

**Question for written answer E-003025/2024**

**to the Commission**

Rule 144

**Beatrice Timgren (ECR), Charlie Weimers (ECR), Dick Erixon (ECR)**

**Subject:** Are EU officials and activist groups working together to undermine more flexible management of the wolf population?

Following the decision of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention to downgrade the protection status of wolves from 'strictly protected' to 'protected', the Commission has promised that the EU's Habitats Directive will be revised to allow for more flexible management of the wolf population that is tailored to suit national circumstances.

At the same time, work is ongoing at the level of EU officials, and this can result in more rules, red tape and increased costs for Member States. The Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE), a lobby group within the International Union for Conservation of Nature, has spoken out against the downgrading. The Commission has asked the LCIE to draw up new guidelines to clarify how favourable conservation status is to be determined in the various Member States. This might limit the Member States' room for manoeuvre in spite of the decision of the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention<sup>1</sup> and the Commission's promises for more flexible legislation<sup>2</sup>.

Given the Commission's promises and the Member States' desire to see a more flexible regulatory framework that allows for management that suits national circumstances:

1. How does the Commission intend to ensure that the guidelines for favourable conservation status reflect the will of the Member States as well as the new political conditions brought about by the Bern Convention decision?
2. What steps will the Commission take to ensure that national needs and geographical differences are fully taken into account in future decisions concerning the management of wolves?
3. Can the Commission confirm that its internal processes and expert advice will not limit the possibility of putting flexible and efficient management models in place at national level?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://jagareforbundet.se/jakt/viltslag/jakt-pa-rovdjur/varg/varg/2024/12/euprocess-kan-skjuta-nedlistningen-i-sank/>

<sup>2</sup> EU proposal to adapt protection status of the wolf adopted by Bern Convention, paving the way to more flexibility in managing wolf populations [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_24\\_6202](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_6202)