

September 2006

Editorial

Landowners are the managers of natural resources; they are conservationists and/or producers of wildlife, fauna and flora and their products and landscapes.

Even if this appears obvious to many of our fellow citizens, we must nevertheless explain this role to society which often knows very little about it. Lack of information generates fear and ill-founded assumptions. A dialogue between the different managers of wildlife, environmental movements and rural stakeholders as a whole generates a positive dynamic for society and favourable results in the field.

Because of its diversity and richness the countryside should be given its true value. Its different functions offer many opportunities which combine protection of biodiversity and revenue. To allow this the rules introduced by the member states must be flexible, placing the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development on an equal footing, otherwise the rural economy and its environment will die in the long run.

And so our governments must accept the benefits of privately managing the environment alongside public or quasi-public sector management. This should not lead to pointless competition between sectors as some people would unfortunately like to see. These three sectors are perfectly complementary. Failing to ensure this amounts to a deliberate political choice with dire consequences: neither man nor the environment would benefit.

As an organisation ELO is keen on bringing together different points of view in order to respect all parties and the public good.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

The "Pilot Wildlife Estates" initiative (PW Ei) or how to communicate the importance of sustainably managed wildlife territories



Sustainable hunting is a traditional method of both regulating and increasing natural resources.

As such it has a practical and positive influence on animal and plant species and their ecosystems. The management of wildlife territories is one of the many ways of using Natura 2000 sites and is of particular economic importance for many rural communities.

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However, whenever this activity is not performed in a reasonable and sustainable manner it can potentially cause conflict between the different uses of natural resources, in particular forestry, farming, fishing or other outdoor activities or even the objectives of nature conservation. Managers of owners of these territories are above all «producers of wildlife, flora and landscapes».

For ELO hunting activities are therefore sensibly managed and compatible with the requirements of Natura 2000 when they are part of sustainable rural development and contribute to the protection of biodiversity. The managers of wildlife territories and hunters have every interest in preserving habitats and the diversity of species residing on their territories and must therefore be considered as 'providers of solutions' for the protection of biodiversity.

Although obvious, this must be put across to society which all too often tends to know little about and therefore misunderstand their vital function.

Communication is an essential element of conservation, and lack of it often leads to fear and

hostility. A constructive dialogue between the managers of wildlife and the different rural stakeholders is fundamental and requires honesty and transparency. Sterile battles where both sides suffer are pointless, not to mention the particularly negative effect on biodiversity.

ELO wishes to communicate this positive message to society: sustainable hunting and the appropriate management of wildlife territories provides undeniable added value to our common heritage.

It is within this spirit in 2004 that ELO, in partnership with Claude DELBEUCK (director general of natural resources and of the environment of the Wallonia Region ministry, 'Chasses de la Couronne' (BE)) and Francis FORGET (national Chambord estate (FR)) launched the 'Pilot Wildlife Estates' initiative to follow on from the 'Official Hunting Territories' initiative. This network of territories created a catalyst intended to open the way towards new solutions.

PWEI: towards the creation of a communication tool

In September 2005 in Estremoz (PT), ELO co-organised a conference intended to promote sustainable management of pilot wildlife territories and set up a working party composed of representatives of ONCFS, APROCA Spain, ANPC, FACE and ELO which received a dual mandate.

Firstly the initiative is intended to create a network of well-managed, exemplary territories. The second part of this mandate



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consists in establishing simple but precise principles of good management and conservation of wildlife territories everywhere in Europe, which could then be divided up according to the different biogeographical regions in the European Union.

The creation of a set of principles, criteria and indicators allows the management of hunting areas to be treated in a transparent and objective way by taking into account the three pillars of sustainability, i.e. environmental conservation, economics and socio-cultural aspects.

The objective is to produce the guidelines for each biogeographical region and a 'label', created from good practices, criteria and indicators identified in the exemplary territories selected. This label must be reproducible, and the territories will serve as a model for the other territories aspiring to better management and recognition.

