

Question for written answer E-013021/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Zoltán Balczó (NI)

Subject: Slaughter of songbirds in Europe

Each year, several thousand songbirds of species which are protected in many EU Member States fall victim to poachers either within European Union territory or in the territories of the EU's south-eastern neighbours. In many cases the birds are obtained not only by shooting them – for the pleasure of hunting – but by other means too (using poisoned bait, nets or birdlime) with the aim of cooking them or putting them to other use. The dead birds are conveyed by smugglers, generally through several countries, to those countries – mainly on the Mediterranean – where they have been ordered. Mass hunting is often attributable to cultural and traditional practices.

In 1979 the Community adopted the Wild Birds Directive, which regulates protection of bird species living in the European Union and deals with the principal issues concerning preservation of their populations. At present, a review of the directive – the 'fitness check' – is underway, having begun in February 2014.

1. Does the Commission consider it possible that, when the fitness check is completed, the Wild Birds Directive will be tightened up in any way in order to curb poaching?
2. Does the Commission consider it conceivable that any action could be taken to curb poaching by means of targeted campaigns involving the Member States' authorities and civil-society organisations?