

# The CIC – A Portrait

## International advocate of hunting

Markus Deissler

Although the CIC has been working internationally for many decades on the most diverse causes relating to hunting, while reaching a considerable size in the meantime, the organisation behind this abbreviation is still far from being known to all hunters. In the following, an attempt will be made to give the reader an overview of the diverse and interesting activities of this international hunting organisation.

As the homepage of the CIC ([www.cic-wildlife.org](http://www.cic-wildlife.org)) is only available in English, as is the case with most international organisations, it is not always easy to reach the broad base of hunters in other language countries, which is the reason for this article.

### **What is the CIC?**

First, the essentials – what is behind the three letters? In English, the full name is "International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation". It is noticeable that this does not quite fit the abbreviation CIC. No wonder, because the founding name of the organisation, and its abbreviation, is in French: "Conseil International de la Chasse".

The history of the CIC is just as international as the name. The Hungarian Count Louis Károlyi and the Frenchman Maxime Ducrocq can be described as the fathers of the organisation. In 1928, together with other hunter friends from various countries, they began to put the idea of the CIC into practice on the Count's estate in Palárikovo (that time Tótmegyer) in present-day Slovakia. The hitherto unsustainable hunting of wild animals, especially in the colonies of the great powers, as well as the emergence of a platform for worldwide exchange through events such as the "First International Hunting Exhibition" in Vienna in 1910, provided good reasoning for the creation of a world hunting organisation.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century heralded the beginning of the idea of nature conservation in general; for example, the "Swiss Federation for Nature Conservation" – renamed "Pro Natura" in 1997 – was founded in 1909 and the Swiss National Park was opened in 1914. In neighbouring countries, too, environmental issues were booming at this time: the "German League for the Protection of Birds", the forerunner of NABU, was founded in 1899; the "Gran Paradiso" in Italy, to which we owe the survival of the Alpine ibex, was re-dedicated from a royal hunting ground to a national park in 1922; and in 1928 the "International Bureau for Nature Conservation" was opened in Brussels.

With the end of the First World War, the importance of international organisations grew rapidly. The League of Nations, founded in 1919/20 and based in Geneva, was intended to prevent future wars and secure world peace, and other global interest groups soon followed this example. Hence, it is not surprising that an international organisation for hunting and nature conservation was founded at this time.

The organisation was officially founded in Paris in 1930 by 121 highly respected personalities from 23 nations in the conference hall of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Ducrocq was elected as the first President of the CIC. Its headquarters were in Paris until 1999, when it moved to its current location in Budakeszi, Hungary. In Hungary, the organisation enjoys diplomatic status. The legal seat of the International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) has been in Vienna since 2003. The members and officials of the CIC are today, as they were then, an international mix that does justice to the global character of the organisation.

## What does the CIC stand for?

The CIC is a non-profit, politically independent, advisory organisation and advocacy group dedicated to the principle of sustainable use in order to ensure the conservation of game and hunting worldwide. The CIC aims to promote and support the conservation of wildlife and related landscapes, local communities, and traditions, in order to achieve a world where wildlife is valued and conserved as part of nature, for the benefit of humanity. In doing so, the CIC sees itself as an "advocate of wildlife" and as a defender of the human rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to use their natural resources, especially the resource of wildlife through sustainable hunting.

In addition to more than 1100 individual members, mostly well-known personalities from business, society, science and politics in over 80 countries, national and supra-regional hunting and nature conservation organisations (including JagdSchweiz), scientific institutions, companies and, as a unique selling point of the CIC, 30 states (including Switzerland) are also members of the CIC. The latter are extremely important for the CIC, as they give the organisation an intergovernmental status, which, in combination with the diplomatic status in Hungary, has led to the CIC appearing as a respected intergovernmental observer with separate speaking rights at State Party negotiations of important international conventions of the United Nations concerning hunting. This is why the CIC is also called the "international ambassador of hunting". Through the membership of national hunting organisations in the CIC, it represents around 30 million organised hunters worldwide. At the European level, the CIC works closely with the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation, FACE, based in Brussels.

Conservation through sustainable use – "conservation through utilization" – is one of the three pillars of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which the CIC advocates at an international level. The individual hunter does not necessarily perceive this, but it is of immense importance as international decisions ultimately have an impact on the continued existence of hunting as a whole. It is also helpful for the work of the CIC that it is a long-standing, active and proud member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which has its headquarters in Switzerland. JagdSchweiz also became a member of the IUCN a few years ago, with the support of the CIC. Furthermore, it also contributes towards the fight against wildlife crime, such as poaching, in the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge on wildlife and hunting, and through strategic communication. Through the transferal of knowledge, international networking and lobbying, it aims to support hunting interests worldwide, as well as promote the sustainability of hunting and preserve hunting cultural traditions.

## The three pillars of the CIC

Analogous to the principle of sustainability, which rests on the three pillars of economy, ecology and socio-culture, all of which the CIC is committed to, the organisation itself has also divided into three thematic areas.

