



26.8.2015

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 1475/2014 by Christos Taklis (Greek) on banning hunting

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner sets out the text of the 1978 Universal Declaration of Animal Rights and asks that the EP support a ban on hunting, especially where hunting is for sport rather than survival.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 12 May 2015. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 26 August 2015

The Birds¹ and Habitats² Directives, which form the cornerstone of Europe's legislation on nature conservation, require the Member States to establish a strict protection regime for all naturally occurring wild European bird species as well as for endangered species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive.

The Directives recognise the legitimacy of hunting and exploitation for certain species, but they set a framework to regulate them and to guarantee their sustainability. The Directives do not make any distinction between hunting for recreational or survival purposes. Hunting of bird species listed in Annex II of the Birds Directive is permitted under national legislation, in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 7 of the Directive, provided it does not jeopardise conservation efforts for those species. Species listed in Annex V of the Habitats Directive may be subject to exploitation as long as this is consistent with their conservation.

1 Directive 2009/147/EC, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7–25, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147>.

2 Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01992L0043-20070101>.

In all other cases hunting and exploitation of species covered by the Directives is possible only under the very strict derogation conditions laid down in Article 9 of the Birds Directive or Article 16 of the Habitats Directive.

The Directives also prohibit the use of large-scale or non-selective means and methods (e.g. nets, blind or mutilated animals used as live decoys) and these may only be authorised by Member States in accordance with the derogation conditions.

It is for the Member States' competent authorities to ensure that the provisions of these Directives are correctly transposed and implemented. Issues such as animal rights and welfare fall under the competence of the Member States. In order to facilitate sound implementation of the Directives at national level the Commission has developed a Guidance document on sustainable hunting under the Birds Directive¹ as well as guidance on strict protection of animal species under the Habitats Directive². In cases of non-compliance the Commission has pursued infringement cases against Member States. Furthermore, the Commission is actively supporting actions aiming to eliminate illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, in co-operation with the Bern Convention on European Wildlife, stakeholders and Member States.

Conclusion

The Commission does not see a need to ban all hunting as requested in the petition. It will continue to closely monitor the implementation of relevant provisions of the Birds and Habitats Directives by the Member States and take the necessary steps when a possible infringement has been identified.

1 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/action_plans/guidance_en.htm .

2 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/guidance/index_en.htm.