



International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

NEWSLETTER *Brussels Event*

Website: www.iaf.org

The I.A.F. currently has 77 associations from 54 countries worldwide totalling 40 000 members.

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FALCONRY: 4000 YEARS OF A HUNTING ART

Falconers and fellow hunters from **18 countries** gathered with EU decision-makers at the European Parliament in Brussels to launch a unique exhibition: IAF and FACE (European Federation for Hunting and Conservation) joined with European Parliament's Sustainable Hunting Intergroup President, Véronique Mathieu and MEP Bogdan Marcinkiewicz who hosted an internationally themed visual display at the very heart of Europe.

The purpose behind the event was to show to Members of the European Parliament and officials the international and cultural aspects of falconry. It continued the celebrations around the UNESCO inscription and followed on from a lower key reception in Strasbourg in 2011 (the EU Parliament sits for six months in Strasbourg and six months in Brussels).

Every MEP, all 742, was invited to visit the four day exhibition and to the inaugural reception which included refreshments. VIPs from UNESCO, national embassies, NGOs and hunters' organizations also attended as well as delegates from IAF member organizations who received their invitations from Mme Mathieu.

Entry to the EU Parliament building is by invitation of an MEP and secure access badge, authorized well in advance, so there was no general 'off-the-street' access, but large number of visitors to the European Parliament deliberately made falconry part of their tour. 450 people were served drinks and fine game meat from Poland (provided by MEP Marcinkiewicz) at the opening and an average daily footfall of 200 people came through the exhibition.

This unique international exhibition from the 6th - 9th November, brought together displays of images, falconry equipment, tools, books and historical artifacts to convey the deep artistry at the heart of our global cultural heritage. There was a photo-opportunity for the MEPs and officials with falcons and hawks of the Club Marie de Bourgogne outside the main entrance of the European Parliament, Place du Luxembourg. This majestic sight was accompanied by opening fanfares of traditional jagdhorn blowers of the Czech Republic and the *Trompes du Duché de Limbourg* serenades the guests as they left

It was a chance for falconers, fellow hunters and other conservationists to meet with EU decision-makers and for the MEPs to meet falconers and to gain a greater understanding of falconry.

Jac van Gerven, curator of the Valkenwaard Museum, gave a demonstration of artisan hood-making and a short film *Falconry our Intangible Living Heritage* offered an outline of the UNESCO-recognized heritage to the assembled MEPs and guests.

French MEP Véronique Mathieu & Polish MEP Bogdan Marcinkiewicz gave the inaugural address and were joined by the Parliament's President of the Culture & Education Committee, Doris Pack. Avv. Giovanni Bana, Vice-president FACE, FACE Secretary-General Angus Middleton and IAF President Frank Bond also addressed the assembly.

Derogations

Special derogations were granted for the numbers attending the opening (usually exhibition openings are limited to 50 people) and for entry of fauna into the European Parliament Building. This is truly exceptional and the dispensation was granted directly by the President of the European Parliament; such is the high esteem carried by the UNESCO recognition of falconry as Intangible Heritage of Humanity.



Vice President Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania : Bohumil Straka (Czech Republic)

Vice President for the Americas: Ralph Rogers (USA)

Executive Secretary : Adrian Lombard (South Africa)

Treasurer: António Carapuco (Portugal)



In her opening speech Mme Mathieu stressed the importance of hunting and hawking at the present time. Angus Middleton, Secretary FACE thanked Frank Bond for his achievements over the past 6 years in the IAF and Frank, as the official representative of falconry, pointed out the benefits of falconers in the great birds of prey protection projects beings carried out e.g., the reintroduction of the peregrine. He lauded the tree-nesting project in Poland, conducted in cooperation with German falconers. He also praised the efforts of Austria and Hungary for their pending recognition of falconry as intangible heritage.



