



President's message

Biodiversity continues to be lost at an unsustainable rate and it is now clear that the European Union (EU)¹ has not met the headline target of *Halting Biodiversity loss by 2010*². The reasons for this are many and often complex and whilst it is useful to examine these it is essential to recognise the successes. The most important of these is that within the EU there is now a good knowledge of where and in what way the EU is failing to halt the loss of biodiversity³. There are also new environmental, social and economic tools emerging to deal with biodiversity loss. Whilst more is required, together we are making a difference.

The value of biodiversity encompasses a plurality of perceptions, practices, knowledge and cultural values that call for tolerance and mutual respect in order to work together. Socio-diversity echoes biodiversity. Biodiversity and nature should not be sanctified but socialised. Managing biodiversity does not only entail the management of all biological entities but also the management of social diversity.

Hunters share a passion for nature, their primary concern being far greater than their future ability to hunt but the ability for generations to come to appreciate nature in the raw. This is why hunters engage every day right across Europe to conserve nature and biodiversity⁴

Taking Stock and Moving Forward - CEO

Across Europe there are 7 million hunters organised into hunting structures, which vary from country to country. They come from every walk of life in every country, region and district, bridge many social gaps and often provide the link between rural and urban areas. As a result European hunters exist in many different cultures and have numerous traditions but share a common passion for hunting and nature. It is this close connection to nature that in the past brought hunters to set up what are now some of the earliest nature conservation organisations in the world and today makes hunters an integral part of conservation efforts.

In order to contribute to the debate on biodiversity and the post 2010 targets we present eight core themes, where hunters are currently making a significant contribution and where more can be done together. These themes are interlinked and are certainly not exhaustive.

¹ Gateway to the European Union - <http://europa.eu>

² EU Biodiversity Action Plan - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index_en.htm

³ *Composite Report on the Conservation Status of Habitat Types and Species as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive*, European Commission -

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/rep_habitats/docs/com_2009_358_en.pdf; *Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target*, EEA Report No 4/2009. European Environment Agency -

www.eea.europa.eu/publications/progress-towards-the-european-2010-biodiversity-target-indicator-fact-sheets

⁴ Case study examples: *The Hunters' contribution to Biodiversity*, FACE - www.face.eu/Documents/Case%20studies.pdf; *Hunting, an added value to Biodiversity*, FACE - www.face.eu/case-studies/introen.htm

At a time when there are increasing voices calling for action, we recognise that there is also a collective responsibility to act and for us all to do more.

This manifesto underlines our commitment.

Habitats

Protecting habitats is a fundamental means to conserve wild flora and fauna; thereby maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ultimately it is through individual actions at grassroots level that a difference can be made.

Through the Habitats Directive⁵ the EU has achieved a great deal by identifying the 231 most important European habitat types including 71 of particular priority which make up its Annex I. A greater achievement still is the creation of the Natura 2000 network⁶ which encompasses these important habitats. Now that these essential steps have been taken it is necessary to ensure that this work has not been done in vain. More action is needed for our most fragile and valuable habitats, and the more common habitats also need to be considered.

Agriculture which accounts for about 50% of the European land area⁷ has shown worrying declines in biodiversity⁸. One of the major drivers was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)⁹ that subsidised intensive cultivations, monocultures and high levels of fertilisers' use. Whilst potential exists through a CAP reform for improved delivery of the objectives of agro-environmental schemes and other mechanisms to maintain high-nature value farmland, action is still needed on the ground. Hunters continue to play a pivotal role in putting biodiversity-friendly measures in place within farmland habitats.

FACE and its Members urge policy makers to draw upon a combination of innovation, science and perhaps most importantly local knowledge to conserve Europe's most important habitats. There is a need to communicate to the public the need to conserve the wider countryside and restore common habitats which are principally on their doorstep. For this we urge all stakeholders to recognise the multi-functionality of Europe's rural areas and to find ways to work together to conserve habitats.

