



Brussels, 19 September 2024

Joint Statement by 300+ Civil Society Organisations

Don't reverse conservation progress: EU must step up coexistence efforts and maintain strong wolf protection!

The undersigned civil society and animal welfare organisations call on EU Member States to reject the European Commission's proposal to weaken the protection status of wolves under the Bern Convention. We urge you to instead intensify efforts to achieve coexistence with large carnivores, such as wolves and bears.

The wolf is a strictly protected species and must remain so according to scientific evidence. Once nearly extinct due to persecution, hunting and habitat destruction, wolves have made a remarkable comeback to Europe's landscapes, due to the legal protection granted by international and EU law, as well as the efforts of competent environmental authorities, farmers, scientists, NGOs, and local communities. However, their populations are still far from being in a good and viable conservation status¹. The latest IUCN assessment shows that six out of nine transboundary wolf populations in the EU are vulnerable or near-threatened. Lowering their protection now would put the species at greater risk and undermine the EU's legal requirement to achieve viable and stable wolf populations.

At present, there is no scientific basis to support an EU-wide modification of the existing legislation. The wolf's recovery is still ongoing, and the main objectives of both the Bern Convention and the Habitats Directive (i.e. to ensure the restoration and conservation of endangered species) have not yet been reached. Additionally, and as confirmed in the Commission's in-depth analysis, there is no scientific evidence that culling effectively reduces depredation on farmed animals. The objective of the Commission proposal is to

¹ Wolf populations in the EU are in unfavourable or inadequate conservation status in six out of seven biogeographical regions according to the most recent assessments done under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

reduce such wolf depredation, but there is no scientific evidence on the effectiveness of culling to achieve this. In fact, it could even be counterproductive, and increase attacks on farmed animals since it risks disrupting the wolves' social structure.

The Commission's proposal comes at a time of ongoing efforts to achieve coexistence between local communities and wolf populations. Over the past decade, the EU and its Member States have invested significant time and resources to enhance coexistence. This is facilitated by several EU and regional platforms, and successful LIFE-funded projects showcasing mutually beneficial solutions in the short and longer term. The proposition to reduce wolf protection undermines all those efforts and investments. It would be a shift away from the EU's goal of achieving harmonious coexistence between humans and large carnivores.

We acknowledge the challenges that arise from the return of the wolf in some EU regions, and the impact it can have on individual farmers and animal owners. Therefore, stepping up efforts to make existing prevention measures, such as fencing, guarding dogs and reinforcing human presence, more accessible for animal owners and supporting them with the appropriate prevention tools is essential. Efforts should be maintained to adapt existing solutions to their needs. Moving away from a coexistence approach towards lowering of the protection of the wolf would ignore all the farmers who have invested in and are successfully protecting their herds from wolves for years.

It is essential to recognise that safeguarding wolves in Europe goes beyond protecting a single species; it involves preserving biodiversity and fostering a balanced living together with nature. Wolves play a vital role in ecosystem stability. Their return to regions from which they had once been eradicated marks a significant conservation achievement. In the current global biodiversity crisis, we cannot risk compromising this progress.

Recent surveys indicate strong public support across Member States for maintaining stringent protections and promoting coexistence with wolves, even among rural communities most affected by the presence of large carnivores. Wolves are an integral part of our shared European heritage and landscapes.

Rather than diminishing wolf protection, the EU should instead:

- Maintain and enhance efforts to promote coexistence between wolves and local communities, emphasising prevention measures to reduce depredation on farmed animals and improving compensation schemes. Many Member States should make better use of existing information on co-existence measures, good practice examples and available EU funding opportunities.
- Ensure proper enforcement of the existing legal protection provided by the EU Habitats Directive across all Member States and eliminate illegal hunting of wolves. Member States must deter environmental crimes, not legalise them, as confirmed in a recent case of the Court of Justice of the European Union².

² Judgment of 11 July 2024, *WWF Österreich and Others*, Case C-601/22, ECLI:EU:C:2024:595.

- Support initiatives to raise citizen awareness and provide accurate, science-based information about wolves to the public, including on the ecosystem and socio-economic benefits provided by large carnivores, and the appropriate behaviour in case of an encounter. EU citizens have the right to be well-informed.
- Respect the due scientific process enshrined in EU nature conservation legislation. According to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Member States will submit their conservation status assessment in 2025. Any discussion on the protection status must be based on those reports, and not be based on political pressure.

