

International Organization for Animal Protection



Organizzazione Internazionale per la Protezione degli Animali - Onlus

NGO associated with the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC)

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Accredited at UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)

Accredited in the Register of Representatives of Interest of the European Commission

Headquarters: Via Sant'Ambrogio 12, I-20816 Ceriano Laghetto MB (Italy) - Fiscal Code: 97310380155

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To the kind Attention of
Ursula Von Der Layen
President European Commission
ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu

Milano, 20 March 2023

Dear President Ursula Von Der Layen,

ERASMUS+ - THE EU PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, YOUTH AND SPORT RECENTLY STAINED WITH BLOOD

OIPA - International Organization for Animal Protection – ONLUS is a non-governmental organization that works for the defence of animal rights and for the protection of animals from cruelty and abuse at worldwide level. Our organization is accredited in the Register of Representatives of Interest of the European Commission (identification number 167911131880-83), and is associated with the UN Department of Global Communications, the UN Economic and Social Council and accredited at UN Environment Assembly and Programme.

We are writing to express our **deep concern** regarding the **first international exchange programme for young hunters** that took place in **Varsinaris-Suomi** from 3 to 8 February 2023, promoted by Erasmus+. Seven young people between 16 and 29 years old from Finland, Estonia and Sweden joined the initiative, supported by local hunters and organizers. The week consisted of theoretical and practical lessons on hunting, including several hunting trips for different species. Participants learned to shoot and kill white-tailed deer, foxes, raccoon dogs and ducks in the areas of Alastaro, Virttaa and Pöytä, during which young Finns tutored the visiting students. Additionally, students practised den hunting of small mammals, visited a weapon factory, an army shop and a hunting museum, and took some sessions at the shooting range. According to the report, the week ended with a wild game cooking lesson and a new hunting opportunity for those who had not yet shot a white-tailed deer.

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. The programme is managed by the European Commission (the EU's executive body) the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), a series of National Agencies in Programme countries, and a series of National Offices in some Partner countries.

The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the running of the Erasmus+ Programme. It manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the Programme on an on-going basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the Programme at European level. The European Commission also bears the overall responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the structures in charge of implementing the Programme at national level.

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We wonder **how these kind of initiatives can improve the quality of education and training in Europe**, which is supposed to be the main objective of the Erasmus programme. We wonder **how the European Commission can consider ethical and educational a programme aimed to teach killing defenceless sentient beings, moreover with public money** from taxpayers, whose vast majority is against hunting.

The slaughter of defenceless animals is harmful, not educative, and **contrary to the principles of biodiversity conservation**, which the Commission itself also pursues with the Biodiversity Action Plan, which aims to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2030.

The decision to **guide our new generations towards principles of union, cooperation and inclusion** employing programmes and activities that involve the killing of other living beings is the most senseless and educationally harmful action the EU could propose to its citizens.

We therefore formally **call on the European Commission to take immediate action and ban these type of exchange programmes**, stained with blood, from any projects funded by the European Commission in all EU member states.

We trust you will give this matter your urgent attention and we hope to receive a positive feedback

Sincerely,

Massimo Pradella
Chairman
OIPA ONLUS

Valentina Bagnato
Head International Relations
OIPA ONLUS

Alessandro Piacenza
Legal Advisor
OIPA ONLUS