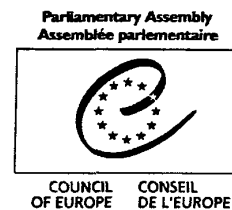


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Doc. 10337
18 October 2004

Hunting and Europe's environmental balance

Report

Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Rapporteur: Mr Viorel Coifan, Romania, Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group

Summary

Hunting, as an activity that is widely practised in all European countries and based on age-old traditions, can make a contribution to sustainable development, especially in rural and mountain regions. In this context, hunting must respect nature and be approached from an environmental protection point of view.

The effects of hunting on ecosystems must be able to be closely monitored as, although hunting can have a regulating function, it can, when poorly managed, also damage ecosystems. The implications of European Union enlargement are also to be seen in the hunting sector and in the associated legislation at national level. The situation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, whose game potential is far greater than that of most western countries, and where the liberalisation of hunting is not without significant environmental, social and economic consequences, today represents a special case.

Amongst other things, the report proposes that a European Charter on hunting be drawn up as a guide setting out common principles and good practices for hunting and, in particular, for the organisation of game tourism in Europe.

I. Draft Recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that hunting is widely practised in all European countries and forged by a long tradition. However, individual hunting traditions differ greatly in Europe from country to country, ranging from hunting as a source of food to hunting as a sport or a social event. For some time, there has been a shift in the behaviour of hunters towards practices that are more respectful of nature, game and habitats, which also contributes to the preservation of rural lifestyles, particularly where farming and forestry are concerned. Some 120 000 full-time jobs are said to be generated by hunting in Europe.

2. Hunting may serve to regulate ecosystems but may also harm them if it is badly managed. For that reason, the Assembly considers that, from the environmental point of view, it is important to control the impact of hunting on natural resources, in keeping with the principle of sustainable development and in compliance with the legal instruments of the Council of Europe, notably the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Bern Convention).

3. The Assembly regrets, however, that among the Council of Europe member States, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Russia, San Marino and Serbia and Montenegro have not yet signed the Bern Convention.

4. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are in a special situation in that their game potential is far greater than that of most of the western countries because hunting was relatively restricted in the communist era. Some species that have become or are becoming extinct in the rest of Europe are still abundant in the central and eastern European countries, as is the case, for example, of certain large carnivores much sought after by amateurs of hunting trophies: brown bear (*ursus arctos*), wolf (*canis lupus*) and lynx (*lynx lynx*).

5. In this context, the Assembly is worried by the changes made in recent years in central and eastern European countries concerning the liberalisation of hunting. Nevertheless, it believes that, if managed professionally and scientifically, the game tourism resulting from that liberalisation may prove to be a factor of development for rural and mountain regions. It may also make a significant contribution to rural tourism, ecotourism, job creation and the preservation of local traditions.

6. Consequently, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

i. draw up a European Charter on hunting, as a guide setting out common principles and good practices for hunting and in particular for the organisation of game tourism on the continent;

ii. set up a mixed pan-European network, made up of hunters and ornithologists, with the task of monitoring migratory bird populations along the major migration routes;

iii. harmonise, on a European scale, the systems of training hunters which should be based on a common core syllabus backed up by specific training courses resulting, where applicable, in the award of a European hunting permit;

iv. invite the member states to take measures with a view to:

a. signing and ratifying, if they have not already done so, the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Bern Convention) and ensure that its provisions are transposed into domestic legislation and complied with, particularly with regard to the protected species listed in appendix II thereto;

b. applying in a uniform manner the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (the "Washington Convention" – CITES)

c. encouraging dialogue between associations of hunters and ecologists, anti-hunt and animal welfare organisations as well as between hunters and farmers, to foster better co-operation for the preservation of the environmental balance;

- d. integrating game tourism in economic and ecological development programmes in rural and mountain regions;
- e. encouraging the implementation of the new EU Rural Development Regulation for protecting wildlife.

II. Explanatory Memorandum by Mr Coifan

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1. Introduction

1. Hunting has a long tradition in Europe. Its practice is a subject for public debate between different groups, occasionally with political overtones, especially within the countries of the European Union.

