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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.6.2025)

The Commission has developed and implements, with the support of a scientific consortium, an adaptive harvest management mechanism aimed at ensuring the recovery of the European turtle dove. In this framework, the Commission issues non-binding recommendations on sustainable hunting of the species, developed in cooperation with national authorities, scientists and stakeholders and underpinned by the best available scientific data.

Following the recommendations and the hunting moratorium along the western flyway countries¹, a positive noticeable effect was noted during three breeding seasons corresponding to the hunting ban (springs 2022-24). There was a population increase of 40.5 %, equivalent to 615,000 additional breeding pairs, leading to 2.13 million breeding pairs in 2024, the highest total since 2009².

Considering this population increase, the increase in the survival that led to a robust growth rate and the improved control systems in the countries³, the Commission considered that hunting could be reopened, within the limits of a 1.5% quota. The effects of this quota will be enforced by national authorities and closely monitored, so corrective action through new recommendations in 2026 can be adopted, as necessary.

In parallel, the Commission also developed a document presenting key actions to address habitat-related pressures and threats on migratory bird species, including the turtle dove and other migratory bird species⁴. When relevant, climate change related issues are addressed. The actions' implementation is the competence of national authorities.

¹ Italy, France, Portugal and Spain.

² This was demonstrated by the monitoring results by the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme: <https://pecbms.info/european-wild-bird-indicators-2020-update/>.

³ On the three agreed conditions for resuming hunting: the documents of the Task Force on the recovery of birds (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/birds-directive/sustainable-hunting-under-birds-directive_en) and in particular the 'March 2025 annual review Turtle Dove AHMM (Adaptive Harvest Management Mechanism) Management scenarios and technical recommendation' (<https://www.operationturtledove.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/TFRB-25-03-02-Technical-recommendation-2025.pdf>).

⁴ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/e21159fc-a026-4045-a47f-9ff1a319e1c5/library/4f0995cc-c7f4-4cab-8168-e3912d432672>.