

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0160/07
by Sergio Berlato (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Disappearance and killing of gun dogs owned by Italian nationals in the Italian-Slovene border area

An article published in the 10 January 2007 issue of the Italian daily newspaper *Il Gazzettino* has helped to draw people's attention to the serious problem faced by Italians who engage in hunting activities close to the Italian-Slovene border. Italian hunters have complained that their dogs are disappearing and are being killed on the Slovenian side and that the competent authorities in Slovenia are turning a blind eye to the problem.

It is now a well established fact that Slovene guards have been instructed to shoot any stray dogs found in the border areas on the grounds that such dogs would be a threat to grazing livestock. There has therefore been a steady increase in the number of reports of missing dogs lodged with the police in both countries by Italian nationals whose gun dogs have failed to return home. However, the Slovene authorities have shown a completely unjustifiable attitude, refusing to cooperate. The tension rose in particular when some hunters, who had no more news of search efforts, finally found the bodies of their dogs, which had been shot on the Slovene side and had their collars removed.

Italian nationals involved in hunting activities, who own one or more gun dogs, are required to observe strict rules on the supervision of their animals, including the insertion of a microchip, the wearing of a collar showing the owner's name and possession of a certificate attesting that the dog has been properly trained.

The Slovene authorities' attitude is intolerable, especially in view of the fact that Slovenia is an integral part the European Union and should therefore not only share its values but also apply EU legislation as a whole, in particular those provisions on freedom of movement and cross-border cooperation.

Given the above, will the Commission state:

1. whether it is aware of these facts?
2. whether it agrees, in its capacity as guardian of the Treaties, that the Slovene authorities' attitude is contrary to the provisions of the EC Treaty, quite apart from the fact that it is hardly edifying in terms of European integration?
3. what measures it will take to restore legality?