2. Today however, hunting has to be seen, primarily, as a potential factor for the sustainable development of rural communities, particularly in mountainous regions.

3. The protection of the environment is a major concern for most of the nations of Europe. Hunting must be included in this broader process. It must respect nature. Prestigious international organisations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe have frequently come out in favour of hunting as a promoter of sustainable development, but with strict regulations regarding the protection of the environment.

4. The whole procedure of EU enlargement represents a major political process with profound implications for the architecture of Greater Europe. After 1989 a number of nations, which used to be a part of the communist system, began the process of becoming members of the Council of Europe, some of them having recently joined the EU. Many of these countries have remarkable hunting cultures and traditions, reinforced by the existence of a rich array of animals. Large carnivores like the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), the wolf (*Canis lupus*) and the lynx (*Lynx lynx*) are still found in significant numbers in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, whilst in the majority of the West European countries they have either vanished or are in the process of disappearing. Hunting legislation created during the communist era contained many restrictions, both as far as the use of firearms was concerned and with regard to a person's right to become a hunter. A number of provisions regarding the definition of the legal aspects of hunting territories from the point of view of property rights, as well as the maintenance of the ecological balance, were non-existent.

5. A real challenge for the new EU member states will be the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In 1992, the CAP started to give greater consideration to environmental requirements, especially through the strengthened role of agri-environment schemes. The objective of making Europe's agriculture more sustainable, and promoting a strong rural development pillar in agricultural policy which integrates environmental concerns, is now fully embodied in the CAP as a result of the EU Commission's Agenda 2000.

6. In Europe, where there are very few "wild" places left, many habitats must be actively managed if their capacity to support wildlife is to be maintained or increased. The involvement of farmers and other land managers in conservation is therefore crucial. In the same extent, hunters and game managers are a valuable source of knowledge and experience in what pertains to land use managements which can be drawn upon at all levels. A strong connection between farming, hunting, biodiversity and Agenda 2000 is therefore needed. Farming, hunting and biodiversity go hand-in-hand: they could exist without this interdependence but the overall result would be much poorer.

7. The harmonisation of national hunting legislation is a necessary process both within the EU countries and in the candidate countries. A number of aspects must be correlated and these will include technical aspects regarding the definition of those species which may be hunted, the definition of the open season, policy regarding migratory species, large predators etc. but consideration must also be given to ethical hunting plans, the protection of the environment and so on. And finally the harmonisation of the legislation is not just a simple operation of aligning national legislation with the *acquis communautaires*, but is the introduction of certain new dimensions with reference to the sustainable development of the rural community. It is clear that such a process of harmonisation must be carefully managed, with respect for the principle of subsidiarity, so as not to impinge on local traditions.

8. Commercial hunting – game tourism – represents one of the ways of ensuring sustainable development. This report will analyse the ways of improving the relationship between economic considerations and the protection of the environment, whilst respecting the principles of sustainable development.

2. *Harmonisation*

9. Legislative harmonisation at a European level with regard to hunting is a necessary process but there are a number of consequences. Before we can identify the principles and means by which this process can be fulfilled we must recognize one fact. And that is that within the European area there are large regions which have their own customs and rules with regard to hunting, which have been forged over a period of centuries, and which have left their mark on national legislation. There is, however, the danger that traditions which do not conform with contemporary reality and which neither contribute to economic development nor show respect for bio-diversity will be justified using demagoguery in support of these practices. At the same time, a proper application of the principles of subsidiarity assumes that such regulations will not be applied at European level when matters relating to hunting can be better regulated at a national, regional or local level.

10. The harmonisation of hunting legislation must be carried out at least on two levels:

- **national**, especially for the candidate countries to the EU, by taking on certain specific provisions from the *acquis communautaires*.
- **European**, by harmonising national legislation based on certain common unanimously accepted values.

11. In actual fact it is easier to arrive at a European hunting policy than to arrive at unified legislation. This obviously applies whilst still respecting the principles of subsidiarity.