This label will not involve compulsory certification nor EMAS accreditation (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme of the European Commission) and will consequently be much more flexible. Moreover, compliance with the requirements of this label will be on a strictly vol-

untary basis. The idea is clearly to recognize the added value sought by managers keen on high-quality work.

The 'PWEi' label testifies to a level of efficiency to be achieved both in terms of species and habitat, while being an excellent communication tool which certifies the value and merit of the territories to which it is awarded.

This is part of a general concept which takes into account a whole series of elements such as water management, forestry, farming, habitats and control of the population of both huntable and non-huntable species. More specifically, by way of example, the existence of a management plan and its implementation, or indicators for monitoring biodiversity must imperatively be part of the sine qua non conditions for obtaining the label in the same way as transparency and reasonable, controlled public access.

PWEi or how to combine the protection of biodiversity with generating extra income for the countryside

The initiative includes several aspects which are part of the European Commission's action, in particular that of DG ENVIRONMENT, which has expressed interest and wants to give it official recognition when all the necessary elements for the sustainability of the project are in place.

PWEi is indeed what is called in Community jargon a 'grey zone' which will increase in the future because it does not simply focus on the protection of biodiversity

but also includes socio-economic aspects. In particular it allows a diversification of income for the countryside thanks to the creation of an economy around the 'wildlife products', such as hunting, bird-watching, gastronomy or the conservation of the countryside. This element is crucial at a time when restrictions to the Community budget will inexorably affect the farm sector and the financing of rural development.

If we now look into the socio-cultural effects of PWEi, there are clear impacts on public interest and human activity, both through involving the local community and by creating jobs linked to the management of wildlife and the land. Wildlife territories have considerable potential for society, including their show-case effect, by raising people's awareness of the quality and variety of wildlife and its habitats.

■ Cécile BONINO





EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)

Obora, an ancient hunting reservation

Situated in the heart of south Moravia, the Obora reservation can testify to a long tradition of hunting. Created in the 17th century, the area has survived the vicissitudes of the centuries to become today a unique testimony to a heritage which since time immemorial has closely linked nature and the environment to one of the most ancestral cultural practices of our civilization, hunting.



It is in the Czech Republic, between the towns of Jihlava and Brno at Velke Mezirici that one of the oldest hunting reservations in Europe is to be found. Archives have revealed the existence since 1676 of a game reserve called 'Obora' that Count Rudolph of Kounice set up on his land. During the 18th and 19th centuries the estate of Mezirici changed hands several times.

Then after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of the First World War, Josephine PODSTATZKY-LICHTENSTEIN became the first owner before the whole estate was nationalised in 1948 and transferred to the state. The overthrow of the communist regime in November 1989 followed by the country's independence in 1993 finally allowed the PODSTATZKY-LICHTENSTEIN family to recover both the Castle of Mezirici and the forests, ponds and game reserve surrounding them.

For over three centuries marked by frequent changes of owners, troubled periods and the communist regime, the hunting reserve continued to function. During the second half of the twentieth century the

state and its forestry services reconstructed barriers, original stone pillars and old wood fences to which concrete posts and wire fencing were added. But when the estate was returned to the PODSTATZKY-LICHTENSTEIN family, one of the first concerns was to return the reserve to its original appearance. Today it is entirely restored to its 17th century structure.

Currently Obora has over 174 hectares of forests, meadows, pastureland, fields, water features and ponds. Although until the beginning of the twentieth century a single crop – forestry – was favoured, the storms in the seventies led to new species being planted in the areas destroyed. Today the estate is mostly divided up between spruce (20%), oak (25%), horse chestnut (19%), pine (14%) and birch (8%).

As for game, although originally the reservation only had fallow deer, subsequently in 1942 sheep and Sicca deer were added, an unusual



choice given the risk of aggression between these animals but they are now well-established. The game is subject to rigorous genetic selection, avoiding in-breeding and overpopulation. In order to guarantee a good balance, several hunts are organized every year respecting the time-honoured tradition of the area. In recent years the quality of game has considerably improved.

