



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Office of the President Ms Ursula von der Leyen

Head of Cabinet

Brussels, **05 AVR. 2024**  
Ares (2024) 806053

Dear Mr Krüsken,

President von der Leyen would like to thank you for your position paper signed by several European farmers' organisations. She asked me to reply on her behalf. The Commission acknowledges that the return of wolves to EU regions where they had been long absent has led to challenges and conflicts, such as increasing attacks on livestock and conflicts with farmers.

On the basis of the in-depth analysis on the status of the wolf in the European Union, in December 2023, the Commission tabled a proposal for a Council Decision to adapt the protection status of the wolf under the Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979), or "Bern Convention", to which the EU and its Member States are parties. Such a modification under the Bern Convention, subject to the agreement of the EU Member States first and of other Bern Convention parties in a second phase, is a precondition for any similar change of the wolf's protection status at the EU level.

At the same time, the Commission continues to urge local and national authorities to take appropriate action, wherever necessary, as permitted by the derogation possibilities in the current legislation. Several Member States make regular use of such derogations to authorise lethal control of wolf specimens, and specimens of other protected species as well. The updated guidance document on strict protection adopted by the Commission in October 2021 provides important clarifications on the relevant provisions and reflects the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union. A dedicated chapter on the wolf provides recommendations and good practices.

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Mr Bernhard Krüsken  
General Secretary  
German Farmers' Association

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With regard to the assessment of the conservation status for transboundary wolf populations, the Commission encourages and welcomes any cross-border coordination in the monitoring of those species whose populations are shared by two or several Member States. Under the existing rules, Member States can carry out joint assessments in accordance with the guidance for reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

To address the concern of livestock farmers, it is key to keep investing in damage prevention measures. Indeed, irrespective of any decision on the legal status of the wolf, it will always be essential to adopt prevention measures to reduce livestock depredation. A number of stakeholder initiatives and projects financed by the EU have developed viable solutions for farmers, shepherds and local communities, including in mountain areas.

The Commission will continue supporting Member States and stakeholders in implementing suitable coexistence solutions, tailored to the specific needs at regional and local level. It also encourages Member States to make full use of the existing EU funding opportunities to help livestock farmers facing the challenges and costs associated with the recovery of wolf populations, in line with the relevant Commission guidance and the available best practices.

Yours faithfully,



Björn Selbert