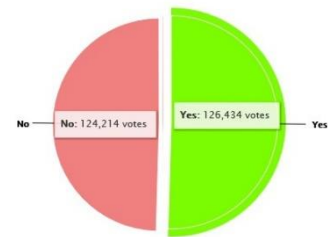


## Let's think about Bird Hunting in Malta

In 2015 a referendum about hunting was held in Malta and the majority of 2,200 voted for hunting. The European Commission had a different point of view about the situation. "Malta bird trapping breaches EU law" Europe's top court said. "... Hunters in Malta who trap and trade several varieties of finch birds are in violation of EU law" the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled.



Malta is in the centre of the Mediterranean and migrating birds often use this little island as a stop-over, so they stop in Malta twice a year, in spring and in autumn. Hunting opportunities are extremely limited as they always rely on bird migration. The Maltese Government applies an exemption and permits spring hunting and similarly permits Maltese traditional hunting as well.

Recently Malta has lost a case on songbird trapping with the EU Court and Commission. The European Commission asked the Court to declare that by adopting an exemption allowing live-capturing of seven species of wild finches, the Republic of Malta had failed to fulfil its obligations regarding an EU Directive. Last July, the General Advocate at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, delivered her opinion to the ECJ in the court case the European Commission initiated against Malta on the trapping of seven species of wild songbirds. The Opinion stated that the present trapping arrangements do not respect Malta's obligations under EU law.

In a survey I have done, overall, it resulted that there were different opinions about hunting in Malta. About 40% said that they are against because Malta is a very small country and there aren't many birds. About 45% think that once the referendum in 2015 had passed rules about hunting in Malta should stay as they are. 60% of the people surveyed think that hunters have many restrictions. 70% that Bird Life Malta is doing a great job when it rescues birds, but about 30% think that Bird Life Malta isn't understanding hunters and is giving them many restrictions. When asked about some disadvantages of hunting most people explained that a reason can be that if the bird has any eggs and it gets hunted the eggs will be useless, 20% think that hunting isn't ideal for nowadays when we can see or buy whatever we want (stuffed birds) instead of hunting. 45% of the people think that the EU needs to strengthen its arguments more

than before when it comes to this issue by courts that should embrace more restrictive rules to educate the EU citizens. Basically, the majority of the respondents don't agree with hunting.

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