Across Europe hunters are doing just this through cooperation with others, particularly farmers, foresters and landowners. Hunters will continue to work hard, invest time and money in our endeavours to conserve our local hunting areas and ultimately Europe's habitats.

⁵ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, European Commission - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

⁶ The Natura 2000 network - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

⁷ Proposal for a new EU Common Agricultural Policy, BirdLife, EEB, EFNCP, IFOAM & WWF - http://www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Proposal_for_a_new_common_agricultural_policy_FINAL_100302.pdf

⁸ Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target, European Environment Agency - www.eea.europa.eu/publications/progress-towards-the-european-2010-biodiversity-target-indicator-fact-sheets

⁹ The Common Agricultural Policy explained, European Commission - http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capexplained/index_en.htm

- *FACE and its Members will develop strategies and policies to address habitat provisioning within the Common Agricultural Policy (through Pillar 1 and Pillar 2).*
- *FACE and its Members will continue to collaborate with farmers and conservation organisations to maintain and restore farmland biodiversity through local actions.*
- *FACE and its Members will work with landowners, forestry interests and conservation organisations to develop policies and strategies that seek to achieve a balance in the management of forest ecosystems that is positive for biodiversity.*
- *FACE and its Members will continue efforts at the local level to maintain and restore wetlands.*
- *FACE will collate and communicate best practice examples of habitat conservation by hunters in forest and agricultural landscapes as well as wetlands.*

Species

While the good status of habitats and its conservation is critical for fulfilling the general ecological requirements of species, there are circumstances where certain species require particular attention. Endangered species may require special protection regimes or Invasive Alien Species (IAS) may need certain measures of regulation or control. All this of course necessitates careful decision making so that species which require specific attention can be prioritised.

The IUCN Red List¹⁰ provides an assessment of extinction risk for species at global level and provides useful supporting information to establish priorities. Initiatives have also been taken to assess certain species groups at EU Level (e.g. mammals, reptiles, butterflies)¹¹. Such information resources are necessary and valuable tools for conservation of rare and endangered species. Unfortunately this focus can obscure the fact that nature is dynamic and not all species can prosper at once. Fluxes need to be carefully managed to ensure that the balance and diversity of nature is retained. In conjunction with this and without jeopardising the efforts and attention required for endangered species, there is a need to focus on positive incentives for near threatened or species categorised as being of least concern and to express satisfaction each time a species moves out of a critical category.

FACE and its Members urge policy makers and conservation organisations dealing with species conservation to maintain decisions are made on the basis of the best scientific knowledge and wise judgement for the benefit of the population of that species and others. As hunters we will continue to work with positive incentives to conserve not only huntable species but all species.

¹⁰ The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - www.iucnredlist.org

¹¹ European Red List - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/>

- *FACE and its Members will encourage hunters to continue engaging in programs to monitor and assess the status of huntable and other wild animal species, and implement appropriate conservation measures.*
- *FACE and its Members will highlight best practice amongst hunters with regards to species' identification programs, harvest regulation schemes (such as bag limits), restoration and conservation.*
- *FACE and its Members will communicate to hunters, the necessity to identify, control and avoid the introduction of alien animal and plant species.*
- *FACE and its Members will contribute to policy formulation for issues such as the control of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and large carnivore conservation.*
- *FACE and its Members will promote the development and implementation of management and action plans especially for species considered to be at risk.*
- *FACE and its Members will contribute to the formulation of guidance documents on issues such as hunting during periods of severe environmental conditions (e.g. extreme cold or dry weather, forest fires, oil spills and epizootics).*
- *FACE and its Members will continue to contribute to the conservation of endangered species (e.g. lesser white fronted goose, lesser kestrel, Iberian lynx).*
- *FACE and its Members will collaborate for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory birds and the conservation of habitats along their flyways (especially within the framework of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, AEWA¹²).*
- *FACE and its Members will promote the sustainable use and ecologically balanced control of widespread opportunistic species and generalist predators (e.g. fox, corvids, mustelidae).*

Protected Areas

The importance of Protected Areas for nature and biodiversity cannot be overstated; in particular the Natura 2000 network¹³ provides an excellent basis for nature conservation in the EU. Unfortunately the essential flexible element of Natura 2000, namely that socio-economic activities inside Natura 2000 sites can continue unless they negatively impact on the conservation of the species or habitats for which the sites were designated, is often not understood or received at local levels.

