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## PRESS RELEASE

### FKNK Joins ELO and Prepares for MEP Elections

Mr. Lino Farrugia, Secretary, and Mr. Joseph Perici Calascione, PRO, from the Council of the Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) participated at the European Landowners Organisation (ELO) General Assembly held in Prague.

During the Assembly the FKNK was accepted as a Member of ELO.

This FKNK affiliation is very important in that today most Maltese hunters and trappers are rural land owners of the property where they practice their passions, whilst the rest are definitely land users in the same sense, and all hunters and trappers are the first defenders and managers of the Maltese countryside. The affiliation was also felt necessary following one of the latest anti-hunting and anti-social campaigns of BirdLife (Malta) who want to “rid the Maltese countryside from Maltese hunters and trappers”.

**The European Landowners Organisation (ELO)**, created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the EU27 and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organisation able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. Such a broad representative scope gives it an unmatched visibility and credibility in its relations with European decision makers, at the highest level.

ELO aims at promoting a prosperous countryside through the dynamism of private property. In the EU27, rural territories cover up to 90% of the European area. Therefore, a balanced development of these territories in connection with the development of urban areas is vital for the EU future. The countryside has to keep its ability to create economic activity and job opportunities as well as to protect and enhance its environmental heritage. Both are equally essential.

To forward its positions ELO has developed a lobbying strategy including **think-tank work, involvement in EU and international conferences and workshops** and **action programmes**. The efficiency of the organisation relies on its ability to gather together rural actors and political decision makers at local, regional, national and European levels. Its close network provides the ability to voice positions shared by a huge number

of stakeholders from all over the EU and the candidate countries as well as to analyse the local effects of implementing EU legislation. This is unique in Europe.

The **Private Landownership and Hunting Rights Committee** was founded by ELO in order to answer the queries of landowners from the New Member States on hunting rights.

Its 54 members from all over Europe give it a powerful and efficient network to better understand, to explain and to influence EU decisions. Joining ELO is not only a question of defending certain interests, it is also and more accurately a way to work towards a future of balanced development for Europe.

From Prague the FKNK officials travelled to Brussels where they participated in an EU Workshop organized by FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation in the EU) at the European Parliament (EP) and the FACE Secretariat.

The Workshop consisted in a one-day training for the participants on the EP Elections 2009 by selected MEPs and working on the draft of the Manifesto – in the framework of FACE's EP Elections 2009 strategy.

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