

Friday 22 March, 2019

Hon. Dr Joseph Muscat
Office of the Prime Minister
Auberge de Castille
Valletta VLT 1061



Dear Hon. Prime Minister

On behalf of BirdLife Malta I am writing to you only a day after the start of spring.

I would like to make it clear that BirdLife Malta objects categorically that the dates for the spring hunting season on the Common Quail should in any way be different from those of last year. Last year, against the advice of the Environment & Resources Authority and BirdLife Malta the dates chosen by the Government were 1st April to 21st April. The Government is aware that in this period a substantial number of incidents took place where protected and vulnerable birds were shot without any action or reaction as if nothing was happening.

Apart from this, a considerable amount of hunters did not hold back from targeting and killing Turtle Doves that were on their way to their breeding grounds. Irrespective of the knowledge that this is a vulnerable species.

To add insult to injury, there is now a proposal at the Ornis Committee to open a spring hunting season for the Turtle Dove. This goes against all principles and values and contrary to the direction taken by the European Union to improve this species' protection all year round.

BirdLife Malta has always tolerated the fact that the situation cannot change overnight. However we will remain adamant and consistent that hunting during the spring season is totally unacceptable.

It is a pity that while this country has accepted cultural changes more relevant and important than hunting, in this case the Government remains stuck and tied to the past because of the fear of losing votes.



We belong to BirdLife International,
the global Partnership of nature
conservation organisations.

At a time when we are considering Malta as a modern country that aims to develop in particular in sustainability, we cannot remain silent and accept regress in the natural environment.

This is a country where the absolute majority of the citizens demand a better natural environment, by action and not simply by words. This is why the Government cannot bow down to pressure by those who throw tantrums, as if the culture of the past should remain acceptable today.

We are ready to understand that things do not change suddenly, but we reiterate that apart from the fact that enforcement leaves much to be desired, we categorically oppose any changes in dates for a hunting season of Quail and we can NEVER accept a spring hunting season of any form or duration on the Turtle Dove.

Kind regards



Mark Sultana
Chief Executive

cc: Media

cc: Minister Josè Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary Clint Camilleri

cc: European Commissioner for the Environment Karmenu Vella

cc: BirdLife International CEO Patricia Zurita

cc: IUCN Director General Inger Andersen