12. The dimensions of this European policy are:

- *ecological* – hunting must respect nature and the surrounding environment and must preserve biodiversity.
- *economic* – hunting must be transformed into an instrument that ensures sustainable development in rural regions and disadvantaged areas.
- *ethical* – respect for both game and hunter, respect for traditions and local customs by those practising game tourism, who must respect what are considered to be important values by those who practise hunting.
- *educational* – the practice of hunting contributes to a better understanding of the national heritage, respect for nature and biodiversity, of civilized behaviour.

2.1 The organisation of hunting in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with reference to their accession to the EU

13. During the Colloquy "Sustainable management of hunting: challenges for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe", organised by the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs in Budapest, on 11 December 2003, Mr. Yves Lecocq, Secretary General of the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE), has identified four hunting models in Europe:

- i. in the Northern European countries a popular democratic form of hunting is practised, close to nature, in which the game is hunted for food. Hunting is supported by the whole political spectrum, including the Greens. There is one hunter for every twenty people.
- ii. In the countries of Southern Europe, hunting is treated as a social event. The shooting of migratory birds is particularly popular. There is one hunter for every forty people.
- iii. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, hunting is considered to be a sport. There is selective hunting, carried out on the move, with the emphasis on giving the animal a chance. The management of the habitat and of the game is practised in a highly professional manner. There is one hunter for every sixty people.
- iv. In Central and Eastern Europe, hunting traditions are very old and dominated by very strict regulations of an ethical nature – the Germans call it *Waidgerechtigkeit* – they maintain their hold even when new traditions develop. Hunting practice is rigorously observed, particularly in the case of big game. There are relatively few hunters, in fact there is one hunter for approximately every 300 people. In Eastern Europe, for historical reasons, there are traditions which are similar to those of Central Europe. Hunting, particularly during the period of the communist regimes, was considered to be a way of extending privileges to the communist *nomenklatura*. Restrictive legislation was in place which was rigorously applied to ordinary hunters and which was systematically disregarded by the *nomenklatura*. The hunters lacked any ecological, ethical and social dimensions. The hunting "records" of the dictators Ceauşescu, Zhivkov, Honecker, etc. are sadly famous not only for the quality, but particularly for the numbers of animals shot. Owing to the restrictive character of the legislation, it was possible to preserve the game stocks. However, due to the tendency to turn hunting primarily into a profitable business for the state resulting from the lack of any clear provisions in respect of game tourism, there is a great risk that these game stocks will be drastically depleted in these countries.

14. In Europe, local hunting associations have a long tradition. They represent a significant lobby for making clear how important hunting is with regard to the preservation of nature and rural development. A FACE report presents evidence of the existence of 120,000 jobs created as a result of hunting and its associated activities. The European Commission and the Council of Europe have understood the necessity of integrating elements of national legislation, customs, traditions and good practices into a

European concept and attitude towards hunting. It is, however, difficult to forge a European policy in respect of hunting, as the principle of subsidiarity would not be respected in its totality. There is, however, a series of options which constitute a suitable framework: the directives and conventions of the European Union and Council of Europe member states, ratified by these, which have to be introduced into national legislation. We refer primarily to the Council of Europe Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Bern Convention) and to other texts – referring to the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats.

2.2 Sedentary game

15. The principle of subsidiarity is usually applied to sedentary species that is those that have a range of a few thousand hectares at most and which stay in the same area all year round. It is the hunters in each country who are most knowledgeable about the conservation status of their own game. In national legislation as well as in current practice, there are numerous examples which demonstrate good management of both large and small game. Better international and particularly cross-border co-operation is however necessary regarding the hunting regulations in respect of specific species. One classic example is that of the two different hunting regimes in force on the two banks of the Rhine. The French bank is classified as a national wildlife reserve, while the German bank and the areas bordering Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein are open hunting areas and different hunting seasons apply. This situation allows the deer to be protected on one side and hunted on the other.

