



28th September 2009

Social Hatred at its best...

The last BirdLife Malta (BLM) demand spells only social hatred and bears no connection to wild birds protection.

BLM has called upon the Commissioner of Police to immediately investigate the Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) members who might be suffering from psychological disorders and were on anti-depressants, and if needed, suspend their guns and weapons licences. The FKNK would like all to consider that discriminating against hunters and trappers is not a solution. It is therefore vital that BLM's vicarious statement does not create serious irreversible problems by hindering hunters and trappers from:

- 1) Seeking professional help and advice if they need to (even though this may not be related to hunting and trapping issues) due to the fact that prospective service users may feel threatened and fear of losing their hunting licence and guns along with their traditional passion and human dignity
- 2) Any hunters/trappers who are already on treatment may discontinue any medical treatment with potentially serious consequences on their health due to the above mentioned reasons

The FKNK is sure that the Commissioner of Police will not be coerced to temper with any doctor / patient confidential relationship, and also that any doctor or psychologist is well aware of his professional duty and would know precisely if and when to report extreme cases to the Police. What is BLM implying here? That mental health professionals are not doing their job well? Is BLM also questioning their competence? In fact the FKNK is aware of one case where the guns of one of its members were confiscated because the person was not in a stable state of mind. What investigation is BLM expecting with regard to the suicides that occurred as a direct result of the same sad circumstances?

In the FKNK's opinion someone should investigate who, why and what has established this depressing situation locally.

What will BLM ask to be suspended from the finch trappers who might end up in the same depressing situation as October draws closer, now that it has been established that for the first time in recorded history, finch trapping in autumn/winter will not be permitted this year? The FKNK is aware that already last week four finch trappers had been admitted to hospital suffering from similar symptoms, one of whom suicidal. What can the FKNK say to these people when it is aware that the same finch capturing by the use of nets is permitted in other EU Member States such as Austria and Spain, and that come 1st October in neighbouring Italy hunters will be permitted to shoot and kill the chaffinch, the brambling, the hawfinch, the greenfinch and the meadow pipit, the same finch species which the Maltese trappers wanted to capture as they have always done since time immemorial for the purpose of keeping alive in captivity?

Finally the FKNK feels that the greatest harm from such alarmist comments is directly aimed at all people suffering from one form or another of mental illness and their families. This is due to the fact that such claims may imply that any individual suffering from mental illness or taking psychiatric treatment is automatically a threat to self and others. This is indeed worrying since such claims may only contribute towards further stigmatisation against all people with mental illness – typical BLM tactics.

Thus, whilst the FKNK reserves the right to speak out in defence of any of its members who is or may be suffering psychologically, it would rather leave such comments to the experts. Meanwhile, the FKNK appeals to BLM to be more sensitive in their comments. In this never ending debate for and against hunting there is no need to harm other human beings in any manner, no matter how important one feels his cause and agenda are.

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