



THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN HUNTERS

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For the attention of: Defence, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention Committee of Parliament of Latvia;
Copy to the Ministry of Agriculture, Latvia.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union (FACE), which is following the ongoing legislative initiatives within the Latvian Republic.

FACE represents the national hunting associations from 36 countries in Europe and the collective interest of Europe's 7 million hunters. Since 1977, FACE has been a well-respected and credible interest group recognised by the European institutions in all matters related to hunting, wildlife management, animal welfare, firearms and the representation of hunters' legitimate interests. We are long-standing members of IUCN and are observers to all of the major nature conventions (CITES, CBD, CMS, AEWA, Ramsar and the Bern Convention).

Hunting is one of the oldest forms of consumptive use of renewable natural resources and provides significant social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits in multiple protected areas within Europe. Sustainable hunting also represents a strong incentive to support the maintenance of habitats and species. In this regard, hunters frequently contribute to the conservation of game and other species through, for example, habitat provision and positive habitat management and the control of mammalian predators.

FACE supports the position taken by the Latvian Republic, which would allow persons upon reaching the age of 16 to acquire a hunting license and to use a firearm. This is only with the permission of their parents and under the supervision of an experienced firearms owner/hunter. In this context, FACE supports society's evolution whereby young adults are given more responsibility, in particular, when such propositions are fully in line with the EU provisions, in this case, through the EU Firearms Directive. This allows young people to develop the required competences to hunt at early age, while being guided by an experienced adult.

We would like to point out that several countries have already adopted laws to provide for this, for example:

- Ireland allows young persons to hunt with a firearm after reaching the age of 14 with adult supervision; at the age of 16 and above, a hunting/firearms license is available.
- Germany allows anyone reaching the age of 15 to obtain a young hunters' licence. From the age of 16, the young hunter can take part in hunting and shooting, guided by an experienced hunter. The firearm cannot be owned by anyone younger than 18. This exemption does not apply to driven hunts.
- In the UK, one can shoot together with an experienced hunter from the age of 14.
- In Finland, there is no age limit to pass the hunting exam. You can go hunting under supervision up till the age of 15. Young adults are allowed to hunt alone since reaching the age of 16. Firearms ownership is only allowed by adults.
- Spain allows young adults to hunt under the supervision of an experienced hunter before reaching the age of 18. A difference is made between hunting with a shotgun and hunting with a rifle. The age to supervised hunting with a shotgun is 14 and 16 in the case of a rifle.
- In Denmark, the hunting exam can be passed since reaching the age of 16 and hunting is allowed under supervision with a hunter older than 18.



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- In Sweden, the hunting examination can be taken at any age; hunting under supervision is allowed from the age of 15. Hunting without supervision upon reaching the age of 18.
- France allows hunting at the age of 15 for a young adult under guidance (of an adult with at least a hunting permit for 5 years). Obtaining a hunting permit can from the age of 16.

In light of the aforementioned EU examples, FACE welcomes the initiative of the Republic of Latvia to follow these good examples. This will allow young adults to learn about the serious responsibilities associated with hunting and firearms use in a guided situation, which will prepare them for a successful and safe life as a hunter. This shows the trust and respect society has for young adults who are the future of any society.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Scallan
Secretary General (acting)
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