

New initiative in the Fight Against Illegal Killing and Catching EU Birds from IMPEL

Introduction to IMPEL

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) is an international non-profit association of 47 environmental authorities of the EU Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the European Union and Iceland, Switzerland and Norway.

IMPEL was set up in 1992 as an informal Network of European regulators and authorities concerned with the implementation and enforcement of environmental law. The core of IMPEL's activities concern awareness raising, capacity building and the exchange of information and experiences on implementation, enforcement and international enforcement collaboration, as well as promoting and supporting the practicability and enforceability of European environmental legislation.

Since 1992 IMPEL has developed into a sizable and widely known organisation. IMPEL has been mentioned in a number of EU legislative and policy documents, such as the 7th Environment Action Programme and the Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections.

The expertise and experience of the participants within IMPEL make the network uniquely qualified to work on both technical and regulatory aspects of EU environmental legislation.

Projects of IMPEL mainly focus on environmental pollution, (land, water, air) and related problems such as Noise pollution levels. On special request of the European Commission IMPEL started a project on the Illegal Killing and Catching of Birds that appear within the EU



Catching birds with glue still happens within the EU



Trapping birds for consumption

Project on the Illegal Killing and Catching of Birds

The overall objective of the project is to bring about improvements in compliance with EU legislation and to work towards the elimination illegal killing, Trapping and Trade of birds protected by the EU Birds Directive. Awareness raising, exchange of practices and improvement of co-operation between enforcement experts are important tools in this project

Based on preliminary surveys four focus areas have been identified:

- 1) illegal poisoning of birds, in particular raptors
- 2) illegal Trapping/Catching of passerines
- 3) Illegal killing of game and non-game species
- 4) Illegal trade of dead birds for human consumption

The first project meeting took place in May 2013 In Brussels. The second meeting, in the form of a workshop, was organized at Malta in October 2013. Enforcement official from

Cyprus, Malta, Italy, Czech Republic, delegates from the European Commission (EC) and NGO's like Birdlife, EU-TWIX and FACE participated in these meetings. The EC roadmap towards eliminating Illegal Killing of Birds was an important Guideline for these meetings..

At the first meeting appointments were made about the steps necessary for the project to become successful. These included; an extension of the network, more awareness raising and the exchange of 'bad' practises in the field of illegal killing of birds.

The main goals for the meeting in the form of a workshop were: extending the enforcement network, exchange of information and good practices, and work on awareness raising within Member States. Other important goals of the workshop were to determine activities for 2014

During the workshop it was agreed upon that the success of the project depended largely on the following points:

Collaboration with the network of prosecutors and judges

For the project to become successful within IMPEL member states, cooperation between enforcement and the judiciary is necessary. Therefore, the illegal Killing and Catching of Birds (IKB) project leader contacted representatives from the EU network of prosecutors and judges to explore the idea of cooperation in the field. The response was positive and a meeting between members of the judiciary and the IMPEL-KIB project was scheduled for early 2014.

Expert meeting/sharing best practices/investigate techniques

The meeting aims to bring together participants from at least 20 EU member states and neighbouring countries and covers the subject of illegal killing of birds, illegal trapping of birds, illegal trade of birds and the poisoning of birds.



IMPEL Workshop Illegal Killing and Catching Birds, Malta 2013

Gathering and Sharing information (including Seizure data) about illegal activities between member states

The aim of the project is to share information on the illegal killing of birds, not specifically about crimes within individual Member States, but information about crimes between member states (illegal trading, illegal hunting tourism). The focus lies on international illegal non nominal trade information. This information will be reported to the IMPEL IKB project leader every 3 to 6 months and a summary of this information will be shared on EU Environmental networks such as EU TWIX,

A format to file seizure date will be prepared. The main aim is to develop a template that is suitable to make all kinds of analysis in the future. A concept format will be presented during the next IKB project meeting in 2014

Expert meeting/sharing best practices/investigate techniques

This planned meeting aims to bring together participants from at least 20 EU member states and covers the subject of illegal killing of birds, illegal trapping of birds, illegal trade of birds and the poisoning of birds. Prior to the meeting a questionnaire will be send to inventory existing knowledge and guidance with the participants.

Prepare recommendations about the marking of EU bird directive bird

Based on experience and existing reports on this issue the project team will write a recommendation about the use of seamless (closed) foot rings and other markings. The aim is to share information and offer the EU Member States and non EU member states that apply EU law in this field the best approach to marking and keeping track. Legislation on the individual marking of birds is a member state responsibility.

IMPEL REVIEW INITIATIVE – a peer review scheme

The IRI is voluntary schemes providing informal reviews of the environmental authorities of IMPEL member countries, by experts from other IMPEL member countries. The main benefit of the IRI is the provision of advice and recommendations to the host authority through a review of their structure, operation and/or performance, on what is working well and what, based on good and best practice taking place elsewhere in Europe, could be improved upon. Another major benefit is the exchange of experience and collaboration between these authorities on common issues and problems.

Based on the needs from the host country, a skilled inspection team will be formed. In close contact with contact persons in the selected country(s) an IRI will be prepared, (what topics, focus, prioritize). The host country can give direction to topics so they gain the most from the IRI. Representatives from Romania and Macedonia were positive about this idea, and might be the first volunteers countries for the IRI.

The illegal catching and killing of birds for aviaries, human consumption or taxidermy is common practice within EU member states. Therefore, IMPEL's project is a good initiative to help stop these criminal practices in- and outside the EU.

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