



Plenary sitting

B9-0514/2022

21.11.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe
(2022/2952(RSP))

Alessandro Panza, Marco Campomenosi, Massimo Casanova, Angelo Ciocca, Paola Ghidoni, Roman Haider, Gilles Lebreton, Elena Lizzi, Georg Mayer, Thierry Mariani
on behalf of the ID Group

**European Parliament resolution on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe
(2022/2952(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2017 on an Action Plan for nature, people and the economy¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2021 on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives²,
 - having regard to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora³ (the Habitats Directive),
 - having regard to the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats⁴ (the Bern Convention),
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas some species that are designated as requiring special protection under the Habitats Directive, in particular the wolf and other large carnivores, have achieved a favourable conservation status in some regions of Europe, particularly in the Alps, with increased population levels leading to a rise in conflicts with human activities, especially livestock farming;
- B. whereas wolves show high mobility, crossing from regions where their conservation status is favourable to regions where they are still classified as being in need of strict protection, making it extremely difficult to take measures in defence of rural populations and their domestic animals; whereas this is also true, to a lesser extent, of other species of large carnivores;
- C. whereas domestic animals, notably those in pasture and open-grazing systems, are put at risk by the growing presence of wolves, as well as other large carnivores, especially in mountainous and sparsely populated regions, while in more densely inhabited rural areas, the presence of wolves and other large carnivores can have negative impacts on sustainable development in terms of both traditional agriculture and tourism;
- D. whereas preventive measures to avoid conflicts of coexistence have been shown not to

¹ OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 38.

² OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

³ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

⁴ OJ L 38, 10.2.1982, p. 3.

be sufficiently effective, while having a significant impact on the landscape and the environment and requiring excessive budgetary commitments; whereas compensation payments often do not achieve full compensation of the damage suffered, meaning that the presence of wolves and other large carnivores has a negative impact on the viability of farming in some areas;

- E. whereas annual compensation for damage caused by large carnivores in Europe amounts to some EUR 28.5 million; whereas the average annual compensation cost per individual animal between 2005 and 2012 was EUR 2 400 for damage caused by wolves; whereas an unregulated increase in the number of wolves has the potential to cause the abandonment of rural and mountainous areas, which runs counter to the goals of EU cohesion policy;
- F. whereas EUR 88 million have already been spent on projects focusing on large carnivore damage mitigation measures through the LIFE programme and a further EUR 36 million have been granted for ongoing projects, very often without clear information being provided on the effectiveness of the measures in question and the effort devoted to implementing them, making it difficult to evaluate their success⁵;
- G. whereas there were 17 000 wolves in continental Europe in the 2012-2016 period; whereas the recolonisation areas of large predators are increasingly straddling traditional grazing areas and alpine pastures used for livestock;
- H. whereas 50 % of all sheep in continental Europe live close to at least one species of large carnivore;
- I. whereas traditional alpine pastures and grazing systems are increasingly being abandoned owing to the economic and human risks posed by the holdings' immediate proximity to large predator species; whereas the loss of farm and domestic animals following attacks by large carnivores not only causes economic damage to farmers and breeders, but also entails significant emotional and psychological consequences for their owners, as well as representing a risk for biodiversity as a whole as a result of the constant hydrogeological surveillance of the land that is required in response;
- J. whereas the presence of large carnivores in densely populated and urban areas has a major direct and indirect impact on livestock owing to the great distances that some species of predators can travel and the very high density of domestic species in such areas;
- K. whereas the large carnivores that are repopulating empty habitats have shown themselves in the past not to be wary or fearful of human beings or settlements, continually entering animal shelters and inhabited areas;
- L. whereas the problem of wolf hybrids (wolf-dogs) has not been sufficiently taken into consideration, given that it has serious implications for the *Canis lupus* species and its

⁵ Oliveira, T., et al., 'The contribution of the LIFE program to mitigating damages caused by large carnivores in Europe', *Global Ecology and Conservation*, Vol. 31, 2021, available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989421003656>

biome and undermines the socio-economic efforts to protect it thus far;

1. Stresses the need to change the paradigm with regard to wolves and large carnivores and make it clear that breeders and livestock protection come first;
2. Calls on the Commission to recognise that the conservation status of the wolf and other large carnivores is now favourable in several EU regions where they are still classified as being in need of strict protection; calls on the Commission to propose to the Council that certain species in Annex IV to the Habitats Directive be moved to Annex V once their conservation status is favourable, as this is the only way to promote their solid, viable and long-term coexistence with humans;
3. Calls on the Member States to recognise the need to more actively involve regional and local actors, such as breeders, veterinarians and hunters' organisations, once a favourable status has been achieved, and to foster cooperation between regions and at cross-border level, allowing the necessary flexibility to allow concrete action to be taken in particular regions that can effectively resolve conflicts of coexistence, including large carnivore population management control; welcomes the fact that the item 'Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention' has been included in the agenda for the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention; emphasises that the conservation status of the wolf at pan-European level justifies a mitigation of the protection status and consequently the adoption of the proposed amendment;
4. Stresses that preventive measures, including fencing and guard dogs, are not effective enough in ensuring the adequate prevention of attacks and protection of livestock; notes, moreover, that they are costly and have a significant impact on landscapes and biospheres;
5. Calls on the Member States to take concrete measures to address issues in order to safeguard the sustainable development of rural areas and local livestock farming, in particular with regard to traditional agricultural practices such as pastoralism; points out that holdings in mountainous areas are small and face high additional costs, but must be protected and encouraged as they help to preserve mountain landscapes and safeguard biodiversity in inhospitable regions, thus avoiding the depopulation of these areas;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider that financial compensation for losses of domestic animals as a result of large carnivore attacks, although essential for breeders' economic survival, cannot compensate for decreased animal welfare in the form of wounds, miscarriages, abortions, reduced fertility and diminished herd integrity, or for the associated impact on the welfare of humans, including that of both breeders and the general population, who, in regions with an increased presence of large carnivores, could feel insecure owing to a fear of attacks by these animals;
7. Calls for taxpayers' money to be used as wisely as possible and considers it necessary to urgently request a special report from the European Court of Auditors on the efficiency of all programmes targeting the issue of wolves and large carnivores;
8. Calls on the Member States to actively protect and conserve the model of pastoral

farming, as well as the lifestyle of pastoral farmers, through decisive action and concrete solutions;

9. Calls on the Member States to take into account the impact that constant and growing attacks by carnivore populations can have on rural communities, tourism and regeneration; calls, further, for a guarantee that concrete action will be taken to reverse the devastating effect that this has already had, and may continue to have, in terms of the abandonment of land and the discouragement of potential young farmers from entering the agricultural sector;
10. Calls on all parties involved to take into account the impact that carnivore attacks can have on the psychological health and general well-being of humans, including the loss of life, injury, the loss of income and higher labour and material costs;
11. Calls on all parties involved to identify adequate funding possibilities beyond the common agricultural policy to ensure and regulate the coexistence of large carnivores and livestock farming;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider the concrete solution of moving certain species of game from Annex IV to the Habitats Directive to Annex V thereto, so that they are subject to management measures;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.