

European Commission DG ENV
Mr Günter Raad
Head of Unit D 3
B - 1049 Brussels

Zurich, 6 December 2013

Political situation on Cyprus concerning illegal bird killing – CHAP(2013)01076

Dear Mr Raad

The political situation on Cyprus has been fundamentally altered by the arrival of a new government early in 2013.

Following the Larnaca Declaration of the Berne Convention in July 2011, the previous Justice Minister, Loucas Louca, had taken a distinctly positive approach to bird protection. He took personal responsibility for enforcement of the law and protection of wild birds on Cyprus. One practical result was that the Justice Minister put a specialised police unit, the APU, into the field.

This small-scale police unit could have been a thoroughly effective tool in the fight against illegal bird catching. As was described in detail in our letter of complaint of 25 March 2013, its failings were due principally to the inadequate training of the staff involved on the ground, as also to lack of support from the judiciary. At all events, from April 2013 this potentially highly effective unit was withdrawn by the new government.

In autumn 2013 MBCC was as usual active in the field and able to observe the current scale of illegal bird killing: dozens of episodes of wildlife crime were witnessed, all of which went unpunished. We received no assistance from the authorities. The situation has worsened distinctly as compared to 2012.

Several media sources made it public knowledge from the outset that the new government was hostile to the Community/Cypriot wildlife legislation currently in force, because it forbids the use of non-selective means in hunting and trapping. Because of this attitude on the part of the government, all barriers to wildlife crime on Cyprus have effectively been removed. Following the change of regime, hundreds of thousands of wild birds are again being indiscriminately slaughtered. The problem of enforcement of the law in Cyprus has been put on an entirely new level of

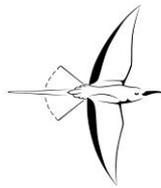
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urgency, while bird protection as provided for under Community law is even further from becoming a reality.

MBCC's Cyprus Report 2013, attached together with two recent reports from the Cyprus Mail, will convey the current level of bird trapping in Cyprus and the appalling state of law enforcement in this regard, confirming that the situation has deteriorated still further since our earlier letter of complaint.

We urge you to take every action in your power on behalf of the protection of wildlife and biodiversity in the EU and thank you in advance for your efforts,

Yours sincerely,

Foundation for the Animal in the Law /
Stiftung für das Tier im Recht (TIR)


MLaw/lic. iur. Vanessa Gerritsen
Deputy executive officer

Migratory Birds Conservation in Cyprus
MBCC


Edith Loosli
President

Enclosed:

- Annual Cyprus report 2013 by MBCC Migratory Birds Conservation in Cyprus
- Press report on political situation: *Our View: State's 'middle way' on bird trapping sends wrong signal* (CYPRUS MAIL, 2.8.2013)
- Press report on new government policy: *Cyprus losing millions in tourism revenue over bird trapping* (CYPRUS MAIL, 7.11.2013)

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