¹² African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement - www.unep-aewa.org

¹³ The Natura 2000 network - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

As the European landscape is predominantly anthropogenic, protected areas can not be stand-alone refuges but must integrate into the multifunctional landscape. Some of the most important wildlife sites in Europe have survived the pressures of development and destruction due to the interest of wildlife uses such as hunting. Unfortunately, hunting is often an easy activity to limit and prohibit for local authorities within protected areas.

Conservation will be best served by ensuring more pragmatic approaches to protected areas at national levels. We highlight that protection is only a part of conservation and is not conservation in itself.

- *FACE will continue to promote the application of IUCN guidelines for protected areas¹⁴.*
- *FACE and its Members will engage in dialogue facilitation and conflict resolution between stakeholders within protected areas.*
- *FACE and its Members will continue to promote hunters' engagement in the management of protected areas in collaboration with the relevant competent authorities and other stakeholders (especially in regards to Natura 2000).*
- *FACE and its Members will collate best practice examples to its hunting community and the public.*

Sustainable Use

In recognising that humans are a part of nature both the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹⁵ and the EU consider that biological resources must be used in a sustainable manner. The CBD encourages parties to [...] *protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation and sustainable use requirements* [...]. These requirements have been further outlined by the CBD in the Malawi Principles of the Ecosystem Approach¹⁶ and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity¹⁷.

More specifically the EU, the Council of Europe¹⁸ and the CBD as well as other major international environmental agreements (Convention on Migratory Species, CMS¹⁹; African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, AEWA²⁰; etc.) all recognise the legitimacy of hunting as a use of nature. In this respect

¹⁴ *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*, IUCN - <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>

¹⁵ The Convention on Biological Diversity - www.cbd.int

¹⁶ The Malawi Principles of the Ecosystem Approach - www.cbd.int/ecosystem/principles.shtml

¹⁷ The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity - www.cbd.int/sustainable/addis.shtml

¹⁸ The Council of Europe - www.coe.int

¹⁹ The Convention on Migratory Species - www.cms.int

²⁰ The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement - www.unep-aewa.org

the Council of Europe together with a wide range of stakeholders has produced the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity outlining a comprehensive set of principles and guidelines for sustainable hunting²¹.

Whilst the EU fully recognises the principle of sustainable use, the focus has been on the commercial use of nature mainly in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors. There has been no coordinated strategy to identify and protect customary uses of nature that are compatible with conservation and sustainable use requirements. Wildlife user groups and in particular hunters have much to offer in this respect, because they not only have incentives but they actually contribute to nature conservation.

The EU has promoted dialogue on the sustainable hunting of birds through the Sustainable Hunting Initiative²² and more recently has been supporting the development of a wider sustainable wildlife users' platform²³. Conservation will be advanced if the EU develops and adopts strategies which are informed by the Sustainable Hunting Initiative's experience. These strategies should support the recognition and further involvement of wildlife users in conservation policies and actions

FACE and its Members urge other conservation NGOs and civil society groups to join with hunters and other wildlife users and their organisations in a constructive dialogue to focus on enhancing their contribution towards nature conservation through sustainable utilisation. We will continue to maintain and further enhance sustainable utilisation through hunting as a tool for conservation.

- *FACE and its Members will create better understanding of sustainable use principles and their implementation, as promoted by the Addis Ababa Principles of the CBD and the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity of the Council of Europe.*
- *FACE and its Members will lead efforts for a new sustainable wildlife use initiative, complementary to the Sustainable Hunting Initiative that has a credible representation and support from wildlife users.*
- *FACE and its Members will encourage the collection of hunting and population statistics and facilitate research to assess the sustainability of hunting practices.*
- *FACE and its Members will seek ways to involve and organise local hunters, their knowledge and experience in promoting good management and best practice for the implementation of EU Nature and Biodiversity Policies.*
- *FACE and its Members will raise awareness amongst the public on the wise use of huntable species, with emphasis on wastage prevention and the health benefit of wild game meat.*

²¹ *European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity*, Council of Europe 2008, Nature and environment, No. 150.

