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Hunting and the MHRA

The Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA) is reportedly concerned about a possible “negative economic effect” of hunting. The MHRA fouled up once when one prominent member was photographed wearing the infamous T-shirt “Stop illegal spring hunting”. This time, the MHRA has messed up again, fooled no doubt by the abolitionist lobby.

What is damaging ecological tourism to Malta is not the hunting, but the “hype” around it: “Hunting publicity harming islands’ ecological tourism” (April 23)”. It is not the Federation for Hunting & Conservation – Malta (FKNK) nor the St. Hubert Hunters (KSU) that say so, but Merill Ltd., the only local licensed company engaged in eco-tourism, which works ‘hands-on’ with the countryside stakeholders, i.e. the hunters and the farmers.

Recently, there were only 3 violations of a bird reserve. Nevertheless, an unholy fuss was created involving a BBC film crew, plus at least 17 news reports in Malta’s leading newspaper. There are 9,600 licensed to hunt in April, and 3 poachers make up only 0.03%. This is proof enough that the whole issue is being dramatically sensationalized by fanatics, aided by foreign abolitionists. As regards the MHRA’s appeal to NGOs “to ensure that the Government takes the necessary steps” to eradicate hunting abuses, the FKNK as the largest NGO would like to assure the association that we co-operate fully with the Government towards that objective.

Finally, since tourism forecasts for 2013 predict a record year, the MHRA should not be unduly concerned. Nevertheless, the MHRA may wish to note that we would gladly participate in any seminar or forum it might organize to study the phenomenon of anti-hunting agitation and sensationalism and their possible effects on tourism.

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