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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Report on the meeting of EU Directors of Wildlife Management and
Hunting (Bonn, 20 – 22 June 2016)
– *Information from the German delegation*

Delegations will find in Annex an information report received from the German delegation on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 14-15 November 2016.

**Report on the Meeting of EU Directors of Wildlife Management
and Hunting in Bonn, 20 – 22 June 2016**

The 2016 Meeting of EU Directors of Wildlife Management and Hunting took place in Germany (Petersberg near Bonn) from 20th to 22nd of June 2016. Sixteen Member States and the EU Commission (DG ENVI) participated in that three days conference to exchange information and experiences on best-practice approaches to wildlife conservation and hunting governance.

These *informal* conferences of the EU-Hunting Directors take place since seven years, one meeting a year. They do not follow the cycle of EU-Presidencies. The next meeting will be organized by *Estonia*.

As results of this year's conference the *informal conclusions attached* to this note will be submitted hereby for the Agricultural Councils attention.

**Meeting of EU Directors of Wildlife Management and Hunting
in Bonn (Petersberg) 20 – 22 June 2016
Conclusions**

The 2016 Meeting of EU Hunting Directors:

RECOGNISES that the annual meeting of EU Directors of Wildlife Management and Hunting provides a valuable forum to exchange information and experiences on best-practice approaches to wildlife conservation and hunting governance across the EU;

STRESSES that future meetings should follow, as close as possible, the approach taken by related EU Directors' meetings (such as the EU Nature Directors or the EU Forest Directors) with regard to structure, status and policy-relevance;

EMPHASISES that future meetings should focus on relevant policy issues and challenges such as the impacts of game management on biodiversity, conservation through sustainable use, implementation of the EU Nature Directives, climate change impacts on wildlife and hunting, contributing to the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and so on;

RECOGNISES that communication amongst stakeholders involved in the hunting sector and, in particular, engagement with the general public and citizens is insufficient and needs to be further improved, and that governments should play a more active role in facilitating and improving communication and stakeholder dialogue;

ACKNOWLEDGES that hunters and their associations must continue to build upon and emphasize their role as guardians of nature and the rural landscape;

- Regarding cooperation between Member States and EU

INVITES the European Commission and the Member States to continue their work in fostering sustainable wildlife management and hunting, taking strongly into account socio-economic needs, cultural requirements as well as regional uniqueness in matters related to hunting and wildlife management;

UNDERLINES the need for better guidance that takes into account subsidiarity, regional specifics and the need to apply flexibility;

ENCOURAGES the European Commission and the Member States to better utilise CAP measures that relate to hunting and wildlife management such as greening and agri-environmental measures, which have the potential to further mobilise the conservation efforts of hunters to generate win-win situations between improved biodiversity and habitat/wildlife management on the one hand and sustainable agriculture on the other hand;

- Regarding large carnivores

PROMOTES the conservation and sustainable management of large carnivores to improve coexistence with humans and to reduce illegal killing; **UNDERLINING** that this must include inclusive stakeholder engagement during the development and implementation of management plans; **EMPHASIZING** that key objectives in management plans should be to inform the public and to reduce the conflict between livestock-owners/hunters and other stakeholders;

- Regarding wild ungulates

ARGUES for an evaluation of the impacts of supplementary feeding in relation to disease and agricultural damages; **REGARDS** that in some regions high level damages caused by wild ungulates is still a problem of concern, although hunting bags increase; **EMPHASIZES** therefore the relevance of holistic approaches in wild ungulate management plans focusing on the needs of the regional wildlife population.

URGES responsible authorities to ban or restrict supplementary feeding of wild boar, given the scientifically proven contribution that supplementary feeding increases the population sizes of wild boar and the damage of agricultural crops and grasslands that may follow; **UNDERLINES** the importance of evaluating the use of baiting as a tool in the reduction in the size of wild boar populations; **STRESSES** that the practice of baiting, if used, needs to be limited in time and in terms of quantity of bait.

- Regarding migratory birds

UNDERLINES that conservation and management issues cannot be solved by individual countries but that there is a need to promote a “flyway-/cross border-approach” in sustainable hunting and conservation of migratory birds; **WELCOMES** new initiatives of Adaptive Harvest Management, such as Taiga Bean Goose, as a concrete step towards flyway-level conservation and management of waterbirds and **STRESSES** the importance of successful implementation of existing initiatives and their further development to cover more species under coordinated flyway-level conservation and management.

- Regarding African swine fever (ASF)

ASSERTS that ASF remains a potential threat to domestic pigs and wild boar populations; **APPEALS** to all hunters in the relevant Member States and regions to continuously participate in monitoring schemes including taking samples of relevant wild boar; **URGES** Member States respectively hunters to keep wild boar numbers at levels that are low enough to hinder the spread of ASF;

- Regarding poaching and illegal trade

WELCOMES the *UNEP resolution 2/14 on Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products* and the *EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking* of 2016, and **STRESSES** the value of sustainable hunting as an appropriate tool for the sustainable development of wildlife populations and natural habitats, income security, protection of species and thus to conserve biological diversity; **SUPPORTS** such an approach of *conservation through sustainable hunting* with regard to the CITES-COP 17 at Johannesburg 2016.
