

Environment Committee
Riigikogu
Lossi plats 1a
15156 TALLINN

European Bowhunting Federation
Stockholm, Sweden 2012-12-05

Dear Mr Erki Nool!
Dear members of Environment Committee

For government officials of Estonia involved in environmental issues, land use and hunting regulation, let it be known that The Estonian Bowhunting Association “Mägilased” for Bowhunting and Ecological Hunting is a member in good standing of The European Bowhunting Federation (EBF).

The European Bowhunting Federation currently includes 25 European nations in its membership. EBF monitors the development of Bowhunting in Europe on several levels – technical, legislative as well as ethical. EBF has also been instrumental in supporting the Bulgarian and Alandic authorities in the development of a new hunting law accepting the use of bow and arrow as a means for harvesting game in a modern game-management system.

EBF shares an ongoing discussion and exchange of information with members of the Estonian Bowhunting Association “Mägilased”(EBAM). From our standpoint it is evident that the representatives of the Estonian Bowhunting Association are thoroughly knowledgeable in the field of hunting as well as knowledgeable in the practice of using bow and arrow as a hunting tool, and that they will work as positive role models for evolving constructive and sustainable hunting activities in Estonia. Officers of EBA participate on a regular basis in the general assembly of EBF, last held in Latvia, May 2012.

As of 2012, a number of EBAM members have qualified to become instructors for the International Bowhunting Education Program (IBEP). This program is practiced in more than 20 nations around the globe and is the world’s most widespread hunting education course.

The art of hunting with bow and arrow is steadily growing in Europe, and during the last ten years nations such as Greenland (2012), Slovakia (2011), Bulgaria (2008), Aland (2005), Finland (2001), Denmark (1999) and France (1995) have modernized their hunting legislation to allow hunting with today’s bows. This movement brings them into a circle of countries that already allow bow hunting, including Portugal, Spain and Italy, among others. Several of these countries introduced bowhunting as early as the 1980s. Today, Finland and France each have some 20,000 active bowhunter.

In the specific case of Denmark, a seven-year study was undertaken on roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*). During this time, participating hunters were required to submit the results of all shots taken. At the conclusion of the study, the Danish Authorities ascertained that of the more than 1000 deer at which arrows were released, less than 5% of these animals were considered to have been wounded. This statistic is comparable to or better than other means of harvesting roe deer in Denmark.

Today, the use of bow and arrow as a hunting tool has a legal status equal to that surrounding the use of rifles and shotguns.

It shall also be noted that the current EU legislation does not forbid hunting with bow and arrow in any directive, document or text, rather in the “Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity” it specifically mentions the use of bow and arrow as a means of harvesting game in modern game management systems.

CIC (the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) initiated a “Bowhunting working group” in 2001 that has drawn up a set of standards for modern bow hunting.

In the international perspective, nations such as Namibia, Ethiopia, Botswana, Ghana, Liberia and Tanzania have legalized bowhunting in the past ten years. Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand all have long-standing bowhunting traditions. In the US, for example, there are more than 3.3 million licensed bowhunters who harvest some 1,150,000 deer each year. The acceptance of bowhunting in these countries is based on the fact that modern bowhunting practices and equipment are fully capable of ethically harvesting game, and totally compatible with modern game-management principles.

Regards

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