

## AGREEMENT between *BirdLife International* and FACE on Directive 79/409/EEC



As part of the European Commission's *Sustainable Hunting Initiative* (SHI), and following a number of meetings, FACE (the *Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU*) and *BirdLife International* reached the following Agreement:

- 1) Both organisations recognize that the *Birds Directive* is an appropriate legal instrument for the conservation of both wild birds (including huntable species listed in Annex II of the *Birds Directive*) and their habitats at a favourable conservation status at EU level. Both organisations agree that the priority is to make the Directive work along the lines indicated in the *Guidance Document on Hunting under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds*.
- 2) As a result of Point 1, neither organisation has the intention of taking or supporting initiatives aimed at amending the text of the *Birds Directive*. In the longer term, the two organisations do not rule out the possibility of a consolidation of the existing EU legal instruments for wildlife conservation, respecting their fundamental principles and without weakening the current provisions of the *Birds Directive*.
- 3) Both organisations acknowledge the historic and continuing significance of the compromises embedded in the *Birds Directive* in regard to hunting, and that such compromises form the basis for jointly promoting strategic conservation priorities such as working towards the target of halting biodiversity decline by 2010, the protection of sites and CAP reform.
- 4) Both organisations support the establishment of the *NATURA 2000 Network* and recognize the importance of effective habitat protection and active management for biodiversity conservation. Both organisations stress that in principle *NATURA 2000* designation is not incompatible with hunting. They acknowledge that properly managed hunting *inside NATURA 2000* sites can continue or take place so long as it is compatible with the site's conservation objectives. In this respect, they refer to the relevant Chapter 1.5 "Conservation of Habitats" of the *Guidance Document*.
- 5) Both organisations agree that it is desirable to reach local, regional or national agreements on bird hunting practices, to establish constructive dialogue between local stakeholders, and to achieve a rational assessment of effects and of measures to be taken. National Partners or Members of both organisations are free to work towards achieving more ambitious targets for biodiversity, sustainable hunting and bird conservation.
- 6) Both organisations are of the opinion that rational assessment of effects and measures, including those to be adopted in legislation and other rules on hunting, must be based on the best available and reliable data, especially for bird populations and hunting activity. The collection of hunting bag statistics, along with their scientific interpretation and proper use, is necessary.
- 7) Both organisations call upon the Commission and the Member States to develop, adopt and implement *Management Plans* for Annex II-species considered to be in an unfavourable conservation status.
- 8) Both organisations call upon the competent authorities to take appropriate initiatives to ensure the respect of all bird conservation legislation, in particular through proper enforcement but also by education and awareness raising initiatives. They offer their assistance in this respect.
- 9) Both organisations ask for the phasing out of the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands throughout the EU as soon as possible, and in any case by the year 2009 at the latest. They also underline the risks resulting from the release into the wild of non-indigenous bird species or subspecies.
- 10) It is further agreed by both organisations to establish a regular bilateral dialogue of consensus seeking, and to that end to meet at least twice a year, plus each time they consider such meeting as useful or necessary to address a specific topic. They will further exchange information, publications, etc. and promote this agreement among their national Partners or Members as well as collaborate with other relevant organisations and bodies (such as Wetlands International, IUCN, CIC, ELO, etc.).

*BirdLife International*

Michael Rands

Michael Rands  
Director & Chief Executive

FACE  
Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Gilbert de Turckheim

Gilbert de Turckheim  
President

I would like to extend warm congratulations to *BirdLife International* and FACE on the signing of this important Agreement which I greatly welcome. This represents a central achievement of the *Sustainable Hunting Initiative*, which the Commission has promoted for the past 3 years. The constructive and cooperative work shown by both your organisations in reaching this valuable Agreement is appreciated by all the Commission services concerned.

Margot Wallström

Margot Wallström  
Commissioner for the Environment