²² The Sustainable Hunting Initiative, European Commission -

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/index_en.htm

²³ A new sustainable wildlife use initiative - http://www.facenatura2000.net/shai_en.htm

Green Infrastructure

Europe is the most fragmented continent of the globe²⁴. Whilst protected areas such as Natura 2000 sites²⁵ are an important backbone for conservation, the wider landscape is also crucially important for nature. Nature is in a constant state of flux and in the past has relied on spatial and temporal flexibility to manage periods of extreme weather instability, floods, drought etc. As development continues and the stock of nature is depleted, spatial flexibility is reduced; in addition continued high demand for resources reduces temporal flexibility. The conservation of the wider landscape is crucial for supporting ecosystems, providing connectivity, flexibility and resilience.

Across Europe it is estimated that hunters contribute to the management of over 65% of the EU's countryside²⁶. The vast majority of this is managed in collaboration with landowners, farmers, foresters, local communities and other stakeholders. All of it is managed primarily for huntable species, yet this has positive effects for a wide range of other species and habitats. Whilst specific measures such as green bridges are important, it is the management of the wider countryside that is required for successful conservation. This is where hunters have a vital role to play.

More should therefore be done to identify and promote the role of hunters in the cooperative management of green infrastructure²⁷. This should be supported by incentive measures for hunters and their local organisations to ensure that these areas are managed as part of wider landscape management objectives. Positive incentives for hunters who manage wildlife areas will serve to increase flexibility in response to a changing environment.

- *FACE and its Members will continue to promote the sustainable management of hunting areas, whenever possible within voluntary cooperation and coordination schemes (such as Game Management Units, Conseils cynégétiques or Hegegemeinschaften) which maintain a fundamental green infrastructure for the conservation of nature at a landscape level, thus securing ecosystems, increasing landscape connectivity and its capacity to respond to environmental change.*
- *FACE and its Members will actively demonstrate and explain 'tried-and-tested' management measures undertaken within hunting areas that underpin a green infrastructure.*
- *FACE and its Members will actively contribute to the policy development for a Green Infrastructure within the EU.*

²⁴ Millenium Ecosystem Assessment - www.maweb.org

²⁵ The Natura 2000 network - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

²⁶ Conference on Promoting NATURA 2000 & Sustainable Wildlife Use, European Commission - www.facenatura2000.net/conference_en.htm

²⁷ Green Infrastructure, European Commission - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm

Ecosystem services

Every day all of us use environmental resources both directly and indirectly, consumptively and non-consumptively. Our lives depend on nature, not just for the life-giving services it provides (such as water and air purification) but also for our wellbeing and recreation. Recent developments in environmental economics such as the Stern Review²⁸ and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study²⁹, have started to show the immense value of ecosystem services to society. At the base of these findings is the need for functioning ecosystems. In Europe most ecosystems have strong anthropogenic drivers and require active management, both to conserve and enhance their functioning. We recognise the important role of protected areas, especially the Natura 2000 network, in providing a backbone for ecosystems, but also draw attention to the wider European landscape. It is often hunters as both users of ecosystem services and in part managers of ecosystems that actively conserve this wider landscape, contributing to ecosystem resilience and restoration.

Ecosystems in the EU are currently undermined by incoherent policies that do not take into account the need for wider ecosystem management, let alone restoration. Along with other conservation organisations we call for a systematic realignment of political and economic policies to reflect the need to address the conservation of ecosystems. Specifically we ask that tools are developed to include ecosystem services and the value of nature in EU accounting. We ask that nature dependent policies such as those relating to Agriculture (Common Agricultural Policy, CAP³⁰), Forestry (broad array of Community policies³¹) and Fisheries (Common Fisheries Policies, CFP³²) are systematically revised to address conservation needs but also maintain the ability of people in those sectors to sustain their livelihoods as with any other sector of society.

