



31.10.2018

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0179/2018 by Harald Bundt (German) on saving wolves in Germany

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner alleges that the leader of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group made a proposal for killing wolves (wolf removal), and that this is in blatant contradiction with the protected status of wolves in the European Union and that, if taken up in the “Grand Coalition” agreement, the wolf population in Germany would be at great risk of extinction. He asks the Committee on Petitions to forward this petition to the Council and to the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 22 June 2018. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 31 October 2018

The petition contains 12,735 signatures of supporters who disagree with a statement of a national politician in Germany that the killing of wolves should be legally allowed.

The Commission does not comment on statements of national politicians, as any statement is part of a public and open discussion process within the Member States.

The petitioner is concerned that wolves could be illegally killed in Germany. The Commission would like to point out that the wolf is an important native species of European wildlife, protected under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC¹, for which Member States have committed to ensure the Favourable Conservation Status. It is also protected under the

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC of the Council 21. May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora; OJ L 206, 22/07/1992, p.0007- 0050.

(broader European) Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. Its recent gradual recovery is an important success for EU conservation policy.

The Commission is aware that the return of large carnivores, especially the wolf, to areas where they have been absent for a long time represents a significant challenge, especially at local level. This is why since 1992 the Commission has been actively supporting Member States and stakeholders to reconcile the conservation of these species with the interests and needs of people. The conflicts associated with the conservation of the wolf in our European landscapes can only be addressed through a comprehensive approach to ensure, with all available tools, a sustainable coexistence with people. A central element of this approach should be an adequate support for effective prevention measures to avoid or reduce the specific problem at stake (namely the livestock damages that appear to be the cause of the greatest conflict). Such measures should be accompanied by appropriate training, technical assistance, monitoring and follow up of their implementation, in order to apply any necessary adjustment.

Another important element is an efficient and fair compensation system to address damages to livestock. Finally, significant efforts and investments are needed for communication and information to the public, as well as dialogue and involvement of all concerned stakeholders. EU funds, namely under LIFE and EAFRD, are available for Member States to help address these challenges.

Lethal control may not and should not replace the above-mentioned actions, but it is a tool made available to national authorities as long as it is used in accordance with the Habitats Directive and is compatible with the need to restore and maintain the favourable conservation status of the concerned wolf populations. The use of derogations to authorise lethal control, must comply with the legal conditions laid down in Article 16(1) of the Habitats Directive, including the lack of other satisfactory alternatives and the need to ensure the maintenance/achievement of a favourable conservation status of the species.

Conclusion

The Commission considers that the interests of the wide community of citizens that strongly support nature conservation and of the farmers who are the caretaker of our environment can be reconciled through dialogue, information, education and support. The documentation and advisory centre on wolves which was set up by the German Federal Government¹ and some German Länder, like in Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein² and Saxony³, are an important step in this direction.

¹ <https://dbb-wolf.de/>

² <http://www.wolfsbetreuer.de/>

³ <https://www.wolf-sachsen.de/de/>