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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

35th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

**5th meeting of the Group of Experts
on the Conservation of Birds**

Strasbourg, 12-13 October 2015

**- ONGOING INITIATIVES TO TACKLE ILLEGAL
KILLING OF BIRDS-**



*Document prepared by
BirdLife International*

BRIEFING ON ONGOING INITIATIVES TO TACKLE ILLEGAL KILLING OF BIRDS

Since the 2011 Larnaca conference on Illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds (IKB), there has been an increasing number of international initiatives to fight illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds.

This is a condensed overview of ongoing regional initiatives in which BirdLife Europe is involved and some further additions on other initiatives in more than one country.

Please contact willem.vandenbossche@birdlife.org for comments and additions, thanks in advance!

EC Roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds

The European Commission identified actions to be taken at EU, Member State, agency or NGO level with a view to increase effectiveness in measures aimed at eliminating illegal killing, trapping, and trade of birds in the EU. The Roadmap is a non-binding instrument for cooperation and prioritization, a first version was produced in December 2012. The working group following up the Roadmap is formed by the EC, Bern Convention Secretariat, BirdLife Europe, FACE, AEWA-CMS, IMPEL and Interpol. Coordinated by the Nature Unit of DG Env (contact: marita.arvela@ec.europa.eu).

Latest version: October 2014, [weblink](#)

Tunis Action plan 2013-2020 for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds.

The Bern Convention developed an action plan to eradicate IKB during the 2nd conference on IKB in Tunisia (May 2013) covering enforcement and legal aspects, biological and institutional aspects and awareness aspects. The action plan was adopted by the contracting parties in December 2013. Coordination by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention (contact: Ivana.DALESSANDRO@coe.int)

Tunis Action Plan: [weblink](#)

Special Focal Points for Illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds of the Bern Convention.

The Bern Convention is convening the national delegates who are the Special Focal Points for tackling illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds. The group is meeting at least once a year.

First meeting ([May 2014](#)), second meeting ([Feb 2015](#)), delegates list ([2014](#)).

CMS Working Group on Poisoning of Birds

This WG has developed global guidelines to counter effects on migratory birds by insecticides, lead, poison-baits, rodenticides and veterinary pharmaceuticals (NSAIDs).

Link with IKB by poison-baits.

Resolution on preventing poisoning of migratory birds was adopted by CMS COP 11 in November 2014, [weblink](#).

The guidelines were adopted at the CMS COP in November 2014, [weblink](#).

Project to create an European Network against Environmental Crime (ENEC).

SEO and the RSPB run a two year project (1st April 2014-Nov 2015) funded by the European Commission's DG Justice to:

- improve the implementation and application of the Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law (including an **inventory in the 28 MS of current implementation**).

- create the European Network against Environmental Crime (ENEC) to strengthen the BirdLife's European Partnership work against environmental crime, facilitating exchange of information and experience with **legal and other practitioners working to prevent or prosecute illegal bird hunting, trapping, poisoning and habitat destruction.**
- bring together legal and other practitioners who work in the fight against environmental crime.
- integrate with the activities of other networks and international institutions involved in the protection of the environment.
- create a support facility to organize and present the work of ENEC. Creation of a simple computer platform that facilitates data storage and the exchange of information between ENEC members.

The Stichting BirdLife Europe, Hellenic Ornithological Society and Czech Society for Ornithology participate as Associate Partners in this project.

Review of illegal killing in the Mediterranean.

BirdLife has completed a privately funded project to review the scale and extent of illegal killing and taking in the Mediterranean region, collect info on hunting and trapping legislation and to develop protocols for monitoring the extent of illegal activities.

The review is conducted in 27 countries in the European, Middle Eastern and North African part of the Mediterranean and includes Serbia and Georgia.

