustainable management of large carnivores.
- To incorporate these elements in *Action Plans* for each of these species and at the scale of their distribution range.
- To create a consultation and dialogue platform at EU level for experts, NGOs, rural communities and other sectors concerned with the conservation and management of large carnivores.

FOR REDUCING POLARISATION BETWEEN HUNTERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS

The natural environment has become a common heritage that is used by more and more stakeholders. This may lead to tensions, for example between hunters and nature conservationists. These tensions frequently result from insufficient information; the final objectives of the different parties are in reality often very similar and may be reconciled. In order to terminate this sterile and even costly opposition, the European Commission recently launched the *Sustainable Hunting Initiative*. FACE and *BirdLife International*, active members of this *Initiative*, participated jointly in the drafting of a *Charter* on sustainable hunting and in a reduction of the conflicts and the polarisation between hunters and other conservationists.



What the EU should do:

- To encourage and support the *Sustainable Hunting Initiative*.
- To promote the dialogue between hunters and other conservationists, in particular by setting up an *Advisory Council* with representatives of both sectors, to assist the Institutions in the drafting and implementation of an EU policy on nature conservation.
- To ensure that all decisions, measures and initiatives are based on reliable scientific and technical data, so that they will be challenged as little as possible.
- To confirm systematically that even *inside* the NATURA 2000 Network, sustainable hunting has a role to play.
- To support the education and information efforts undertaken by the hunters community, in particular on the phasing out of lead shot for hunting in wetlands and on the need for bag statistics.



VI

FOR OBJECTIVE CRITERIA ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Today the majority of Europe's population is urban and has hardly any contact anymore with wild animals in their natural environment. Whereas our ancestors knew and accepted that eating and wearing clothes meant having to kill animals, today's society tends to forget that the survival of mankind is still to a large extent based on the production and harvesting of living resources, be it through farming, forestry, fishing or hunting.

All wild species are naturally predisposed to 'overproduce'. At each reproduction period, an animal population will increase in numbers until it risks exceeding the carrying capacity of its habitat. Nature however condemns a certain proportion of this population to die before the next reproduction season, falling victim to natural mechanics such as poor weather, starvation, diseases, parasitism, predation, cannibalism, etc. The choice then is between two options: to let animal populations be reduced by these natural mechanisms, or else to regulate them by hunting. Throughout the EU, hunting is governed by strict rules and codes of conduct, which ensure that excessive bags and animal suffering are avoided.

We must however stop thinking of animals in human terms – simply because a wild animal does not think, feel or act like a human being. Its needs and priorities are not those immortalised in the literary works of our childhood or in Walt Disney films. These are tales of human foible, not of animal fact.



What the EU should do:

To base its initiatives in the field of animal welfare on reliable and measurable data.



VII

FOR HUMANE TRAPPING

In 1997 an *Agreement on international humane trapping standards* was concluded between the EU, Canada and the Russian Federation, which applies to trapping methods and certification, as well as to the identification of traps for 16 animal species, including Pine marten, Badger, Ermine, Raccoon dog and Muskrat. It expects trappers to be trained in the safe and effective use of traps and further that traps and trapping methods should be tested for compliance with the standards. The Agreement requires the introduction of trapping legislation in the EU at the appropriate level, which FACE considers to be the national or regional one.

FACE welcomes this Agreement as a tool for further improving the humaneness of traps. A remaining problem is however that there are no trap testing facilities in Europe. Another problem is the financing of these tests; trapping in Europe being mainly an activity to regulate species causing important damages (Muskrat, etc.) by non professional trappers, it is not realistic to expect that they will be able to cover these costs.



What the EU should do:

In the event of EU trapping legislation being introduced, to ensure that the testing of traps is undertaken *within* the EU and according to a reasonable timescale, with costs (at least partly) being covered by the competent authorities.

VIII

FOR QUALITY WILD GAME MEAT

In recent years, considerable effort has been undertaken to improve food safety in the EU. The complex and enormous amount of community legislation covering food of animal origin is in the process of being reviewed, simplified and up-dated. The fundamental principle ‘from stable to table’ – or in the case of wild game meat ‘from forest to fork’ – will be part of this legislation, as well as a greater flexibility, a liability regime for food producers and identification of the origin of food products (or ‘traceability’). And this new legislation also covers game meat, a quality and healthy product to which no drugs or other substances are added and which is the result of a process of natural selection. This meat is ‘harvested’ by hunters who have to respect hygiene rules and to inform the competent authorities in cases where abnormalities are observed. Game meat is most of the time intended for personal consumption, given to friends or sold in small quantities to the local market. In the case of larger quantities or importation from other Member States or third countries, game is commercialised and processed by game dealers that are subject to more stringent hygiene rules and veterinary inspections.