This good management by the current owners does not just allow an historic hunting reservation to be maintained in the same way as the castle and the rest of the estate but it has also recently contributed to the repopulation of certain natural areas of the Czech Republic and elsewhere, thus contributing to the protection of animal species and to the restoration of biodiversity in several regions of Europe.

■ Donatienne de SÉJOURNET

Obora

EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)



The Water Front ; Grand Harbour, Malta.

A word from the president

The sunny summer weather has attracted hoards of tourists and ramblers, seeking various sights and sensations, to our historic monuments and listed landscapes. Should we allow or even encourage it? Yes but not at any price.

These day trippers from all four corners of the earth deserve to be well-informed so they can benefit from authentic, unforgettable experiences. The publication by Europa Nostra of the Malta Declaration on Cultural Tourism during its annual congress last May is worthy of some thought.

Today some of the hotspots are literally invaded by often ill-informed visitors herded there by tour operators who care little for the conservation of our unique heritage or for the life of the local population. I am thinking of exceptional sites such as Dubrovnik or Florence that I have had the opportunity of visiting at several periods of the year. How many times have

I not heard the grievances of hoteliers or even owners of listed monuments about the ravages of mass tourism!

The development of cultural tourism and the unbridled commercialization of historic sites can have disastrous consequences for their conservation. Yet this historic heritage is the symbol par excellence of Europe due to its diversity and artistic and architectural richness.

A fair balance must be struck between economic development, sustainable tourism and heritage conservation in order for this same heritage to avoid losing its identity and authenticity which is what makes it so attractive in the first place. Spreading tourism out more geographically and seasonally would avoid congestion of these sites and the cannibalization of our cultural heritage.

It is also important to communicate information properly to a public eager for knowledge. The creation of good tourist

infrastructure on the one hand and the sensible use of the latest audio-visual technology should contribute to a better management of this unique heritage.

Most owners of historic monuments have no choice but to accept the invasion in order to meet major financial commitments, necessary for the conservation of this heritage. A better share-out of financial resources between economic sectors and the non-commercial sector is necessary to ensure optimum conservation of our historic heritage, either through financial transfers in the form of subsidies or through legal and fiscal measures which are often more efficient than subsidies.

Finally there is the problem of claiming free access to our homes and cities, to our countryside and forests with the excuse that these belong to everyone. On the contrary, we believe that the accessibility of historic sites, be they buildings or landscapes, must be properly managed and supervised in order to respect the lives of the owners and local population, as well as protect the environment.

A constructive dialogue between all parties, be they public or private, European, national, regional or local is indispensable if we are to cope with the huge growth in European tourism.

■ Ghislain d'URSEL

THE INSTITUTIONAL ECHO

The Lodos Secos site (Aricam Group) of Talamanca de Jarama North of Madrid: an exemplary industrial and environmental concept

On June 14 the 'Sustainable hunting, biodiversity and rural activities' intergroup welcomed Luis SERRANO to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the director of the Lodos Secos company, at the invitation of ELO. This Spanish company, producing aggregates for construction (sand, gravel etc) has created industrial techniques which are particularly respectful towards the environment.



Lodos Secos gravel pit.

The extraction of aggregates also produces sludge and thus the consumption of vast quantities of water. The loamy mud which remains once sand and stones have been separated is often deposited in several layers on large surfaces. The water is eliminated by evaporation and the drying process may sometimes take ten years before it is possible to process the dry matter. The storage and drying process inevitably also affects fauna and flora on the spot and the original use of the soil.

The restoration of the sites can take many years. The risks inherent to this activity for man and for nature make it necessary for managers to contract specific insurance policies.

Available industrial techniques

It is certain that the sludge generated by industry is not currently efficiently managed. The techniques available on the market, often extremely costly, also require high maintenance.

It was against this background that Lodos Secos developed a treatment method for mud allowing the solid and liquid phases to be separated without using disproportionate mechanical methods and by avoiding any toxic effluent.