16. The management of large carnivores is a different matter. If wolves have disappeared or are few in number in Western European countries such as France, Spain, Germany, Italy etc., they still exist in large numbers in Central European countries, and especially in Eastern Europe. The wolf's role is that of "health worker of the forest" but at the same time it causes extensive damage to the rural community, especially in the alpine regions. That is the reason that certain countries from that part of Europe express reservations with regard to the Bern Convention. This species, the wolf, is also mentioned in Appendix V of the directive on "Habitats" referring to Poland, the Baltic countries, Slovakia and certain areas of Finland, Spain and Greece. The wolf may be hunted and may be the subject of certain administrative measures, the purpose of which is to control the level of its numbers and its distribution. At the same time these measures refer to the evaluation and commercialisation of this species. Wolves will ignore political frontiers: it follows that this problem must be dealt with at a higher supranational level. The success of such international management of the wolf will affect the decisions taken in Brussels and Strasbourg, which then comes back to an almost unanswerable dilemma: strict conservation or sustainable management of the species.

17. A separate problem is that of the repopulation of certain areas with large carnivores. In Slovenia, for example, the lynx was reintroduced several years ago. Paradoxically and contrary to all expectations, there was no dramatic reduction in the deer population.

18. In the final analysis what matters is always knowing up to what point the animals can be left to regulate their own existence and when human intervention becomes necessary. One example of incorrect management of a species, which was re-introduced to a territory, is that of the European beaver (*Castor fiber*). In Germany the existence of a significant number of beavers started to cause problems. A few years ago, this species which had once been protected was now being hunted again.

2.3 Migratory game

19. Migratory species' range extends across a number of countries during the breeding cycle. There is a unified management approach in force. Since 1979, the year the European Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds came into force, we have seen the start of a dispute between hunters and ornithologists about the opening and closing dates of the hunting season. On account of the diversity of the species affected and the different hunting methods, we cannot refer to "hunting" in respect of migratory birds. Basically what is needed is to ascertain the conservation status of the European migratory bird populations before defining plans for the hunting or protection of these species.

20. Migratory birds recognize two migration periods: *the courtship season*, which occurs in the autumn, from North to South, and the *return courtship season* after over-wintering in the South. If we take into account the migration routes which the birds fly, the latitudinal and longitudinal co-ordinates of the continent of Europe and the size of the area, we must arrive at the conclusion that it is practically impossible to define the same hunting seasons in the different zones. The EU Directive on birds prohibits the hunting of certain species during the breeding and rearing season as well as over the period of their return.

21. The European Commission, on the other hand, is making efforts to obtain solid scientific data. The process is complex, as the migration courtship period extends over several months and every species splits into several groups, which may display different behavioural aspects in respect of migration.

22. The most important conventions for the protection of migratory birds, which also regulate their hunting, are the Bern Convention and the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals, of the United Nations Programme for the Environment (UNEP) (Bonn Convention).

23. Special attention must be given to wetland zones, which are the habitat of water-birds.

24. The harmonisation of the hunting of migratory birds is to be effected in two consecutive stages. The first stage would be the formation, in the western Palaearctic, of a team of observers of the migratory bird population. This team would consist of ornithologists and hunters. Their aim would be to identify the evolutionary trend, and set the hunt accordingly.

25. The second stage would put an end to legal proceedings and political debates regarding the breeding season. It makes more sense to calculate a quota of birds that may be hunted annually during migration than for hunters to attempt to hunt at will at times thought to be outside the breeding season.

26. A different solution would be to award hunting permits for a specific migratory species every other year.

2.4 Transposing the *acquis communautaires* into the law of the EU candidate countries

27. As part of the EU enlargement, candidate countries are required to transpose the *acquis communautaires* into the national legislation. This is a necessary stage for legislative harmonisation. The most important directives of the European Commission, included in Chapter 22 of the *acquis*, are those referring to Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (79/409/EEC). Their inclusion in national legislation is necessary for the formation of *Natura 2000* national networks.

28. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have a better preserved biodiversity thanks primarily to their reduced and delayed economic development compared with the development of the EU countries. This wealth is the result of different cultures and, consequently, national rules require special adaptation to Community law. Hunting of certain species (large carnivores, beaver, otter, etc.) and some hunting methods will have to be re-examined by legislators.

