

**Question for written answer P-001447/2017  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Mark Demesmaeker (ECR) and Julie Girling (ECR)**

Subject: Spring hunting

On 7 December 2016, the Commission confirmed that the EU Nature Directives are fit for purpose and acknowledged that better implementation is key to fully achieving their objectives.

The upcoming spring hunting season could be considered as a test to see whether the Commission will defend the principles enshrined in the Birds Directive. The fact that Malta now holds the Presidency of the Council makes the prospect even more compelling.

It is expected that quail hunting will still be permitted in Malta. Although quails are not yet a threatened species, their numbers are in decline, so strong action is required to ensure that hunting does not further jeopardise quail populations as it has turtle doves. Similar cases of declining bird populations are emerging in Finland.

1. Can the Commission confirm its commitment to the full implementation of the Birds Directive?
2. With regard to the emerging cases in Malta and Finland, will the Commission back up its promised commitment with affirmative action, including taking cases to the Court of Justice if necessary?
3. Does the Commission agree that better implementation is key to ensuring its credibility and building citizens' trust in the EU?