Improvements: applying the 'Global management System for Dry Mud' to the Talamanca de Jamara site

Recycling 90% of the water used allows water outlets to be created on the site in order to boost the development of biodiversity. It is no longer necessary to use large surfaces of 5 hectares as storage zones. On the contrary, once the mud has been treated and the water recovered it is used for restoring the extraction zones. These are then entrusted to farmers to be cultivated.

The risks to our environmental heritage and human health are thus eliminated and the landscape is protected.

Awards for Lodos Secos

Two prizes have recognized and paid tribute to the efforts made by the Aricam Group to protect the environment:

- the 2005 National Prize for Sustainable Development of the Spanish Association of Mining Industries (Asociacion Nacional de Empresarios de Fabricantes de Aridos)
- The 2004 ELO international prize for the protection of water and wetlands.

■ Hannes HUHTANIEMI



Structural funds 2007-2013: Green light in the European Parliament

On July 4th 2006 the European Parliament in its plenary session in Strasbourg adopted the legal basis for the conditions for allocating cohesion and structural funds in the enlarged Europe.

The legislative package includes a general regulation and four others on specific questions.

The first define common rules on planning, management, monitoring and assessment of the new cohesion policy while insisting on the strengthening of environmental aspects, in particular sustainable development.

The four others set specific rules concerning the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund and the new European Territorial Cooperation Grouping (ETCG).

These rules define the objectives and allocation criteria to be fulfilled by the



member states and regions in order to be eligible for these funds.

Unlike the previous period 2000-2006, there has been a 'lisbonisation' of the new rules intended to concentrate the use of these loans on growth and employment projects.

Some figures:
These aid-packages total 308 billion euros, thus representing 35.7% of the EU budget for 2007-2013.

- Increase of the cohesion fund by 18 billion euros (for the period 2000-2006) to 61.59 billion euros.
- 251 billion go firstly to the convergence objective (economic recovery within the EU), and concern the regions whose GDP is below 75% of the European average and secondly to the cohesion fund for the countries whose GDP per inhabitant is under 90% of the community average, which is the case in the ten new member states.
- 49 billion will be divided between projects intended

to strengthen regional competitiveness and employment in the richest regions which as such cannot benefit from the convergence objective.

- 7.8 billion are earmarked for cross-border cooperation projects.

Division per country for the global envelope:

Local and regional European authorities can start work on the programmes funded by the EU since the texts have been adopted and the loans can be used as from 1 January 2007.

The European Commission must now publish its strategic guidelines in order to help the member states draw up, by the end of the year, their national strategic reference frameworks and the relevant operational plans which must be approved by the Commission in 2007.

■ Cécile BONINO

Country	In billions of Euros
Poland	approx 60
Spain	31.5
Italy	25.6
Czech Republic	23.7
France	12.7
(including 2.8 billion for the convergence objective for Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion and Guyana)	

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THE ENLARGED EUROPE

Hunting and Property Rights in the New Member States

Hunting rights are inevitably linked to property rights. Legislation in the new member states (NMS) proposes different solutions applicable to this problem. There are several methods for managing this relationship. This is however closely linked to the use of forests, hunting being treated as one of its accessories.



To illustrate this we only need to examine three different legal frameworks: in Slovenia, Latvia and Poland. Of course these three different sets of legislation comply with European directives on conservation and in particular with the 'Birds' and 'Habitats' directives which form the foundation of the Natura 2000 network.

In Latvia things are simpler because forests and game are privately owned. Compensation for damage caused by game and the profitability of hunting are not part of the state's responsibilities. It is up to the private landowner to manage his estate as he sees fit in compliance with national law on environmental protection.

In Poland the situation is quite the contrary. Over 80% of forests are state-owned and all game is part of the National Treasure. A private landowner with game on his land is not at liberty to do what he likes with it, i.e. neither manage it nor use it for economic gain. This situation dates back to the country's recent history and is now being justified for social and economic reasons.

Clearly as long as the forest remains in the hands of the State there will be no change to the situation. The question is whether game should continue to be managed by the state. Would it not be socially and economically more beneficial to privatize hunting rights and the whole issue of game?

