

# Presence of the IAF at international conferences

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**The IAF has among its aims**, to represent falconry throughout the world, to develop, maintain and amend national and international laws, treaties and conventions to permit the pursuit and perpetuation of falconry.

To fulfil this mission, the IAF must, where possible, attend the international conferences dealing with conservation and sustainable use of birds of prey. It is IAF's policy of presence.

IAF must endeavour to retain its place amongst the most significant international NGO's in the field of sustainable use and conservation.

Within this framework, I attended several international conferences, and have summarized here the reports I made of those of the last two years.

The full text of my reports can be found on our website: [www.i-a-f.org](http://www.i-a-f.org)



From left: Baron Gilbert de Turckheim, president of FACE; Dr Yves Lecocq, secretary general of FACE; Christian de Coune.

## SECOND MEETING TO CONCLUDE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS OF PREY IN AFRICA AND EURASIA UNDER THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
20-22 October 2008

The MOU, contains an Action Plan as a part of it.

The text of the MOU and the attached Action Plan had been adopted at the first conference at Loch Lomond in September 2007, it was agreed that only minor changes would be made to it.

The Chairman of the Abu-Dhabi conference recalled it in his introductory speech : "only minor changes may be made to the MOU, discussions will not be re-opened on the text itself".

To my dismay, I stated that a substantial change had been made to the Loch Lomond text of the Action Plan.

The substantial change consisted in the addition of: **"only where there is no other satisfactory course of action."**

Loch Lomond had confirmed the possibility of sustainable taking of raptors from the wild,

As such the text proposed in Abu-Dhabi would have weakened drastically that possibility.

I alerted our colleagues, Nick Fox and Andrew Dixon of the change to the Loch Lomond text. I drew the attention of the Secretariat as well.

We approached several personalities explaining them that this restriction was

a negation of the principle of sustainable use of natural resources and was in contradiction to the centuries long tradition of falconry in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. Most persons we approached showed sympathy for our point of view. When the Action Plan came for approval, I took the floor at the session of the meeting in following terms :

"In the name of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, I "wish to draw the attention of the meeting to the following:

"Point 1.2 of the Action Plan has been discussed at length at Loch Lomond. A text had been adopted. It was said that the text could possibly undergo only purely formal minor changes without questioning the principles of the text.

Between Loch Lomond and now, the text of point 1.2 has undergone a substantial change.

A far reaching restriction has been added."

The Loch-Lomond text excluded the taking from the wild unless this can be shown to be sustainable.

"This is consistent with the spirit and the words of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which admits the sustainable use of natural resources. Sustainable use is a principle that is now widely approved.

"The text which is submitted to us today contains the following substantial restriction: where there is no other satisfactory course of action. This restriction has not been discussed at Loch-Lomond, it is a step back in the principle of sustainable use. I ask you to revert to the text adopted at Loch-Lomond and remove the added restriction."

The Chairman and the Secretariat proposed that the issue would be discussed in a small working group; nobody objected to this procedure.

A small group was formed with Lahcen El Kabiri (CMS Secretariat), Nick Fox, Andrew Dixon, Marianne Courouble, Jean Philippe Sibley (both from France, representing the EU of which France holds currently the presidency), David Stroud (UK), Saleem Javed (Abu-Dhabi), Brigadier Mukhtar Ahmed (Pakistan), Mohammad Sulayem (Saudi Arabia), Christian de Coune (IAF).

This small group worked in an atmosphere of perfect mutual understanding and in a very straightforward mood.

The Secretariat explained the procedure following which the said amendment had been made, but did not take a position on the substance of it.

We insisted on the principle of sustainable use of the Convention on Biological Diversity, that is sufficiently covered by

Loch-Lomond's word "sustainable". We said that the restriction "no other satisfactory solution" was purely European and that there was no reason to expand it to Middle East and farther. This restriction dates back to the EC Bird Directive, 1979, since then the concept of sustainable use has made its way and is now widely accepted. We said that the word "sustainable" was sufficiently restrictive and that there were no reasons for adding more restrictions to it. The proposal of removing "no other satisfactory course of action" was making its way. It was ultimately agreed to remove the following words: "only where there is no other satisfactory course of action". The modified text was submitted by France, as holding the presidency of the EU, to the other EU representatives. After apparently difficult discussions, they declared themselves ready to approve the new text provided we added the word "sustainable". Our little group agreed to this addition. The text reads now as follows :

*"...c) egg-collection and taking from the wild. Unless this is authorised by the competent body and only where the action is sustainable and not detrimental to the conservation status of the species concerned".*

The whole text of the Action Plan has been adopted unanimously by the Meeting.

#### **Personal comments**

The absence of the concept of "no other satisfactory solution" from the Action Plan of the Memory of Understanding for the Conservation of migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia is not simply "by default". It had been deliberately discarded in Loch Lomond and adopted at this meeting.

This decision strengthen the principle of sustainable use of wild birds of prey and weakens the restriction "no other satisfactory solution" contained in the EC Bird Directive and in the Bern Convention.

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## SPECIALIST MEETING ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE SAKER FALCON

**Abu-Dhabi, 5-7 April 2009**

#### **Background**

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species adopted in December 2008 in Rome, a resolution (9.20) on the Saker Falcon, which "urges Parties to assist in the delivery of a research programme, initially supported by Saudi-Arabia, designed to re-evaluate vigorously the conservation status of the species across its range".

If this is not being done by mid 2010, The Saker will be proposed for listing on Appendix I of the CMS with the support of the Scientific Council of the CMS. This means that derogations from extremely protective measures could be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Sustainable use of the Saker is at stake!

This resolution was the result of a compromise aiming at persuading the

proposing country to withdraw its proposal to list the Saker on Appendix I, filed at the CoP in Rome on 1-5 December 2008.

The decision of CMS to postpone the decision of uplisting is the result of its will to base decisions on facts and science rather than on emotionalism.

The said resolution was the back-ground of the Specialist Meeting on the Conservation of the Saker Falcon.

#### **The meeting**

The meeting has been convened by The Environment Agency of Abu-Dhabi, and I was invited as the representative of the IAF.

The meeting was attended by some 50 participants from 18 countries.

The meeting was expected to insist on the fact that the population of Sakers may