

E-0441/06EN

Answer given by Mr Dimas
on behalf of the Commission
(6.3.2006)

The Commission monitors closely the implementation of the Birds Directive¹ in Cyprus and has provided information about the situation with regard to illegal bird trapping activities in Cyprus through the replies to written questions E-2171/04 by Mr Davies² and E-0721/05 by Mr Davies³. The efforts by all involved stakeholders (the Cypriot Game Fund, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, as well as the authorities of the British Sovereign Bases) to implement anti-poaching measures and to stop illegal trapping, hunting and poaching practices, are continuing.

The Commission has provided detailed information on the implementation of the Birds Directive and more specifically about the progress with the classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in its reply to written question E-4442/05 by Mr Davies⁴. Cyprus has also communicated the list of Sites of Community Interest (pSCIs) designated under the provisions of the Habitats Directive⁵. Following their official notification and the related technical information and maps, the Commission will assess whether the classified SPAs and the designated pSCI sites account sufficiently for meeting the objectives of the Birds and the Habitats Directive in the part of the island that the Directives are applicable. The Commission will also address the issue of protection and management of these sites following their classification/designation. Currently, the Commission examines the correctness and completeness of the transposition of the provisions of the Birds and Habitats Directives in the national legislation of all the new Member States.

With regard to the situation on illegal bird trapping methods in Greece, the Commission is not aware of the existence of such practices, nor had ever received complaints concerning this Member State. In the case of France, there is one complaint against it, which concerns the use of "tendelles", which are trapping systems with stones and wooden sticks. The particular practice is followed only in one department in the South-West of France and it is estimated that it concerns around 200 hunters. Currently, the Commission is assessing the information received to determine whether this method is selective enough or not. The results of this assessment will determine the Commission's position vis-à-vis this case.

For Italy, at present, there is one infringement procedure open against the Member State for insufficient designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive and two infringement procedures concerning the Italian hunting legislation. Since these procedures are open, it is evident that the Commission considers that Italy does not completely comply with the provisions of the Birds Directive. The decisions in the framework of the above-mentioned infringement procedures will be taken on the basis of the available legal and factual circumstances and in the light of the applicable EC environmental law.

It should be stressed that the web site of the Secretariat General of the Commission contains updated

¹ Directive 79/409/EC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds; as amended by Commission Directive 91/244/EEC of 6 March 1991, OJ L 115, 8.5.1991

² OJ C...

³ OJ C...

⁴ OJ C...

⁵ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

information on the evolution of infringement procedures, which can be accessed at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/droit_com/index_en.htm.