Downgrading legal protections for the wolf would not only hamper conservation efforts, but also go against strong public support and scientific evidence favouring wolf conservation in Europe. Furthermore, the politically motivated proposal of the European Commission severely risks creating a precedent for other species and opening the door to other changes in EU Nature Laws. This would lead to legal uncertainty and set back years of effective conservation efforts across the continent. Such a move would seriously tarnish the EU's reputation as a leader in environmental protection.

Signed by:

1. ADDA Asociación Defensa Derechos Animal



2. African Conservation Foundation



3. AG Wildtiere am Forum am Forum

Wissenschaft& Umwelt



4. Agent Green



5. Aktion Kirche und Tiere (AKUT)



6. Alpe Adria Green



7. Alsace Nature



8. Anima Helvetia



9. Animal Alliance of Canada

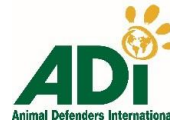


10. Animal Angels

11. Animal Cross



12. Animal Defenders International



13. Animal Friends Croatia



14. Animal Law Italia ETS



15. Animal Liberation Private Foundation

16. Animal Protection Agency



17. Animal Protection Party of Canada



18. Animal Rights Association B.and T.

19. Animalistes per la independència



20. Animals Asia Foundation



21. AnimaNaturalis



22. ARBA Sistema Litoral 2017



23. ARBAI

24. ARCHELON



25. ARCTUROS



26. ARION-Cetacean Rescue and Rehabilitation

Research Center



27. ASCEL



28. Asociación Animalista LIBERA



29. Asociación Nacional Defensa Animales



30. ASPA Vosges



31. Associació ànimaL: som ànima animal



32. Associació Mediambiental La Sínia



33. Association Biom



34. Association de Protection des Animaux Sauvages



35. Associazione Naturalistica Argonauta



36. Associazione per i Vivai ProNatura OdV



37. Avenir Loup Lynx Jura



38. Aves France



39. BALKANI Wildlife Society



40. Biofuelwatch



41. Biomass Action Group



42. BirdLife Cyprus



43. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia



44. BirdLife Hungary /MME



45. Bond Beter Leefmilieu



46. Born Free Foundation



47. BOS+



48. Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds

49. BUND



50. Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland

Landesverband Nordrhein-Westfalen e.V.



51. BUND Naturschutz in Bayern e.V.



52. CALLISTO Wildlife and Nature Conservation

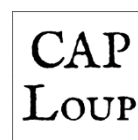
Society



53. Canine Efficiency



54. CAP Loup



55. Center for Protection and Research of Birds



56. Centre for Bat Research and Conservation



57. Centre4NI



58. CENTRO STUDI NATURALISTICI



59. Cgam imola

60. Charity Foundation Sofi



61. Charles University

62. Chris Buerki Consulting

63. CHWOLF



64. CIÊNCIA NATURA

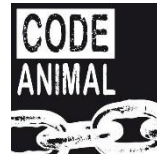


65. Circolo Svizzero Parma Italy

66. ClientEarth

ClientEarth[®]

67. Code animal



68. Comitee pour la protection des oiseaux



69. Compassion in World Farming



70. Corpo Forestale Volontario ESAF

71. Corpo Guardie Ambientali Metropolitane

72. Czech Society for Ornithology



73. Danish Mammal Society



74. Danish Society for Nature Conservation



75. Danmarks Vilde Natur



76. David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation and Fondation



Franz Weber

77. De Jonge Klimaatbeweging



78. De Unge Biodiversiteitsambassadeur



79. DEPANA



80. Deutsche juristische Gesellschaft für

Tierschutzrecht e.V.



81. Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V.