These questions are also relevant in Slovenia where over 80% of forests are private but where game belongs to the State (according to the law of December 2003). Hunting rights and the income they generate belong to the National Treasure. This is a surprising piece of legislation since private landowners can make a profit from their heritage, in particular from timber, except from hunting. This lack of trust in the private landowner is all the more surprising since in Slovenian and Polish history hunting was very successfully managed in the past by private landowners.

The ruling adopted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg on 20 April 1999 in the Chassagnou etc. case against France generated major interest among private landowners. The ECHR adopted a clear position in this case on the issue of the relationship between ownership and hunting rights. Ruling on the infringement of art1 of Protocol n°1 (property rights) of the European Convention on Human Rights the court stated that the system of *apport forcé* (compulsory granting of hunting rights), which under French

law is an attribute of property rights, is a derogation from the principle of article L.222-1 of the Code Rural according to which no one can hunt on another's property without the consent of the owner, and therefore that *apport forcé* amounts to placing the applicants in a situation which disturbs the balance which should prevail between safeguarding property rights and the requirements of the general interest. Thus forcing small owners to cede hunting rights on their property to third parties so they can avail themselves of these rights in a completely contradictory fashion to the owners' convictions is a disproportionate burden which cannot be justified.

This ruling clearly demonstrates how the relationship between the State, the private landowner and society should develop to strike a fair balance between availing oneself of property rights and the general interest. Restricting the owner in the long term by depriving him of payment for the management and investments he is currently carrying out, as is currently the case in Slovenia, is difficult to justify. The private manager is aware of his duties and obligations towards his estate, Nature and society. Moreover his motivation is often greater in that he is safeguarding the property for future generations, because as the communist period demonstrated, what belongs to everyone belongs to no one.