The sub-area "Applied Sciences", divided into specialist groups, deals with research projects on wildlife and its management through hunting. These include, for example, the introduction and adaptation of wildlife management systems, studies of the distribution and habitat use of different species, investigations into wildlife diseases, human influences on wildlife through hunting, as well as climate change, evaluations of different hunting systems and economic considerations on the use of wildlife as a resource. A typical motto here is species conservation on its own merits, to be achieved in the local population through participation in the sustainable use of game. The use of game through hunting tourism turns wildlife into a valuable source of income, the conservation of which is thus brought into the interest of the population, which ultimately has a positive effect on humans and animals. The CIC supports various scientific projects worldwide in the areas of big game, small game, migratory species, wildlife diseases, resource economics of wildlife, agricultural use and game, as well as trophy evaluation.

The division "Policy and Law" supports the practical implementation of scientific findings by providing expert opinions and statements on legal, political and administrative issues. Core topics are hunting legislation, multilateral agreements as well as weapons, ammunition and their transport across national borders. The creation of international conventions for the conservation of biodiversity, which resulted e. g. in the development of the "Addis-Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity", is just as much a field of activity for this CIC Division as the fight against illegal trade in rhino horn or the legal design of the gradual minimisation of lead in ammunition. The CIC has also made outstanding contributions through the initiatives of the CPW (Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management). The CPW is a partnership of 14 international organisations representing different aspects of wildlife management, (animal and human health, food security, conservation, wildlife trade) which works on transboundary wildlife conservation issues through this platform.

Finally, the "Culture" section deals with the cultural reception of hunting and game as well as hunting traditions. Hunting is to be promoted in the various forms of art, as should hunting as a "way of life". To this end, cultural events with hunting themes are organised and advertised, and close cooperation is maintained with cultural institutions such as museums. This Division is also responsible for the maintenance of the CIC Museum in the founding castle of Palárikovo, which was inaugurated in 2006, as well as the library. Traditional types of hunting are to be preserved as intangible cultural assets of the various countries, with a special focus on falconry, which was declared as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO as a result of a CIC initiative. "Hunting" itself has already been declared a national intangible cultural heritage in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia through the cooperation and contributions of the CIC – looking to protect hunting can not get better than this!

Of course, the CIC's tripartite structure is not a strict separation and the divisions cooperate with each other to implement a wide range of projects.

### **Special working groups and awards**

Similar to many larger organisations, the CIC has over time formed working groups for specific groups of members. In 2001, "Young Opinion" (YO for short) was founded as the youth organisation of the CIC. In order to safeguard the interests of hunting and species conservation in an increasingly anti-hunting world, it seemed sensible to promote relationships between young members and thus effectively help shape the future. Up to the age of 40, members have the opportunity to get involved in this offshoot of the CIC. Ten years later (2011), the "Artemis Club", a group specifically for the female members of the CIC, was founded with the aim of focusing on the role of women in species conservation and hunting, while also highlighting their work in general.

To promote particularly successful projects in the spirit of the CIC philosophy, the CIC also awards a whole range of different prizes and awards. The Edmond Blanc Award recognises hunting areas that are managed in a particularly sustainable manner, while the Markhor Award, named after the Asian goat species, honours special projects in environmental protection and species conservation whose success is based on the cooperation of the local population. The Young Opinion Research Award, held by the youth organisation of the same name, is given to young scientists whose work makes a special contribution to the goals of the CIC. In addition, a photography prize, an award for "Hunting in Art" and literary prizes in five different categories are awarded to individuals whose cultural work is in the spirit of the CIC's Cultural Division.

### **Trophy evaluation**

The area for which the CIC is probably best known in the hunting community, however, is the official assessment of hunting trophies. CIC points scored by capital hunting trophies from all around the world are

always widely talked about. The "CIC Trophy Evaluation System" also has a considerable history, descending from the formula developed by Herbert Nadler in 1925 for evaluating red deer trophies.

Over the decades, formulas for all kinds of game species from all over the world have been added and the scoring formulas for trophy evaluation have been adapted and improved again and again. The most recent version of the CIC Trophy Evaluation Manual was published as recently as 2014. In addition, the CIC also maintains a database in which all assessed trophies are recorded. This data is used for scientific evaluations as well as for the official world ranking of the most valuable trophies. Assessments for the CIC may only be carried out by certified measurers or the Senior International Trophy Judges, who are delegated to the Trophy Evaluation Board by the national delegations of the CIC.

For the coveted CIC International Gold Medal, a trophy must be evaluated with a sufficiently high score by three of these official measurers. For this, it is necessary that the whole skull is present. Another criterion is that the piece has lived in the wild under natural conditions. In keeping with the CIC's concept of sustainability, trophies from game reserves are excluded from this competition because of the advantage they have in terms of management. There have been scandals in which hunters were sold deer from enclosures as wild, under false pretences. These medals were revoked after the fraud, which repeatedly caused a great stir in the media, was exposed.

National medals are also awarded by some national delegations of the CIC – namely Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway as well as the United Kingdom.

Hungary will host a world exhibition "One with Nature" from 25 September to 14 October 2021, where all countries of the world will be invited to present their achievements and traditions relating to the sustainable use of nature (hunting, fishing, forestry, etc.). The CIC is the international patron of this world exhibition and is also responsible for organising four of the associated international conferences. All **Swiss** hunters are welcome in Budapest!