



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

ENVIRONMENT

Directorate B - Protecting the Natural Environment

ENV.B.2 - Nature and Bio-diversity

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Roberto Tinarelli
Associazione Ornitologi
dell'Emilia-Romagna
Via Massa Rapi, 3
I-40064 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)

Dear Mr. Tinarelli,

Thank you for your letter addressed to Commissioner Margot Wallström and myself, which we received on 15 September 2004 and with which you expressed your concerns over the attempts to establish a longer hunting season for birds in Italy.

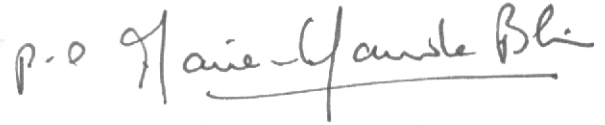
The European Commission appreciates the effort put by a number of Italian ornithological societies in collecting the data that led to the dates for breeding and pre-nuptial migration seasons that are included in the document "Key Concepts of Article 7(4) of Directive 79/409/EEC", which was endorsed by the Ornis Committee in 2001.

The Commission has repeatedly stated, in the Ornis Committee itself and in replies to letters from different organisations, that it considers the dates listed in the "Key Concepts" document as being the best available scientific information for the definition of hunting seasons in the EU Member States. The Commission has also repeatedly stated that the dates in the "Key Concepts" document will be revised if and when new verifiable and robust scientific data shows a need for such a revision.

These principles have been clearly laid out also to the Italian Ministry of Agricultural and Forest Policy each time it requested a meeting to review possible modifications of the dates in the "Key Concepts" document. To make an assessment of whether the information provided by the Ministry meets the requirements in terms of scientific value the Commission has accepted to organise meetings involving experts from the Agriculture and Environment Ministries as well as from INFS, as the national scientific authority on wild fauna, and from BirdLife International, the main EU-wide conservationist organisation specialised on birds, and FACE, the EU hunters association.

I can therefore reassure you that no changes will be made to the "Key Concepts" document which are not based on verifiable and robust scientific data

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "p.o. of Marie-Claude Bli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Nicholas Hanley
Head of Unit