82. Dier&Recht



83. Dierenbescherming



84. Dierencoalitie



85. Dierenwelzijnsorganisatie VIER VOETERS



86. Djurskyddet Sverige



87. DOF BirdLife



88. Društvo Dinaricum



89. Društvo Lajka



90. Društvo S hrti za hrtne Slovenija



91. Društvo za dobrobit živali AniMa



92. Društvo za zaščito in pomoč živalim v stiski Lajka

93. Društvo za zaščito živali Kočevje



94. Društvo za zaščito živali Novo mesto



95. Društvo za zaščito živali Pomurja



96. Dryade



97. Dyrenes Beskyttelse



98. Earth Ethics, Inc.



99. Earth Thrive



100. Ecoflix



101. ECOLOGICAL RECYCLING SOCIETY



102. Ecologistas en Acción



103.	Ecologistas Sierra de las Nieves	
104.	Ecologistes en Acció de Catalunya	
105.	EDEN center	
106.	Education Ethique Animale	
107.	Eko - svest Skopje	
108.	Elephant Reintegration Trust	
109.	ELLET	
110.	Environment East Gippsland inc	

111. Environmental Organisation iSea



112. Environmental Pillar



113. Environmental Sustainability Agency

114. Eurogroup for Animals



115. EuroNatur Foundation



116. European Alliance for Wolf Conservation



117. European Environmental Bureau



118. European Institute for Animal Law and Policy



119. European Young Rewilders



120. Faia Brava - Associação de Conservação da
Natureza



121. Fair Carbon

122. Fauna4Life



123. Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura



124. Focus Association for Sustainable
Development



125. Fondation Franz Weber



126. Fondation Miaou & Co



127. Fondation pour la recherche sur la
biodiversité

128. Fonds Culture Nature et Patrimoine de Saint
Lizier et du Couserans



129. Forests NOW 
130. Forests of the World 
131. FORUM Salviamo il Paesaggio 
132. FOUNDATION CONSERVATION CARPATHIA 
133. France Nature Environnement 
134. Freundeskreis freilebender Wölfe e.V. 
135. Friends of the Earth Europe 
136. Fundación para el Asesoramiento y Acción en
Defensa de los Animales 
137. Fundacja AgriNatura 

138. Fundacja Psubraty



139. Fundatia Eco-Civica



140. Galanthus



141. Gallifrey Foundation



142. Geology Society of Denmark

143. GEOTA-Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do
Território e Ambiente



144. Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Wölfe e.V.



145. Global Youth Biodiversity Network European
Chapter



146. Global Youth Biodiversity Network France



147. Great Lakes and Wetlands Association / Nagy



Tavak és Vizes Élőhelyek Szövetsége

Nagy Tavak és
Vizes Élőhelyek
Szövetsége

148. Green Impact



149. Green Squad



150. Grup Signatus



151. Gruppe Wolf Schweiz



152. Gruppo Società e Ambiente



153. Hellenic Animal Welfare Federation

154. HELLENIC ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY/BIRDLIFE GREECE



155. Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature -
HSPN



156. Hnutí DUHA šelmy



157. Humane Society International / Europe



158. IFAW



159. IG Berner Wald



160. IG Wild beim Wild



161. In Defense of Animals



162. International Otter Survival Fund



163. International Wildlife Coexistence Network 
164. Io non ho paura del lupo APS 
165. Kemeru National Park Fund 
166. La Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique et Sciences 
167. Lajka 
168. Latvian Ornithological Society 
169. Latvijas ainavas
170. LandschappenNL 
171. Law of the Wild 

172. Le Klan du Loup 
173. Lega Anti Vivisezione 
174. Legambiente 
175. Legambiente ImolaMedicina 
176. Les Agulles - Ecologistes en Acció 
177. Liga para a Protecção da Natureza 
178. Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux 
179. Lipensko pro život 

180. Lipu 
181. Lithuanian Fund for Nature 
182. Loomus 
183. Luchs- und Wolfsschutz Bayerischer Wald 
184. Luonto-Liiton susiryhmä
185. MEDASSET 
186. Mediterranean Institute for Nature and
Anthropos 
187. Menschen für Tierrechte - Bundesverband der
Tierversuchsgegner e.V. 
188. Merman Conservation Expeditions Ltd 

189. MOm



190. Morigenos



191. Mouvement Ecologique



192. MTÜ Eesti Suurkiskjad /Estonian Large

Carnivores

193. NABU



194. NABU Landesverband Hessen












195. NABU, Landesverband Baden-Württemberg e.

V.



