

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1159/04
by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: The protection of fish stocks from cormorants

Under European Law, the cormorant is a protected bird. Methods of controlling their numbers are highly restricted, even if it is for the purpose of protecting fish stocks. In Britain, this law is strictly upheld by the government body DEFRA; only if a fishery owner can prove hardship is he allowed to shoot any of the birds, and then he is restricted to just four a year.

However, in France, the French Government has granted each of its 94 regions the right to shoot 3 000 cormorants a year. Could the Commission firstly confirm that this is the case? Secondly, what action does the Commission propose to take to narrow the alarming gap which exists between two Member States who are essentially enforcing what should be harmonised European legislation?

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that, if cormorants are driven away from France, they will almost certainly fly north to Britain, thereby further compounding the problem.