



Open Letter (abridged version)

To: The Honourable Elly Schlein, National Secretary of the Democratic Party; The Honourable Giuseppe Conte, President of the Five Star Movement; The Honourable Nicola Fratoianni and The Honourable Angelo Bonelli, Co-spokespersons for the Green and Left Alliance

CC: Virginia Libero, National Secretary of the Young Democrats

Rome, 21 September 2026

Request: an urgent moratorium on hunting activities in the regions governed by the parties of the 'broad coalition' (Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Sardinia, Umbria, Apulia, Campania), in line with the positions expressed by those same parties in Parliament regarding the progress of the Hunting Bill (AC No. 2984, already approved by the Senate as AS No. 1552).

Jointly promoted by: Green Impact ETS | Randagio Group Activists – ODV | National Pro Natura Federation | LEAL – Anti-Vivisection League | CABS – Committee Against Bird Slaughter

Hunting: now the regions governed by the Campo Largo coalition must change course and immediately introduce a moratorium to align themselves with the battle in Parliament against the Hunting Bill

Wildlife is an inalienable asset of the State. The protection of wildlife and biodiversity is a duty both in Parliament and in the Regions

Dear Sir or Madam,

in our capacity as representatives of Green Impact ETS, Attivisti Gruppo Randagio – ODV, the National Pro Natura Federation, LEAL – Anti-Vivisection League and CABS – Committee Against Bird Slaughter, organisations active in the protection of wildlife, biodiversity and animals, we are writing to you regarding the dire situation facing wildlife – partly due to its management and inadequate hunting legislation – and, in particular, to draw your attention to a contradiction that we believe can no longer be postponed: whilst at national level opposition parties are rightly denouncing the dismantling of environmental protections currently underway, in numerous regions administered by those very same parties, decisions regarding hunting have been authorised in recent years that do not appear consistent with that very same cause. This inconsistency is no longer tolerable in the eyes of the associations which, year after year, undertake the arduous work of advocacy and legal protection, nor in the eyes of the citizens who devote their time, energy and resources to this cause, often on a voluntary basis. This is by no means a marginal endeavour: the

Italian third sector, of which our associations form part, currently generates an estimated economic value of over 100 billion euros (4.5–5 per cent of national GDP), with around 400,000 active organisations and one million employees (Aepi Confederation based on Istat data, 2025–2026) — a 42 per cent increase compared with the 70.4 billion recorded by Istat in 2015. This is a sector that produces real public value and deserves consistency, commitment and, above all, results from the political sphere for the common good.

1. The overall picture: hunting legislation spiralling out of control

Parliament is currently pushing ahead, through the so-called Hunting Bill (AS No. 1552, now AC No. 2984, lead sponsor Sen. Lucio Malan), the most extensive deregulation of hunting since 1992: an expansion of hunting areas and seasons, including state-owned and forested areas; the redefinition of the hunter as a ‘bioregulator’ of wildlife — a definition that is unscientific, devoid of biological meaning and lacks any basis in established ecological literature; an increase in the number of species that may be hunted; the downgrading of ISPRA’s opinion from binding to advisory; the recognition of foreign licences as equivalent; and the use of optical sights. The bill, approved by the Senate on 23 June 2026 (80 in favour, 56 against, 2 abstentions), is now under consideration by the Chamber of Deputies’ Agriculture Committee.

This drift is in direct conflict with the constitutional and European framework. Article 9, paragraph 3, of the Constitution requires the Republic to protect the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, including in the interests of future generations: a ‘mandate to protect’ which, as clarified by the Constitutional Court (judgement no. 105/2024), binds every level of government to its ‘effective defence’ and is viewed through the ‘prism of European and international obligations’ — from the 1979 Bern Convention, through the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), which form the basis of the Natura 2000 network, to the recent EU Regulation on nature restoration (Nature Restoration Law, EU Reg. 1991/2024). Wildlife, which constitutes the State’s inalienable heritage pursuant to Article 1 of Law 157/1992, cannot be managed as a matter of local political appropriation, nor can the freedom of the parliamentary mandate (Article 67 of the Constitution) be interpreted as a constraint in favour of sectoral interests.