196. NABU, Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz e.V.



197. Natagora	
198. Natagora -GTloup	
199. National Wildflower Centre/Scouse Flowerhouse	
200. natur&emwelt a.s.b.l.	
201. Natura 2000 Coalition Romania	
202. Natural Heritage Foundation	
203. Nature Nova Scotia	
204. Nature Trust FEE Malta	
205. Naturefriends Greece	

206.	Natuurmonumenten	
207.	Natuurpunt	
208.	Naxos Wildlife Protection	
209.	NBSCLIMATE	
210.	Niech Żyją!	
211.	NOAH - for animal rights	
212.	Noé	
213.	Nzatu	
214.	Oasicostiera OdV	
215.	Observatoire des Carnivores Sauvages	

216. OIPA



217. ÖKOBÜRO-Allianz der Umweltbewegung



218. One Voice



219. OneKind



220. OSCAP Outraged South African Citizens
Against Poaching



221. Österreichische juristische Gesellschaft für
Tierschutzrecht



222. OurLand Thailand



223. Palombar - Associação de Conservação da
Natureza e do Património Rural



224. Paragraf 3 & Bilag IV ApS

225. Peter Jeffs Holistic



226. Plataforma Grup Llop Catalunya



227. Plataforma loboiberico.pt



228. Pôle Grands Prédateurs



229. Polish Society for the Protection of Birds



230. Politischer Arbeitskreis Tierrechte in Europa

231. PRO NATURA ANIMALI



232. Pro Natura Firenze APS



233. Pro Natura Genova



234. Pro Natura L'Aquila



235. Pro Natura Torino APS



236. Pro Natura Val Susa

237. Pro Natura. Bisceglie Trani



238. Pro Wildlife



239. Project 1882



240. Protect ▪ Natur-, Arten- und Landschaftsschutz

e.V.



241. Protect the Forest



242. Puse Latvijas



243. Rewilding Academy



244. Rewilding Europe



- | | |
|---|--|
| 245. Rewilding France |  |
| 246. Rewilding Portugal |  |
| 247. Romanian Ornithological Society |  |
| 248. ROYAL WOLF RANGERS del Lazio - O.d.V. |  |
| 249. Save Estonia's Forests (Päästame Eesti Metsad) |  |
| 250. SCOTLAND: The Big Picture |  |
| 251. SEY Animal Welfare Finland |  |
| 252. SFPEM |  |
| 253. Silviculture | |
| 254. Skye Environmental Centre Ltd | |

255. Slovenian Alliance of non-government organisations for the protection of animals



256. Societatea Carpatina Ardeleana Satu Mare

257. Société nationale de protection de la nature



258. Society for Ecological Restoration

259. Society for The Protection of Animals Ljubljana



260. Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace



261. Society for the Protection of Prespa



262. Spoleczny Instytut Ekologiczny

263. Stichting De Faunabescherming



264. Stowarzyszenie Carpatica



265. Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto



266. Svoboda zvířat



svoboda
zvířat

267. Swedish society for nature conservation

268. Swedish Society for the Protection of Animals

269. Tendua association pour la protection de la
biodiversité



270. Terra Anima, society for deep ecology



271. Terra Cypria Cyprus Conservation Foundation











272. The Danish Anglers Association



273. The Danish Mammal Society

274. The European Institute for Animal Law &
Policy



275. The European Nature Trust 
276. The Green Tank 
277. The Irish Wildlife Trust 
278. The Swedish Carnivore Association
279. The Wolf Action Group 
280. The Wolf Conservation Association 
281. Ulvetid 
282. Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development 
283. Umweltdachverband 

284. Ursia



285. VETERINAIRES POUR LA BIODIVERSITE



286. Vogelbescherming Nederland



287. Vogelbescherming Vlaanderen



288. VšĮ "Žiedinė ekonomika"



289. Waldexkursionen



290. WeHowl

291. Werkgroep wolf



292. Wild Europe



293. Wild Heritage



294. Wild Poland Foundation



295. WildChoices



296. Wilderness Foundation Global

297. Wildlife for All

298. Wildlife Network for Disease Surveillance



299. Wildtierschutz Schweiz



300. Wolfs-Hirten



301. Workshop for All Beings (Pracownia na rzecz

Wszystkich Istot)



302. World Animal Protection Denmark



303. World Animal Protection Netherlands



304. World Animal Protection Sweden



305. WWF European Policy Office (on behalf of the
EU WWF Network)



306. Youth and Environment Europe



307. Zürcher Tierschutz

308. Δράση για την άγρια ζωή/Action for wildlife

