



FKNK

10 December 2011

Government's Consultant on Trapping

Whoever has been chosen by Government as its consultant on matters concerning bird trapping (live-bird capturing) matters must have a personal anti-trapping agenda.

Advice, which has definitely led government to refrain from opening this autumn's trapping season for the turtle dove and the quail in an arbitrary manner and with no scientific basis or justification. Advice, which has probably also instigated Government's decision not to open this autumn's trapping season for the golden plover, yet again on a lame illogical excuse based on sub-species identification since the same criterion was not applied to the hunting (shooting/killing) of the same specimen both locally as well as in several other Member States. The same irrational situation applies to the turtle dove and the quail.

It would be futile for the Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) to ask Government to reveal the identity of its “advisor”, however, the FKNK would be in its full right to ask Government to consult the genuine advice, also through the numerous Reports, scientific Studies and other documentation, given by the FKNK on behalf of its thousands of trapper-members who are always the only ones on the receiving end of incorrect application of derogations and subsequent government decisions. The same trappers who can only see this government's decision not to open the trapping season this year for the first year since time immemorial as a capricious excuse.

The Maltese government also tried insinuating that the reason for not opening this season was due to the legal proceedings initiated by the Commission against Malta last June for the incorrect application of derogations to permit this practice each year throughout the seven consecutive years since Malta's EU Membership.

The Commission's early warning (since 2009) and offer of assistance for the application of correct derogations have now been clearly explained in the EU Environment Commissioner's reply to a European Parliament question that had been raised by Maltese MEP Dr. John Attard Montalto ([Reply](#)). The FKNK, would like, once again, to thank Dr. Attard Montalto for his continuous assistance in hunting and trapping matters.

Earlier today, a local daily newspaper published on-line its' at times incorrect, at others twisted interpretation of the Commissioner's Reply, which Reply is a 'copy-paste' from a letter the same Commissioner sent to the FKNK on the 25th September 2011, which letter was also quoted in a Press Conference addressed by the FKNK on the 21st November

2011. As can be understood in the Reply, whilst confirming that other countries DO apply derogations to permit trapping, Mr. Potocnik DID NOT refer to any legal action that the Commission was planning to institute against a number of Member States over trapping, but that such action would be taken against those countries that apply derogations INCORRECTLY.

Another false statement is that “According to EU rules, trapping had to be completely outlawed in Malta by the end of 2008..”. The facts are that live-finch trapping had to be suspended by the end of 2008 pending Studies which had to be undertaken by the Malta Ornithological Committee which would determine how many finches could eventually be caught from the wild to sustain genetic-diversity in captive kept finches. NOTHING was negotiated or agreed upon with reference to birds that could also be legally shot and killed, as in the case of the scenario at present.

The reporter is also not correct when he writes that “..in 2008, the government decided to apply a derogation allowing the trapping of four bird species (turtle dove, quail, golden plover and song thrush).” The government had in fact applied such derogation every autumn since Malta’s EU Membership in 2004 and ever since up to 2010. The problem was that on the seven consecutive occasions the derogation was applied in an incorrect manner (in conjunction with four years – 2004 to 2007 – of the application of other incorrect derogations to permit spring hunting and trapping). 11 derogations regarding hunting and trapping applied incorrectly!

Finally, the FKNK solemnly promises its continuous commitment to its trapper-members, confirming that every effort will be made so that live-bird capturing, not just for species that may also be legally shot and killed, but more importantly as regards the socio-cultural tradition of live-finch capturing, will be re-established in our islands on a solid and legal foundation within the boundaries of sustainability and wise use of renewable natural resources and within the parameters and in full respect of EU Nature Directives.

Lino Farrugia
Secretary General