

29<sup>th</sup> March 2009

### **“Il-Majjistral” Park and NATURA 2000 sites**

The three NGOs, Din I-Art Helwa, Gaia Foundation and Nature Trust that together with the Malta Government officials have been entrusted with the management of the “Majjistral” Park are calling for a total ban of hunting from the area, mainly because parts of the area have been designated as Natura 2000 sites. We believe that the general public should be better informed.



## **Natura 2000 & Sustainable Hunting in Europe**

NATURA 2000 is an ecological network of sites selected all over Europe, to safeguard biodiversity in these sites. Today it includes more than 25,000. This is a consideration for users, and in particular hunters, within this network.

In 2006, FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation in the EU) ran a project, “*Communication and awareness raising on the NATURA 2000 Network - Sustainable hunting*” co-financed by the European Commission, in partnership with the European Landowners’ Organisation, and with the support of *BirdLife International*.

This project promoted the active involvement of European hunters in the Natura 2000 network in order to contribute to European Union habitat and wild species conservation.

FACE therefore launched a major communication and awareness raising effort, in close association with its Members to enable a network of 25 *correspondents* coming from each EU Member State to exchange their opinions and experiences. Workshops and site visits were organised in Brussels, France, Spain, UK and Latvia. These contributed towards the acceptance of hunting as a tool for management and conservation of biodiversity, also *inside* NATURA 2000 sites.

The logo (as captioned) was specially created for the project and is inspired by that of the European Commission.

An electronic website is available at: [www.natura2000@face.eu](http://www.natura2000@face.eu)

Malta’s correspondent is Mr. Lino FARRUGIA Secretary of the FKNK (Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta), who has already been working in close collaboration with NATURA 2000 sites local authorities from MEPA (Malta Environment & Planning Authority).

## What is NATURA 2000?

- **Why the NATURA 2000 Network?**

Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 is a key objective of the EU environmental policy. Safeguarding Europe's most important wildlife areas in the NATURA 2000 ecological Network is central to achieving this goal.

- **EU Nature Legislation**

§ *The "Birds" Directive* of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1979 (79/409/EEC) – SPAs

§ *The "Habitats" Directive* of 21<sup>st</sup> May 1992 (92/43/EEC) – SACs

- **A network of 25,000 sites in Europe**

Hunters are directly affected and concerned by the loss of biodiversity. It is in their interest to preserve this natural heritage. To succeed, the NATURA 2000 network needs the active support of all land users and, in particular, hunters.

## NATURA 2000 and Sustainable Hunting

- Human activities
- HUNTING IS IN PRINCIPLE COMPATIBLE WITH NATURA 2000
- NATURA 2000 IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HUNTERS

### Questions on NATURA 2000

**What is FALSE...**

- Ø Hunting is generally forbidden in the NATURA 2000 sites
- Ø NATURA 2000 sites are closed to visitors and users

**What is TRUE...**

- Ø All activities, including hunting, can continue on NATURA 2000 sites, as long as they are compatible with the conservation objectives of the site.
- Ø Site management activities which favour nature conservation can receive financial support.



## *Promoting NATURA 2000 & Sustainable Wildlife Use*

In 2008 FACE embarked on another follow-up European project, ***Promoting NATURA 2000 & sustainable wildlife use (hunting & angling)***. The project included the organisation of four regional workshops. One of them – namely the ***Mediterranean Workshop*** - took place in **Arosio, Italy**. This workshop covered **Portugal, France, Italy and Malta**.

The participants have now become the “***focal points***” for this project and will act at local levels.

Given the importance of clarifying that sustainable hunting (and angling) is fully compatible with the aims of NATURA 2000 (see Mr. DIMAS and EU Commission statements below), the FKNK also participated at the workshop in Italy.

The FKNK’s “***focal points***” for this project are Mr. Lino FARRUGIA and Mr. Joseph LIA.



*“I would like to correct one of the **common misconceptions** about NATURA 2000 which is that once a site is designated all economic activities have to stop. This is simply **not true** and it is unfortunate that this **myth** continues. The NATURA network consists of living landscapes in which farming, **fishing**, forestry and **hunting can continue**.”*

### **Stavros DIMAS – Commissioner for the Environment**

*EU Nature Policy – Challenges in a changing world*

14<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Furthermore:

The EU Commission recognises that:

- “..many of our favourable habitats are the result of **traditional land use** and their conservation is dependent on traditional practices and skills.”
- “..many sites in NATURA 2000 network are valuable precisely because of the way they have been managed up to now. In such cases it will be important to assure that these sorts of activities can continue in the future.”

- *“..some of the most important wildlife sites in Europe have survived the pressures of development and destruction due to the interest of wildlife users, such as hunting and angling.”*

The Full Report may be viewed at: [http://www.huntinginmalta.org.mt/uploads/24/571/II-Majestral\\_Park\\_and\\_NATURA\\_2000\\_sites.pdf](http://www.huntinginmalta.org.mt/uploads/24/571/II-Majestral_Park_and_NATURA_2000_sites.pdf)

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