The fact that for hunters a certain degree of flexibility is foreseen is totally justified and had already been recognised by the EP when it indicated that the direct and local distribution of game meat in small quantities should remain subject to existing national rules.



What the EU should do:

- To introduce rules that are sufficiently flexible and practical for wild game meat so that local trade of small quantities remains possible.
- To make sure that the anticipated cost of the health inspections takes into account the economic reality of a local trade in small quantities of game.
- To support training programmes for hunters on game hygiene and health inspection.

FOR ENABLING HUNTERS TO TRAVEL MORE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE EU

The Directive *on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons* (91/477/EEC), adopted in 1991, aims to contribute to the creation of a single internal market by foreseeing the abolition of police and customs formalities at intra-Community borders. This objective is to be achieved through the implementation by Member States of strict rules on the control of the acquisition and the possession of firearms, based on a partial harmonisation of national legislation, in particular on the categories of firearms that are prohibited or subject to licensing.

Any transfer of a firearm from one Member State to another is subject to a procedure that enables each Member State to be notified before a firearm is brought into its territory. However, for hunters and sport-shooters, who regularly travel from their home to one or several Member States in order to hunt there or to participate in a competition, the Directive introduced the *European Firearms Pass* (EFP) that should permit the free movement inside the EU *without* prior authorisation. Unfortunately, some Member States do not recognise this community document at all or demand that the EFP is sent to them in advance in order to deliver, after a long and costly procedure, a national license or permit. All this is totally incompatible with the principle of free movement of people, services and goods and may lead to unfair competition, to distortion of markets and to restrictions for rural development and agro-tourism.



What the EU should do:

- To require all Member States to recognise the EFP as the *only* document required for a hunter to travel with his firearm inside the EU, without the need for an additional prior authorisation.
- To launch when needed an infringement procedure against those Member States that do not respect these provisions for the EFP.

FOR A LIVING COUNTRYSIDE

Rural exodus continues to affect numerous so-called 'less favoured' regions in the EU and will probably even increase with the accession of new Member States. Indeed, it has very often not been possible to compensate for the considerable loss of employment in farming by creating new jobs in the countryside. But the causes of this migration towards employment centres and towns also have a socio-cultural character. Many people may be willing to live in the countryside – because they do appreciate at its value the advantage of a more natural and healthy environment – and to accept working there for a lower income than in a city. But for all that, they require a minimum degree of infrastructure, communication channels, comfort and leisure activities – notably hunting. In many of these rural communities hunting can indeed play an important role in ensuring social cohesion while at the same time offering an alternative, or at least complementary, income in different sectors: management of hunting areas, game-keeping, agro-tourism, bed and breakfast, trade in rural products, etc. Through a co-ordinated and coherent rural policy, the EU should encourage and actively support pilot projects illustrating how traditional activities – including hunting and angling – may contribute to the economy and the social infrastructure of the countryside. This will also contribute to a better balance between urban and rural communities.



What the EU should do:

- **To implement a true European policy of rural development which will make the countryside attractive again from a social and economic point of view, and avoid the continuation of its depopulation.**
- **To ensure and to promote equal opportunities and rights for cities and rural areas.**
- **To involve local stakeholders – farmers, country landowners, fish-farmers, foresters, hunters, anglers, etc. – in the development of the countryside and in defining priority policy objectives.**

Postscript

Europe's hunters do not want to elect a team of hunters to the European helm. Their vote will go to:

- men and women, capable of making up their mind on conservation and hunting on the basis of logical arguments and understanding rather than emotion;
- men and women who can recognise that Europe's hunters are able to make an invaluable contribution as the watchdogs and managers of a healthy rural environment, together with farmers and foresters, ecologists and the authorities;
- men and women who will take a positive and understanding attitude to the problems and expectations of the countryside.

Quotes about hunting

'Use of wild living resources, if sustainable, is an important conservation tool because the social and economic benefits derived from such use provide incentives for people to conserve them.'

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources

'The "Birds Directive" recognises the legitimacy of hunting ... In line with the principle of subsidiarity it is the Member States who fix the hunting dates in accordance with the biological principles of the directive.'

Commissioner Margot Wallström in an open letter on hunting

'The European Commission has frequently stated that hunting is a management issue at site level, and, a priori, is not to be excluded from NATURA 2000 areas... Hunters – with their interest in sustaining wildlife habitats and sites of importance for the production of quarry – are another lobby for the countryside: they should be seen as a solution and not a problem.'

Report of the Green Week Workshop on Sustainable hunting within and around the NATURA 2000 Network, 19th April 2002, Brussels

'Waterfowl hunting in European wetlands is a popular leisure activity and can be an important source of income for wetland owners. Rightly, hunting associations are becoming an important driving force for wetland conservation. The principle of using the waterfowl resource in a sustainable way can substantially contribute to wetland conservation.'

Wise use and conservation of wetlands. COM (95) 189, 29.05.1995