29. European law will have to be applied in a flexible manner, in conjunction with local hunting traditions, so long as scientific evidence demonstrates their usefulness with regard to the species concerned.

30. In the absence of a solid argument, candidate countries' heritage could be replaced by administrative decisions.

3. Game tourism

31. There is an added value to contemporary hunting: the game tourism. It represents an instrument for sustainable development, especially in rural areas.

32. There are 7 million hunters in Europe, three-quarters of which hunt at home. The rest are tourist hunters and they travel hoping to discover different cultures, different game, different methods of hunting etc.
33. Game tourism can contribute to sustainable development in the rural areas of Europe. The hunter, regardless of whether he is hunting at home or abroad, is exploiting a living resource, which cannot be replaced unless conditions are in accordance with the rules of sustainable management. If these conditions are respected, he can contribute to bio-diversity conservation. The Declaration of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature made in Amman (Jordan) in October 2000, acknowledges that the sustainable use of living resources, of wildlife, represents an important instrument for the conservation of biodiversity.
34. This principle is found in Resolution 882 (1987) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which refers to the importance of shooting for Europe's rural regions.
35. In game tourism, as in hunting as a whole, good mechanisms for management, conservation and supervision must be in place. Suitable education must also be extended to all those affected, whether these are hunters, travel agencies, organisers or local authorities.
36. A questionnaire was sent to a number of government departments in charge of hunting (in Croatia, Poland, the Czech Republic, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary). The answers obtained from five countries are summarised in the tables below; the Czech Republic does not possess comprehensive information about game tourism.
37. It appears that the state, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, always plays the crucial role in the drafting and enforcement of hunting legislation, reflecting the strong link between hunting and rural affairs in this part of Europe.
38. The latest amendments to hunting legislation are very recent, stemming from the negotiations on enlargement.
39. Local hunters make up a small proportion of the whole population; their numbers are especially low in relation to the number of foreign hunters in Romania and Hungary, where the latter account for 33% and 37% of all hunters respectively.
40. The largest numbers of foreign hunters are from Germany and Italy. A significant proportion also comes from Austria, France, Spain and Belgium.
41. In most cases, temporary permits are issued by agencies with fairly close links to government, a system that is conducive to monitoring and information gathering.
42. As a rule, some or all of the administrative and financial management is assigned to specialised foreign travel agencies.
43. Although significant financial flows are generated, it is important to ascertain exactly how they are distributed; this seems to be impossible at present, although at least some of the earnings appear to be reinvested in resource conservation. The number of jobs created is rather high; this is another aspect worth examining more closely.
44. Hunting zones appear to be clearly identified, which would make it easier to establish designated quality pilot areas.
45. Applications for dispensations from the EU always relate to very specific hunting activities; the reasons given include tradition, damage by certain species, and also a desire to preserve those species.

	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>
Hunting legislation drafted by	Ministry of Agriculture	Government
Hunting legislation enforced by	Department of Wildlife Management	Ministry of the Environment
Hunting legislation amended in	1996	2001
Number of local hunters	51 000	100 000
Number of foreign hunters	19 000	15 000
Main countries of origin	Germany, Austria, Italy	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy
Permits required	Temporary permit	Temporary permit
Permits issued by	Local offices of the Ministry	Local offices of the Ministry
Tourism operated by	Foreign travel agencies	Agencies approved by the Ministry
Finances managed by	Travel agencies + hunters' association	Agencies approved by the Ministry
Financial flows generated	25 million euros	59 million PLN
Jobs created	2000	Not available
Reinvestment in	Hunters' association + game conservation projects	Hunters' association (partly)
Main regions involved	South-west and plains	South, east, north-west
Dispensations applied for/EU	Woodcocks in spring	Woodcock in spring
Reasons given	Prohibition on autumn hunting	Tradition

