

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1335/06
by Elspeth Attwooll (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Hunting of birds in Malta

Malta plans to allow the spring hunting of turtle dove and quail this year (25 March to 22 May) for the third time after EU accession by claiming appropriate use of a derogation under Art.9 of the Birds Directive. It is understood that the Commission has received a report submitted by Malta last November which tries to justify spring hunting as practised in 2004. Will the Commission accept any derogation under the Birds Directive as long as Art.9 of this Directive is not transposed into national law (as in the case of Malta)? What is the Commission's view on Malta's compliance with all the conditions set out in Art.9 for the use of such a derogation (e.g. as regards 'alternative solutions', 'unfavourable conservation status of the species in question', 'surveillance and limitation of the derogation' and 'small numbers')?

What steps will the Commission take to prevent Malta from breaching the Directive again this spring?