

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1975-1976

9 January 1976

ORAL QUESTION (0-58/75)^{*}

DOCUMENT 473/75

with debate pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr Jahn on behalf of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: / Binding Community regulations on bird protection /

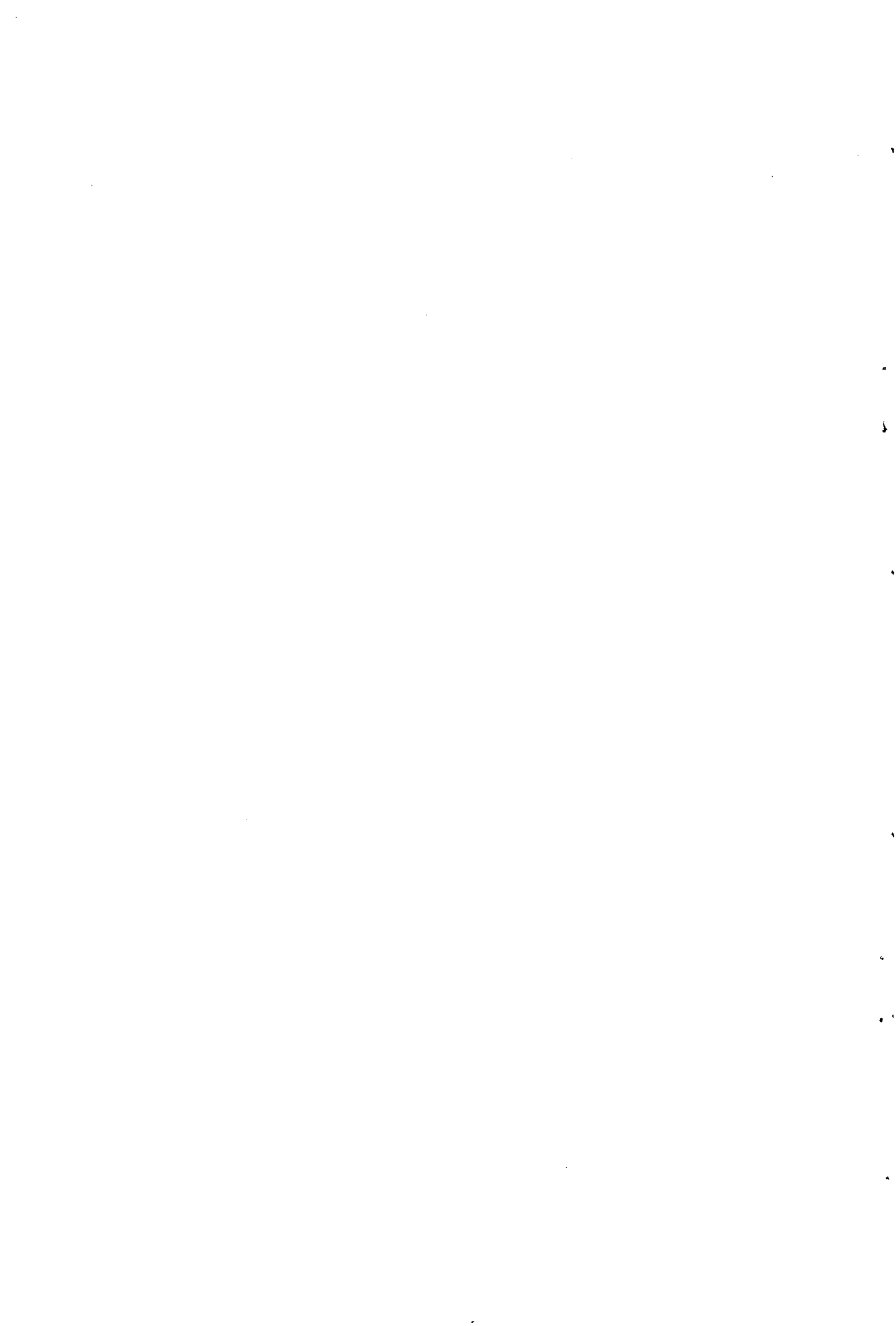
At the plenary debate on the report on Petition No. 8/74 'Save the migratory birds' (Doc. 449/74) Commissioner Brunner stated on 21 February 1975 that the Commission would put forward a directive if its recommendation of 20 December 1974 concerning the protection of birds and their habitats¹ did not produce satisfactory results. Mr Brunner went on to say that what would then be required would be harmonization of laws on the protection of birds.