The figures, moreover, paint a picture far removed from the narrative of a hunting ‘lobby’ that is decisive at the electoral level. According to a survey based on generalised public access to regional data on hunting licences (LAC, 2026), the number of active hunters in Italy during the 2025/2026 season stands at 429,484 — just 0.8 per cent of the resident population, down 2.7 per cent on the previous season. This group is 98 per cent male, concentrated in the 60–80 age bracket, with fewer than 3 per cent of licence holders under 30, and a projected electoral weight of 0.3–0.4 per cent by 2030.

In contrast to this extremely limited support base, Italian public opinion is clearly leaning in the opposite direction: according to surveys by Ipsos and the Piepoli Institute for the Capellino Foundation (October 2025), 94 per cent of Italians are calling for the abolition, severe restriction or, at the very least, the retention of current hunting legislation; 78 per cent consider it ethically

unacceptable; 85 per cent perceive it as a serious risk to public safety; 61 per cent say they are opposed to Bill 1552. The European Commission's 2026 Special Eurobarometer on Biodiversity also confirms this picture: 96 per cent of Europeans recognise the collective responsibility to care for nature, whilst 94 per cent consider biodiversity essential for long-term economic development.

The risk to public safety is not a matter of perception, but a documented fact: according to the National Observatory on Hunting Victims (AVC), the 2025/2026 season alone recorded 42 victims (11 fatalities, 31 injuries), of whom 13 were uninvolved in hunting activities — hikers, farmers and residents struck whilst going about their normal daily lives. Overall, in recent years, the Observatory has documented hundreds of injuries and over two hundred deaths linked to hunting; a picture confirmed, albeit using more restrictive methodologies, by surveys carried out by the University of Urbino. The risk, however, does not end with the close of the regular hunting season: on 14 March 2026, in Montegranaro (Fermo), a 43-year-old man with no connection to hunting was killed by a rifle shot fired accidentally during a hunting party, after he had approached to protest against the gunfire disturbing the horses at a nearby riding school.

From an economic perspective, too, weakening nature conservation means undermining a structural asset of the country, not freeing up resources. According to the Sixth Report on Natural Capital in Italy (MASE, 2024), the degradation of ecosystems already costs around 3 billion euros a year, with an estimated cumulative impact of 60 billion by 2050, compared with a total value of Italian ecosystem services estimated at between 24 and 58 billion euros annually; every euro invested in nature restoration can generate up to 38 euros of added value (European Commission, Impact Assessment on the Nature Restoration Law). The European Central Bank notes that 72 per cent of non-financial firms in the eurozone depend on at least one ecosystem service, and that 75 per cent of bank loans in the eurozone are linked to activities that are themselves dependent on natural ecosystems. Italian tourism — with total expenditure of €122.6 billion in 2024 (ENIT) and the second-highest number of international visitors in Europe — relies largely on its natural and landscape heritage, with sustainable tourism growing steadily and 64 per cent of tourists stating that they are influenced by environmental considerations in their travel choices (71 per cent among the under-35s).

2. Regional contradictions: where the national government rules, hunting advances

Regional decisions on hunting do not reflect the position expressed by the same parties in national parliaments. In many cases, these decisions have been taken in deviation from the technical and scientific opinion of ISPRA — the Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, the State's leading technical body on wildlife matters. ISPRA's opinion is to be regarded as binding until such time as a substantiated justification is provided to account for any deviation from it, based on evidence of equal scientific standing: administrative case law has in fact clarified that a hunting calendar cannot deviate from it without such a justification, which must account for the scientific basis of the deviation itself. It is not sufficient merely to disregard the technical guidance: it must be justified. It is precisely this obligation that the Regions examined here, in the majority of cases, fail to fulfil, proceeding to authorise hunting without any supporting technical or scientific

basis: a lack of justification which, over the years, has allowed the killing of tens of thousands of animals, and which has, at the same time, constituted the legal loophole through which administrative courts have repeatedly suspended regional hunting calendars.

