



ASSOCIAÇÃO PORTUGUESA DE FALCOARIA
MEMBRO DE: "THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION for FALCONRY and CONSERVATION OF BIRDS of PREY"
"UNION INTERNATIONALE pour la CONSERVATION de la NATURE"
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Members of the European Parliament,

Dear Ladies or Gentlemen

I send this letter on behalf of the Portuguese Association for Falconry (Associação Portuguesa de Falcoaria).

In the middle of this month a vote of great importance to our common future will take place in the Parliament. This vote on the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU is of extraordinary importance for biodiversity in all European countries.

In a recent study Bird Life, a leading conservation organization in Europe, shown that the number of farmland birds has decreased by 50% from 1980 to 2012 in 25 EU Member States. In Germany the data from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation reports a loss up to 90% for farmland birds like the tree sparrow, the sky lark, yellowhammers, corn bundings and lapwings. Has falconers we are used to share the countryside with this birds and we also have observed that their numbers are decreasing or are completely lacking in some habitats were they used to be common. Not taking action to ensure this problem is tackled and jeopardizing this birds (that are important biodiversity indicators) represents a crisis for biodiversity and a loss for Europe.

The reasons for the problem are complex but they are fundamentally related to intensive agricultural practices of larges tracks of land; large scale cultivation of less diverse crops; the intensive use of pesticides and the working width and speed of modern machinery used in modern farming.

Falconers in Europe are deeply concerned about wild birds of prey numbers in our countryside, by the loss of breeding grounds such has for harriers, the accumulation of chemicals used (birds of prey are the final link of the food chain) and the loss of prey species which are also affected by all our modern farming methods. Being hunters we are also directly affected by the reduction in our quarry species, especially the Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*) an iconic bird of Central Europe witch in many countries is no longer available to any hunters because of its conservation status.

We are aware that national and international obligations to protect natural resources and biodiversity exist. We are also aware that the European Union and another 163 countries are committed to the implementation of the global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The signatories agreed to declare the years 2011-2020 the UN Decade of Biodiversity with the aim of stopping this global loss by 2020.

To achieve this goal we strongly believe in the EU GREENING proposal that contemplate crop diversification, permanent grassland conservation, and ecological compensation areas. This signification is even greater since the next funding period in the EU is up to 2020. For the reasons listed above it's of fundamental importance that you support the Greening.

Our association kindly requests your active support for the proposal of greening in Europe and that you vote accordingly in the EU Parliament.

Sincerely yours.