	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Bulgaria</i>
Hunting legislation drafted by	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture, National Directorate of Forestry
Hunting legislation enforced by	Ministry of Agriculture, the Environment and National Parks	Local offices / National Directorate of Forestry
Hunting legislation amended in	2002	2002
Number of local hunters	120 000	120 000
Number of foreign hunters	Not available	3000
Main countries of origin	Not available	Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Austria
Permits required	Temporary permit + insurance	Permit/species and hunting method
Permits issued by	206 municipalities	Local offices
Tourism operated by	Municipalities + travel agencies	Local offices / National Directorate of Forestry
Finances managed by	Municipalities	Ministry of Agriculture, National Directorate of Forestry
Financial flows generated	Not available	3.5 million euros (rising)
Jobs created	Not available	1 380
Reinvestment in	Hunters' association + game conservation projects	Game conservation projects
Main regions involved	Hunting districts	Hunting districts
Dispensations applied for/EU	None	Capercaillie, wolf, wildcat
Reasons given		Habitat management

	<i>Romania</i>
Hunting legislation drafted by	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Hunting legislation enforced by	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Hunting legislation amended in	2001
Number of local hunters	60 000
Number of foreign hunters	20 000
Main countries of origin	Spain, Austria, Germany, Italy
Permits required	Invitation from hunters' association or forestry authority
Permits issued by	Hunters' association or forestry authority
Tourism operated by	Hunters' association via specialised agencies
Finances managed by	Game: hunters' association; management: departments and agencies

	<i>Romania</i>
Financial flows generated	4 million euros
Jobs created	2 500
Reinvestment in	Game conservation and tourism development
Main regions involved	Carpathians, Danube delta, central plains
Dispensations applied for/EU	See appendix
Reasons given	Good conservation status, damage, commercialisation

4. *Recommendations*

4.1 *Legislative harmonisation*

- a) Setting up a joint network of hunters and ornithologists to monitor the conservation status of migratory bird populations across the major migration routes.

Rationale

46. From a technical perspective, hunting can be managed only in respect of a known population, which does not exist in the case of migratory birds. Once numbers have been determined, the important thing is not the breeding season, but setting a hunting quota per hunter per season, as with sedentary species

- b) Reviewing the principle of total protection of potential game species in favour of a system of zero-rated hunting plans.

Rationale

47. Placing species under total protection has failed to prevent dwindling populations or even extinction. The evolution of hunting towards a rational use of natural resources can now help to preserve species which were in the process of extinction.

- c) Harmonised training for hunters at a European level, with a common core syllabus supplemented by specific training, followed by a practical shooting test, leading to a *European hunting permit*.

Rationale

48. There are major discrepancies in levels of training between European hunters. New demands regarding environmental protection require extensive knowledge and a unified approach. The existence of a European permit would allow for a wider exchange of views between hunters, based on a set of common values and a set of universally accepted procedures and regulations.

- d) Applying the principles and provisions of the Rural Development Regulations in rural areas

Rationale

49. One of the most important advances of the CAP reform consists in the new EU Rural Development Regulation, which brings together a group of existing instruments, including agri-environmental ones, and requires EU member states to develop integrated rural development plans. This Regulation has a very promising implication for wildlife. In the given conditions of the declining role of agriculture in rural economies, a new form of land use management – such as game management – should be adopted for its job creation potential.

- e) Setting up a supra-national body that would be independent of national hunting federations and environmental protection organisations, which would collect technical and scientific data on European wildlife to make it available to the political forums with regard to the shaping of future European regulations.

Rationale

50. Currently the decisions concerning wildlife, which are more or less objective, are influenced by lobbies. The proposed body would eliminate this random factor.

4.2 Game tourism

- a) There would be a European Game Tourism Charter under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

Rationale

51. Such a document would be able to provide candidate countries with a manual of common principles and good practice for organising game tourism. A number of criteria would be defined for the quality of services that must be offered, the ethical requirement which must be equally accepted by all, as well as references in legislative terms on the protection of nature and the environment. At the same time advice could be provided on financial management of this type of tourism.