- *FACE and its Members will endeavour to improve information on ecosystems and the services that these provide by continuing to be involved in collaborative research and monitoring that contributes to the placing of a true value on biodiversity assets.*
- *FACE and its Members will endeavour to improve understanding of the importance of healthy and resilient ecosystems and the services that such ecosystems provide, by collaborating in awareness raising programs as well as educational activities, both for hunters and the public.*
- *FACE will actively support and promote the work of the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)³³.*

²⁸ The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change - http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm

²⁹ The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity - www.teebweb.org

³⁰ The Common Agricultural Policy explained, European Commission - http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capexplained/index_en.htm

³¹ EU Forest policies, European Commission - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/fpolicies.htm>

³² Common Fisheries Policies, European Commission - http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp_en.htm

³³ The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - <http://ipbes.net>

- *FACE and its Members will advocate that the conservation work that local hunters carry out contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of functioning ecosystems.*

Investing in Nature

Society does not invest sufficiently in nature. However it is not simply a question of making funds available for nature, it is also about being able to deploy them to where they are most needed. More so, it is the recognition of the real value of nature that will drive investment. The EU and its Member States make available financial resources for the environment which are generally well used although limited.

Hunters have long paid their way both financially and in kind. It has been estimated that hunters in the EU alone spend annually some 16 billion €, a good portion of which goes back to nature³⁴. Hunters and other wildlife users ensure that wildlife has a value, not just in Europe but worldwide. These values often make the difference between ongoing conservation of wildlife and its destruction. Hunters and other wildlife users also invest considerable time and effort in carrying out conservation work all year round. This not only has positive impacts on the environment but also improves our knowledge of nature. In the course of carrying out wildlife management activities hunters in many countries offset costs that would otherwise have to be covered by tax payers, by compensating for damages and managing wild populations.

FACE and its Members will continue to invest their resources in nature and maximise the benefits, through the following actions;

- *FACE and its Members will improve the understanding of how hunters spend their resources within the context of ecosystems, so that investments in nature can be better targeted and valued.*
- *FACE and its Members will examine and promote economic tools (e.g. biodiversity banking, fiscal incentives, subsidies, funding mechanisms) to support conservation measures associated with sustainable uses such as hunting, to provide sustainable solutions for biodiversity conservation.*
- *FACE and its Members will encourage actions associated with hunting through rural development programs creating jobs, businesses and other economic activity that sustains nature.*

³⁴ GEM-CON-BIO, FP6 Project, European Commission, www.gemconbio.eu/project_results.shtml

Hunters for Nature

Biodiversity is nature. Nature needs people who understand its complexity and are willing to work with it. Across Europe millions of hunters work for nature conservation, mainly by undertaking actions at local and regional levels. This collective effort ensures that we can continue to hunt and more importantly because we care. Hunters contribute to biodiversity in a wide variety of ways. In an increasingly urbanised world they retain a link to nature regardless of where they live. Hunters carry with them traditional knowledge and practices that are still relevant today in the conservation of nature. "Reading" the environment is a rare skill these days and one that is increasingly confined to hunters, other field naturalists and land managers. At the same time hunters have adapted and contribute to our contemporary knowledge of nature and biodiversity through monitoring and research. Hunters give time and money for conservation activities throughout the year and often this takes place in common areas that would otherwise be overlooked and where most conservation is actually needed.

This Manifesto is our commitment to making sure that hunting is sustainable and in doing so, contributing positively to biodiversity conservation and our shared heritage - Nature!

We will review and where necessary revise our Manifesto after the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)³⁵ to ensure that we are in line with decisions taken by the European and Global Community. In the process of the first revision we will set in place a regular reporting and review structure to ensure that the hunters' contribution to the conservation of biodiversity remains focused on agreed priorities and public needs.

³⁵ The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity - www.cbd.int/cop10