^{*} Unanimously adopted at the meeting of 16 December 1975.

Present: Mr Della Briotta, chairman; Mr Jahn, vice-chairman and rapporteur; Mr Spicer, vice-chairman; Mr Concas (deputizing for Mr Brégégère) Mr Liogier, Mr Meintz, Mr W. Müller, Mr E. Muller, Mr Noè, Mr Premoli and Mr Rosati

¹ OJ No. L 21, 28 January 1975, p.24

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Answering oral question No. 0-25/75 on the inadequacy of Community measures to protect birds², Vice-President Scarascia Mugnozza stated on 11 July 1975, in confirmation of Mr Brunner's promise, that the Commission continued to advocate a recommendation on the protection of birds, with the undertaking to replace it by a more binding legal instrument if it did not bring the desired practical results.

- However, prominent international bird protection organizations have recently complained, and rightly so, that in Italy in particular the massacre of migratory birds has continued on an even larger scale since the Italian Government has not only failed to comply with the Commission's recommendation, but even contemplated further liberalization of the relevant legislation by extending the hunting season. The numerous public protest meetings, appeals from bird protection associations, calls for the immediate cessation of the mass annihilation, signed by 3.5 million people, and protests from many governments against the trapping and hunting of birds in Italy, were ignored.

On the other hand it is realized that after studying the matter for some 15 months the agricultural committee of the Italian Senate approved on 10 December 1975 a new Bill by the Italian Government affirming the principle of controls and limited periods for bird hunting. In various regions of Italy regulations have also been enacted or are in preparation for the purpose of restricting the hunting of song birds and migratory birds.

Written Question No. 599/75 by Mr CALEWAERT on the protection of Belgian birdlife³ indicates that Belgium has recently relaxed provisions on bird protection. The catching of 80,000 birds, including typical migratory and nesting birds, was permitted during the period 16 October to 16 November 1975. Moreover 602,700 birds that are part of the European bird heritage are kept in captivity in Belgium. Control measures also left much to be desired.

Finally, it is known that the problem of effective bird protection has not yet been solved in the South of France and the introduction of French bird protection provisions is meeting with strong resistance in certain circles.

In these circumstances, the Commission is asked to answer the following questions:

² Doc. 153/75; Debates of the European Parliament, p. 286 (193/75)

³ EP Bulletin No. 41/75, p.26



1. Does the Commission now consider that the time has come to follow up its repeated assurances to the European Parliament and implement the Action Programme of the European Communities on the Environment of 22 November 1973⁴ by submitting forthwith specific proposals for directives or regulations to provide effective protection of our bird life, particularly migratory birds?
2. Is the Commission prepared to take account in its proposals of the European Parliament's resolution of 21 February 1975 on petition No. 8/74 'Save the migratory birds'⁵, which advocates the following provisions:
 - (a) a general prohibition on the trapping of birds with nets;
 - (b) a shorter season for hunting migratory birds by other means;
 - (c) a general prohibition on cruelty to captured birds;
 - (d) a strict prohibition on the importation into the Community of dead *song birds and migratory birds*, and import controls in the case of live birds?
3. Is the Commission further prepared to propose the positive measures suggested in that resolution to protect bird life, particularly
 - the creation of bird reserves in which hunting is generally banned,
 - the preservation of certain species of birds and the creation of suitable breeding grounds,
 - the safeguarding of a healthy environment?
4. When does the Commission intend to publish the conclusions of the study carried out for it by the 'Zoologische Gesellschaft von 1858' on the situation of bird protection in the EEC Member States, which is in the European Parliament's opinion a solid basis for immediate positive measures by the Commission and the Council at Community level?
5. Has the Commission, in accordance with Mr Brunner's assurance, included in its proposal for a second environment action programme measures to protect natural living conditions, with particular reference to bird hunting?
6. Finally, does not the Commission realize that one of the reasons which make immediate Community measures necessary is to put an end to the boycott of Italy by Community firms because of the massacring of migratory birds?

⁴ OJ No. C 112, 20.12.1973, p.1

⁵ OJ No. C 60, 13.3.1975, p.51

