

**Question for written answer E-015676/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Georgios Epiteios (NI)**

Subject: The need to legalise hunting of the Eurasian Blackcap

Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds prohibits the use of lime-twigs as a method for hunting birds.

The implementation of the Directive in Cyprus has made it illegal to hunt the Eurasian Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), a species of game bird which has been hunted since at least 1250.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has classified the Eurasian Blackcap in the 'Least Concern' category and notes that its population is increasing. It is worth noting that its average life expectancy is three years.

As a game bird, it provides an additional source of income mainly for farming families, but it also constitutes a traditional delicacy in Cypriot cuisine.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

How does it view this criminalisation of a traditional practice, bearing in mind that it poses no threat to biodiversity?

Does it have any other additional information on the population of the Eurasian Blackcap and the above assessment?

Since hunting poses no threat whatsoever to it as a species, what steps will the Commission take to put an end to the raids, the trespassing and persecution endured by Eurasian Blackcap hunters?