In this relationship between hunting and property rights it is essential

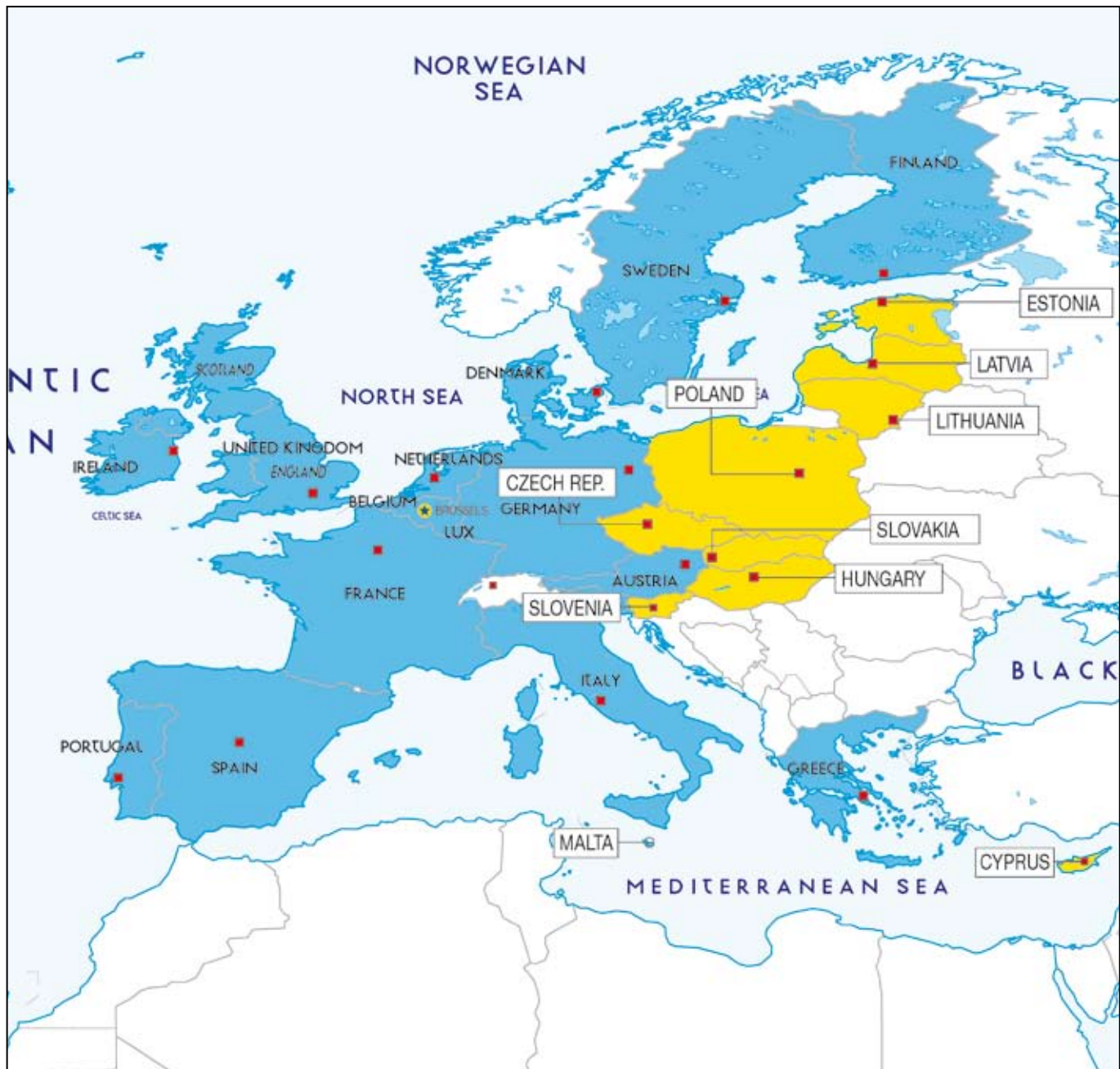
THE ENLARGED EUROPE

to highlight the impact of the implementation of Natura 2000. It also influences human activity and presence on the land it covers. Even if the NMS have more virgin land than the 15 member states of the EU, human presence has left its mark. Today managing biodiversity is increasingly complicated: natural areas are increasingly restricted, in particular because of creeping urbanization.

All of this influences the designation of protection zones for birds and habitats, which is still underway in the NMS. This procedure raises several problems because (according to information from July 2006), in Slovenia for example 31% of the territory is already a protected site under the 'Habitats' directive compared to a mere 4% in Poland. The complexity of these circumstances,

as the experience of the 15 MS of the EU shows, makes it vital to involve all parties concerned. Clearly private landowners are a part of this, and the possibility of fully enjoying their land and its activities, in particular hunting, should be discussed in the immediate future, in order to achieve a social consensus.

■ Emmanuelle MIKOSZ



YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Hunters and their future

The practice of hunting in Europe is in a state of constant development; its usefulness, its style, its ethics and its price and its profitability are constantly being called into question and changed.



Moreover, a slight reduction in the number of hunters in Europe (today over 7 million) is the reflection of a general decline of interest in hunting, although there is an increase in Scandinavia. More particularly, it is interesting to note a change in the hunting population; more and more women are obtaining licences and are actively participating in the management of territories. This is a good way of demonstrating that modern hunting is neither sexist nor simply an activity for brutes, as some people tend to believe.

The young generation of hunters must, as well as bearing the increasing cost of hunting, defend themselves against a society which is increasingly hostile to this activity while at the same time complying with increasingly strict rules.

This is why young people must continue the traditions of hunting (by learning) which is essential for the survival of this activity. They must be shown how to explain that hunting, through its traditions and customs, is an activity intended to achieve long-term management and is of both social benefit for the rural environment and of economic benefit for the country as a whole. Moreover this activity generates income and is already strictly regulated in all the countries of Europe and by the European Institutions themselves which have legislated on the opening dates and leg-hold traps. Traditions particular to each country and region include hunting in the daily activities of country people. It reflects their identity.

In several European countries there seems to be diminishing interest in hunting among the young generations. A specific example is France with its large farming and forestry areas (544,000 km²)¹ and ancestral hunting traditions. The major rural exodus of young people is having a significant impact on new generations which would normally take over. We are living though a period where the countryside provides proportionally less work than before.

