

KARMENU VELLA

Member of the European Commission

Brussels, **29 APR 2015**
Ref. Ares(2015)1714893

Mr Bart Staes, MEP
European Parliament
ASP 5F262
Wiertzstraat 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Mr Staes,

Thank you for your letter of 23 March 2015 concerning the illegal trapping of migratory birds in Cyprus.

The Commission is well aware of the issue and has been monitoring closely over the years the efforts deployed by Cypriot authorities to curb illegal trapping activities, including in the frame of an existing file (ref. EU Pilot 2970/12/ENVI). The Commission has also raised the matter with the competent British authorities as regards trapping activities within the Sovereign British Base areas.

On the basis of information received from Birdlife, including the report you mention, as well as from Cypriot authorities and other organisations, it appears that, despite improved enforcement action taken on the ground in 2014, trapping levels, especially with lime sticks, remain a problem and coordinated enforcement action needs therefore to be maintained and stepped up. In that regard the Commission considers the Strategic Action Plan being prepared in Cyprus in consultation between authorities and stakeholders of crucial importance to tackle the problem effectively and has recently stressed again with the Cypriot authorities the need to adopt it and implement it without any further delay.

The enforcement of EU legislation, including the provisions of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC, is primarily a responsibility of Member States. It lies therefore with the Cypriot authorities to implement relevant measures under the Strategic Action Plan. The Commission will take into account the Plan, once adopted, for updating the EU Roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, and can support its implementation according to its competence.

I would like to reassure you that the Commission will continue to monitor closely the efforts undertaken in Cyprus against illegal trapping and killing practices, and to assist the authorities, with a view to ensuring compliance with the applicable EU legislation on the protection of wild birds.

Yours sincerely,

