

**Question for written answer E-003448/2014/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE)

Subject: Protecting sheep farms against wolf attacks

For a number of years, the fact that sheep meat has been produced and consumed in ever-decreasing quantities has led to sheep farmers in France and other Member States facing severe difficulties.

Against this background, the increase in the wolf population and in the number of attacks on sheep – 1 874 in 2012 – is particularly alarming. Protecting the wild wolf population is vital to safeguarding EU biodiversity, but these attacks pose a significant threat to farmers and local communities.

EU farmers and governments have very little leeway when it comes to dealing with wolf attacks. Wolves have a special status under the Habitats Directive as a 'strictly protected animal species of Community interest' which, among other things, prohibits culling, except under extremely narrow conditions. However, since the adoption of the Habitats Directive in 1992, the wolf population has risen dramatically and in France looks set to return to former levels. Given these circumstances, it is essential to help EU farmers to protect their sheep against wolf attacks.

1. Is the Commission considering removing wolves from Annex IV to the Habitats Directive, thus making measures to protect them less restrictive?
2. Is the Commission considering making the conditions for culling wolves more flexible so that farmers can respond more effectively to wolf attacks?
3. In its answer to Question E-012947/2013, the Commission stated that it had set up a working group on large carnivores. Has the working group met? If so, how many times? What has been the outcome of that dialogue? Has the wolf issue been specifically broached?