One of the outcomes of this project is the identification of black spots of IKB, which will be tackled intensively in a follow up project (and simultaneously by other initiatives). It is a cooperation between BirdLife's global and regional offices and the BirdLife Partners in the Mediterranean. The project is covering a period of 15 months and started in January 2014.

The Laymann's report has been launched in August 2015, you find it [here](#)

Contact person: anne-laure.brochet@birdlife.org

A scientific article and full report will be published at the end of 2015

Capacity Development for Flyway Conservation in the Mediterranean (supported by MAVA)

BirdLife International is coordinating a MAVA funded project to enhance the capacity of conservation NGOs in the Mediterranean to work effectively as a dynamic self-sustaining network, to better protect key species, sites and habitats at the heart of the Africa-Eurasia Flyway. Our partners that are developing the project are Malta, Cyprus, Turkey, Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro. [Weblink.](#)

Cooperation to end the illegal trapping of protected bird species in Egypt and Libya

Following high-level diplomacy and a petition by NABU (BirdLife in Germany) which secured 115,000 signatures, an action plan has been agreed to address illegal trapping of protected bird species in Egypt and Libya (developed by CMS/AEWA with support of BirdLife International & BirdLife Europe, and the governments of Egypt, Libya and Germany). The main elements of the Action Plan include:

- Increase knowledge of the scale, socio-economic and legal aspects of bird trapping
- Ensure that effective legislation and regulations are in place and are enforced
- Build capacity of government, NGOs and local communities to effectively address the bird trapping issue
- Increase awareness locally, nationally and internationally to promote bird conservation
- Reduce bird trapping where necessary and possible by creating alternative livelihoods

In Libya government officials are leading on the project, in Egypt our partner Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE) is leading together with the Egyptian government agencies. NABU is supporting the hunting officer in NCE.

The project was launched by AEWA – CMS in autumn 2013 and has a project website: <http://www.illegalbirdkilling.aewa.info/>

A safe haven for wild birds-changing attitudes towards illegal killing.

EU LIFE communication project from our partners LIPU, HOS and SEO (BirdLife in Italy, Greece and Spain) aiming to change attitudes towards illegal killing in Northern Mediterranean to create social pressure to obey and enforce the laws protecting migratory birds by:

- Raising awareness of key stakeholder groups: local communities, local authorities, hunters and the wider public
- Changing socio-cultural attitudes towards illegal killing in the younger generation;
- Improving law enforcement, through increased awareness and better coordination among law enforcement authorities;

The project focuses on three blackspots: autumn trapping in SW Sardinia (Sulcis), spring shooting in the Ionian Islands (Greece), and Parany (lime) traps in Catalonia, Valencia and SE Aragon (Spain).

The closing conference has been held on 21st of May 2015 in Rome, Italy.

Project website: www.leavingisliving.org/.

Interpol – project on illegal killing of birds

As part of the global programme of the Environmental security unit, Interpol has launched a proposal to start working more intensively on tackling the illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds. The project is funding dependend and was first proposed at the Bern Convention Standing Committee Meeting in December 2013.

IMPEL – project on illegal killing of birds

The EU IMPEL group of enforcement officers has started in 2013 with a project on tackling illegal killing of birds. The project is voluntary with an invitation to countries to join. Cyprus, Italy and Malta enforcement agencies have started the project. There have been two workshops in 2013 and one in 2014 with contributions of several European countries, exchanging best practices on tackling IKB. Plans for 2015 include:

- Collaboration with the network of prosecutors and judges
- Expert meeting/sharing best practices/investigate techniques,
- Gathering and Sharing information about illegal activities between member states
- Impel Review Initiative -peer review of legislation and its enforcement, carried out in Romania in 2014, others planned.
- Format for reporting illegal activities

Coordination by John Visbeen – Utrecht province (NL): john.visbeen@provincie-utrecht.nl

Champions of the Flyway

The SPNI – BirdLife project “The Champions of the Flyway Bird Race” is a fundraising, communication project which started in spring 2014. The profits of the project in 2014 were used to support the work on IKB in Georgia and Malta. Georgia is an important blackspot of killing of raptors in our region and is strengthened by the cooperation between SPNI and our Georgian candidate partner (Sabuko). The 2015 edition of the race was held on 25th March and the funds raised support the work of BirdLife Cyprus to tackle illegal killing of birds on the island.

