



FKNK

6 November 2011

FKNK critique
of the
draft consultative Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations, 2011

The Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) has strongly objected to certain sections of the draft Trees and Woodlands Regulations through a Paper which seeks to identify those objections and the reasons behind them. It is astonishingly clear that the draft regulations are the result of armchair thinking with little basis in reality.

Over the last 30 years, anyone going for rambling walks in the Maltese countryside could not have failed to notice that the islands present a less arid landscape and much more greenery than in former times in spite of all the adverse conditions, such as lack of water resources. This environment ‘miracle’ did not happen overnight. It took much time and patience, and was mainly brought about by the hunters and trappers of Malta and Gozo who did their utmost to transform their mini-acres from semi-desert into miniature oases. They did this by investing their time, labour, energy and money in planting thousands of trees and nursing them to full growth. As a result of these efforts, the Maltese and Gozitan countryside looks a great deal better than it did a generation ago. The map (attached) shows the density (as many as 200 woodlands) of mixed acacia/eucalyptus tree plantations planted and cared for by Maltese hunters and trappers just at the southern end of Malta. It serves as a sample that reflects the situation obtaining in the other countryside areas of the Malta. Hunters and trappers on Gozo have dedicated the same energy and effort to create the same effect. As a result it cannot be denied that, without any fanfare, the hunters and trappers have contributed the lion’s share to the greening of the Maltese islands over many years.

Now, however, a monster is rearing its head! The new Trees and Woodlands regulations are all set to deal a major blow to this great achievement, inasmuch as they pave the way for the possibility that all such trees may be destroyed and removed.... at the sole discretion of the Competent Authority.

That would be a great folly and would constitute a massive setback for the very environment they purport to protect.

The FKNK concluded that the draft *Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations, 2011*, in particular the parts relating to ‘invasive or alien species’, need to be revised and amended to take into account that the majority of present plantations contribute in no small measure to the present beauty of the Maltese landscape; that compensatory measures should be in place for any trees that have to be replaced and at no cost to the landowners; that no discrimination between different entities takes place; and finally, that the FKNK, many of whose members are directly involved in the planting and growth of trees, should be represented on the Board of the Competent Authority.

The full FKNK Critique can be viewed at http://archive.huntinginmalta.org.mt/uploads/24/823/FKNK_critique_of_trees_and_woodlands_regs.pdf

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