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PRESS RELEASE

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Hunting in Sicily: the Palermo Regional Administrative Court rejects the Region's appeal for revocation and confirms the immediate suspension of the new hunting calendar

Palermo, 16 November 2026 – A new and decisive legal victory for the protection of wildlife and environmental law in Sicily. By a decree issued today (**No. 735/2026**), the **Acting President of the Regional Administrative Court for Sicily – Palermo branch**, fully upholding the defence arguments set out in the statement of defence and reply filed on behalf of the National Pro Natura Federation APS and LEAL – Anti-Vivisection League ETS – **has rejected in its entirety the appeal for revocation** proposed by the Regional Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Mediterranean Fisheries, **confirming the immediate suspension of the new 2026/2027 Hunting Calendar** (Administrative Decree No. 282/Gab of 10 November 2026).

The case stems from the Sicilian Region's attempt to urgently reopen the hunting season on 10 November, just twenty-four hours after the Administrative Justice Council for the Sicilian Region (CGARS) had rejected the request to suspend Regional Administrative Court (TAR) judgement No. 2953/2026, which had already annulled the previous calendar. In response to this move, the environmental organisations had secured **Presidential Decree No. 730/2026 of 11 November** from the Regional Administrative Court of Palermo, once again halting hunting activities. The State Legal Service had lodged an appeal for the revocation of this interim measure.

In the written submission filed with the court, the defence team comprising lawyers **Aurora Rosaria Loprete**, **Mariachiara Giovinazzo** and **Luca D'Agostino** dismantled the regional administration's arguments point by point, highlighting:

- the purely **evasive and reactive** nature of the new council decree in response to the rulings of the Regional Administrative Court (TAR) and the Regional Administrative Court of Appeal (CGARS);
- the persistent **absence of an updated Regional Wildlife and Hunting Plan** (the Sicilian plan having expired in 2018 and never having been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for its necessary renewal);
- the same technical shortcomings and reservations identified in **the ISPRA opinion of 9 November 2026**, in addition to the breach of statutory deadlines and the absence of the mandatory opinions on the final text;
- **the irreversibility of the biological and ecological damage** resulting from the culling of wildlife pending the CGARS's closed-door hearing, already scheduled for 25 November 2026.

Endorsing the arguments of the applicant associations, the Acting President of the Regional Administrative Court of Palermo firmly reaffirmed the application of **the precautionary principle**, stating that it **"can only lead to a ban on the killing of even a single animal"** pending the imminent collegial decision of the appeal court. In today's ruling, the Court also emphasised that the protection of nature and wildlife represents an **overriding public interest**, which clearly takes precedence over the "entirely secondary interest of a few in

being able to practise the sporting activity of hunting", reiterating that no "shortcuts of any kind" are permitted with regard to the obligation to update the wildlife management plan, which has been outdated for years and rendered obsolete by serious environmental events such as fires and cyclones.

Statement by the lawyers

> *"We express our great satisfaction with this new and fundamental ruling by the Palermo Regional Administrative Court, which not only rejects in its entirety the Region's attempt to circumvent previous judicial decisions, but also reaffirms with extraordinary clarity the key principles of environmental and European law*," stated lawyers Aurora Rosaria Loprete, Mariachiara Giovinazzo and Luca D'Agostino. *"The Court has recognised the validity of our objections and has drawn a firm line against any administrative shortcuts: without a Wildlife and Hunting Plan that has been updated and validated in accordance with legal procedures, there can be no scope for the resumption of hunting in Sicily. The constitutional interest in the protection of biodiversity and wildlife takes precedence over any logic of emergency or delay. We will continue to monitor the situation in all forums, starting with the panel hearing on 25 November before the CGARS, to ensure that full and effective protection of Sicily's natural heritage is guaranteed."*

Today's decree has also been sent directly to **the President of the Sicilian Region**, the **Secretary-General of the Presidency** and the **Italian Hunting Federation**, so that they may ensure strict compliance with the ban on hunting throughout the region.

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