- b) The diversification of game tourism offers

Rationale

52. It is necessary to establish a proper balance between trophy hunting and mass hunting, which appears more democratic by setting a cost level. The former might lead to the elimination of certain rare animals, with higher genetic potential, the latter could result in significant destruction of the environment. The temptation of consumerism must be avoided as it could lead to such unacceptable practices as releasing certain species – for example the pheasant - from hatcheries – for no other reason than to be shot. Game tourism needs to accentuate such components as: tradition, the taste for adventure and discovery etc. which could attract many young people.

- c) A more uniform application of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (the "Washington Convention" - CITES)

Rationale

53. Trade in animal species must be under strict control by the application of an international convention. Such a regulation, however, must be applied identically to all the signatory countries. Putting such overcomplicated administrative measures in place may put off intending hunters, who organize their own game tourism trips.

- d) The systematic integration of game tourism into future programmes for the conservation of European species and habitats.

Rationale

54. It is necessary to integrate game tourism as a factor in economic and ecological development, within the *Natura 2000* or the *Emerald* networks. In this way greater legitimacy is conferred upon this type of tourism in agreement with other users of natural resources who believe that there is a contradiction between conservation and hunting measures.

5. Conclusions

55. If hunting can meet certain requirements it can be legitimised as being sustainable. On the other hand it can be destructive of our environmental legacy. The economic potential of hunting makes conservation measures possible.

56. With the enlargement of the EU it is important to ascertain the impact on the environment and the wildlife.

57. For many years now sterile discussions have been held in European forums regarding the protection of European fauna. The main purpose of these discussions must be environmental conservation. In these discussions, the political leaders and decision-makers of Europe must also consider the economic aspects of the natural heritage. In this context, hunting and game tourism must play their proper role as stimuli to sustainable development. Within this framework, consideration of rural areas, whose financial resources are limited, must be given priority. The lack of any stimulus to development will irrevocably doom all attempts at environmental conservation.

* * *

Reporting committee: Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Reference to committee: Doc. 8567, reference no. 2452 of 4 November 1999 (extended until 4 November 2004)

Draft recommendation adopted by the committee on 8 September 2004

Members of the committee: MM. **Gubert** (Chairman), **Meale**, **Nazaré Pereira**, **Schmied** (Vice-Chairmen), MM. **Açikgöz**, Akselsen, Andov, **Annemans**, Mrs **Anttila**, MM. Banac, Baura, Bruce (Alternate: **Wray**), **Çavuşoğlu**, **Sir Sydney Chapman**, Mrs Chikhradze, Mrs Ciemniak, MM. **Coifan**, Cosarciuc, Dedja, **Deittert**, Delattre, Donabauer, Duivesteijn, Duka-Zólyomi, Ekes, **Etherington**, **Fernandez**, Frunda, **Giovanelli**, Mrs Gojković, MM. Götz, Grabowski, **Grachev**, **Gunnarsson**, Mrs Hajiyeva, Mrs Herczog, MM. Hladiy, Högmark, Huss, **Ilaşcu**, Mrs Jäger (Alternate: Mr **Wodarg**), MM. **Kalezić**, Mrs Kanelli, MM. Karapetyan, Klympush, **Kolesnikov**, Kortenhorst (Alternate: **Platvoet**), **Kužvart**, Libicki, **Livaneli**, Lobkowicz, Loncle (Alternate : **Lengagne**), Maissen (Alternate: **Dupraz**), Masseret, Mauro (Alternate: **Nessa**), Mrs Mesquita, MM. Meyer, Milojević, Mokry (Alternate: Mrs **Smirnova**), Mrs **Ohlsson**, MM. Oliverio, Opmann, Mrs **Papadimitriou**, MM. Podobnik, **de Puig**, Pullicino Orlando, Rattini, Mrs Schicker, MM. Sizopoulos, Steenblock, Ms Støjberg, Mrs **Stoyanova**, MM. Timmermans, **Tulaev**, **Txueka Isasti**, Vakilov, Velikov, **Wright**, Zhevago.

N.B. The names of those members present at the meeting are printed in **bold**.

Secretariat to the committee: Mr Sixto, Mr Torcătoriu and Ms Trévisan