Another reason for the drop in the number of people interested is the high cost of hunting permits in certain countries. In Belgium for example a licence for one hunting year over the 16,884km² of Wallonia costs 300Euros making this a luxury activity, the exact opposite of the democratization intended. Clearly this does not suit a majority of hunters who hunt out of the need to reduce damage to crops and timber. Another reason is certainly the still increasing number of rules and restrictions which turn it into an administrative and restrictive activity rather than a natural one. And rambblers' rights in certain countries like Germany considerably increase the dangers during a hunt.

The fact that most citizens have less and less direct contact with nature creates a certain indifference towards the use of natural resources. They are therefore dependent on every new good or bad ideology on the subject. A particular common example is the personification of animals in films like Bambi by Walt Disney which is full of errors and delusions.

To counter this negative influence on healthy management and achieving a good yield from Europe's land it is vital that an effort be made on the part of the older and wiser generations to interest young hunters in taking over the task of actively defending and advancing a cause which, if it is destroyed, will disturb the balance in our countryside.

■ C.L. zu STOLBERG-STOLBERG



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¹ FACE webpage: <http://www.face-europe.org/fs-hunting.htm>

YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Young Friends
pay tribute



On the occasion of the death of his grand-father Charles Cornet d'Elzius, former minister of forests, hunting and fishing in Belgium, Jean Charles Speeckaert sent a forestry message to him following the speech by the Belgian deputy prime minister, praising the exemplary role he played helping the poor and supporting private property.

Goodbye from an old conifer
to his forestry 'father'

One fine spring morning my brothers and I were sent off into your forest, huddled together in bundles. You received us delicately and slid our roots into a hole and filled it in with earth.

With this gesture a long love story began!

First you protected us from the insects, then game, and then from the surrounding vegetation. Several times a year in all weathers we saw you passing creating clearings.

You sacrificed the less 'beautiful' brothers because you knew we needed air to grow tall.

Some time ago you were accompanied by younger people...you were walking with a stick....and I haven't seen you since. Are you ill or dead? Is it your spirit which sings with the wind in my branches?

I have also become majestic thanks to your tender care and will soon be felled.....but at my feet little seedlings are already growing. And the forest will live on, protected by your heirs.

I could have written this letter with my cousin the broad-leaf because it would not have been different. But I the 'unloved' conifer want to thank you specially since you know that in some soils I am the only tree that can create a forest worthy of the name.

To you 'forest father' – your work is often denigrated, but the old tree that I am wants to tell you on behalf of all the trees, 'Courage, for just as children need their parents, forests need people like you to be beautiful!'. Father of forests, I want to say THANK YOU for your patience, perseverance, respect for nature and love for life!

■ An old conifer

Diary Dates 2006

1-2 September,
La Tour du Valat
in Camargue, France

Seminar on the protection of species of migratory fish in the Mediterranean and in particular the alicie shad as part of cooperation between ELO, Fauna and Sustainable Development, the European Anglers' Association and the Association for Salmon Management on the River Dee (Scotland).

6-8 September,
Copenhagen

Conference on sustainable management of Pilot Hunting Properties.

14-16 September,
Prague

General Assembly of the Union of European Historic Houses (UEHHA).

22-24 September,
Château d'Hex (Belgium)

'Countryside Fair' as part of ELO's communication programme on Natura 2000 in Belgium, organized with the support of the European Commission, DG Environment. www.countryfair.be

25-26 September,
Bruges

'Biomass for Energy – the challenges for agriculture' – conference organized by North Sea Bio Energy as part of the European Interreg IIIB programme. <http://www.northseabioenergy.org/>

3-4 October,
Brussels

"A simplified CAP for Europe- a challenge to all" – conference on the simplification of the Common Agriculture Policy organized by the European Commission.

16-17 October,
Brussels

The 2nd annual conference on European Energy – the future of Europe's energy industry. http://www.epsilonevents.com/eps_ce.asp

25-28 October 2006,
Leipzig

European Fair on Restoration, Conservation and Urban Renewal under the patronage of UNESCO.



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