The regions governed by parties in the ‘broad coalition’ present a common picture: the authorisation of hunting of species in a critical conservation status or at risk, often through early hunting seasons, and wildlife management plans based almost exclusively on direct culling, rather than on precautionary, ecosystem-based and non-lethal approaches. In this way, year after year, public resources continue to be channelled into the hunting sector, whilst at the same time causing environmental damage at the expense of the common good that wildlife represents: the very ungulates that a functioning ecosystem would entrust to the control of natural predators — first and foremost the wolf — are instead culled at public expense, whilst the wolf performs that same regulatory function free of charge. The case of Tuscany is emblematic: on 16 September 2026, President Eugenio Giani (PD) spoke in person at a meeting with over 1,000 hunters organised by Federcaccia Toscana-UCT in Donoratico, emphasising the importance of a sector that represents less than 1 per cent of those eligible to vote — a group consisting almost exclusively of men and overwhelmingly concentrated in the 60–80 age bracket — and whose activities essentially amount to the killing of living beings that constitute our collective heritage.

The picture that emerges from these cases is not one of wildlife management in the strict sense, but of an administrative practice that has proved to be essentially a failure, resulting in environmental damage documented by the very technical reports — notably those of ISPRA — which have been systematically disregarded. Year after year, as each hunting season draws to a close, the same culling plans are repeated, without any real investment in ecological and non-lethal wildlife management solutions. Wildlife management must be geared towards safeguarding animal welfare and coexistence in human-impacted environments. This approach revives and updates the original spirit of Law 157/92 concerning the rescue of wildlife in distress.

Concluding requests

Six regions, different governing majorities, yet one constant: national political affiliation does not translate, in regional administrative practice, into a coherent policy for the protection of wildlife. It is this gap between words and deeds that we ask you to remedy. We therefore expect a clear and urgent change of course, which must be reflected in three concrete and immediately enforceable measures:

1. an urgent moratorium on regional hunting calendars, which will finally allow legislation and science to be brought back into alignment;
2. the adoption, by the start of the next season, of wildlife management plans based not on culling, but on ecological principles and on preventive, non-lethal measures;
3. the introduction of regional laws permanently enshrining an absolute ban on hunting in protected areas, nature reserves and Natura 2000 sites — a ban that is currently systematically flouted — and the precautionary suspension of hunting in areas affected by

wildfires or heatwaves, to protect wildlife already weakened by habitat loss and climate-related stress.

The undersigned associations are, moreover, already involved in three separate legal challenges against the hunting calendars of Sicily, Tuscany and Lazio, confirming their determination to continue this battle at every institutional level.

We remain at your disposal to provide, where appropriate, further technical, scientific and regulatory documentation in support of the above, and we trust in your prompt and concrete intervention.

Yours faithfully,

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Table of regions governed by the Campo Largo coalition that have authorised hunting and selective hunting, with some also permitting early opening dates

Region	President	Party	Coalition Parties
Tuscany	Eugenio Giani	PD	PD, Alliance of Greens and the Left, Five Star Movement, Reformist Alliance (Italia Viva, +Europa, PSI)
Emilia-Romagna	Michele de Pascale	PD	PD, Five Star Movement, Alliance of Greens and the Left, civic lists (Civici con De Pascale, Emilia-Romagna Futura – Riformisti)
Sardinia	Alessandra Todde	M5S	M5S, PD, Alliance of Greens and the Left, Progressives, Sinistra Futura, Orizzonte Comune, civic lists
Umbria	Stefania Proietti	PD	PD, Five Star Movement, Alliance of Greens and the Left
Puglia	Antonio Decaro	PD	PD, Five Star Movement, civic lists (Decaro Presidente, Per la Puglia), Alliance of Greens and the Left
Campania	Roberto Fico	M5S	PD, Five Star Movement, Alliance of Greens and the Left, PSI, civic lists