Coordination by SPNI (Dan Alon and Jonathan Meyrav) and BirdLife International (Jim Lawrence)

Project website: <http://www.champions-of-the-flyway.com/>

Fact finding exercise on bird hunting tourism in Europe and Central Asia

BirdLife and FACE will do a small fact finding exercise on the type of bird hunting tourism promoted by hunting tourism agencies in the EU. We focus on a legal analysis on how is hunting tourism governed in key countries in the Balkan (FACE), Morocco & Central Asia. Hunting tourism agencies profiling: what types of trips are offered and are they potentially unsustainable practices? Which are the most affected species? In which seasons? (BirdLife). As a result of Good practice we will try to repackage the Hunting Charter of the Bern Convention to match a European hunter audience.

IUCN Resolution 2012-029 Combating the illegal or unsustainable capture, trade or killing of migratory birds in the Mediterranean

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012 urges:

...

- a. the countries of the Mediterranean basin which have adequate legislation on hunting of migratory birds to ensure that this legislation is rigorously enforced;
- b. EU Member States in the Mediterranean basin to enforce their bird protection legislation and to rigorously apply the guidelines of the EU Birds Directive. Any use of derogations under Article 9 of this Directive should be very restricted and can only be allowed under certain strict conditions and if stringent controls and reporting can be ensured, with the aim of avoiding any misuse of the derogations permitted by Article 9;

...

<http://portals.iucn.org/docs/iucnpolicy/2012-resolutions/en/WCC-2012-Res-029-EN%20Combating%20the%20illegal%20or%20unsustainable%20capture,%20trade%20or%20killing%20of%20migratory%20birds%20in%20the%20Mediterranean.pdf>

Intergovernmental Task Force to combat illegal bird killing in the Pan-Mediterranean Region

CMS is finalizing the set up of the first ever **intergovernmental Task Force** to combat illegal bird killing in the **Pan-Mediterranean Region**, as part of the Tunis Action Plan of the Bern Convention. The initiative is kindly supported by the European Commission. The decision to set-up such a Task Force was adopted at the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) of CMS in November 2014, [weblink](#).

The Task Force is likely to focus on ensuring implementation of existing guidance and action plans already developed by treaties as well as agreeing new guidance as necessary.

Other Initiatives:

A: *EFFACE*

Short for “European Union Action to Fight Environmental Crime” - is a 40-month EU funded research project. Eleven European research institutions and think tanks are involved. EFFACE assesses the impacts of environmental crime as well as effective and feasible policy options for combating it from an interdisciplinary perspective, with a focus on the EU. Weblink: <http://efface.eu/>

B: *Themis Network*

The Themis Network is a regional cooperation platform addressed to environmental and enforcement authorities as well as the judiciary of the EU candidate countries and potential candidates. Themis’ activities are focused on environmental law enforcement, and more specifically on increasing capacities in the national authorities to tackle environmental crimes, including those related to natural

resources and wildlife. As such, Themis secretariat hosted by the Regional Environmental Center (REC) and the network members are welcoming IMPEL's activities on green issues and propose to play a role as facilitator to help IMPEL reaching out to South East European countries. (contact person: Cecile Monnier)

C: Second Adriatic Flyway Conference

Was held in October 2014 in Albania, [weblink](#). This event was a follow up to the First Adriatic Flyway Conference held in Ulcinj, Montenegro, in 2009. For background information please visit: <http://www.euronatur.org/Adriatic-Flyway-Conference.934.0.html>

This is an initiative of EuroNatur and the Adriatic Flyway partner network