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Ghasafar Selvaġġi*

*Wild Birds Regulation Unit*

Wild Birds Regulation Unit hosts a visit by representatives of Adriatic bird protection NGOs

The Wild Birds Regulation Unit hosted a study visit by a group of representatives of bird protection NGOs from the Adriatic region, including from Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Macedonia. Foreign NGO participants were also accompanied by representatives of Birdlife Malta. The visit was organised by German nature conservation advocacy Euronatur as part of the Adriatic flyways project focusing on the role of NGOs in combating bird-related crime.

During the briefing hosted by the Unit, the participants were given an overview of the wildlife crime situation in Malta, and the legal, regulatory and enforcement reforms implemented over the recent years that have led to significant overall improvement. The participants were especially interested in Malta's approaches to hunting regulation, including in licensing processes, hunter education and examination procedures, as well as the pioneering telephonic game reporting system, which is the first legally binding real-time reporting system for small game hunting in Europe.

During the briefing, the participants have also learned about enforcement operations in the field, as well as the trends and statistics in bird related crime over the past few years. Topics such as collaboration between the authorities and NGOs, as well as relations between bird protection societies and hunting organisations were also discussed.

The visit comes in the wake of a major international conference on combating bird-related crime which the Wild Birds Regulation Unit organised, hosted and chaired in June this year.

