

**Question for written answer E-000831/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI), Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE),
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE), Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE) and Kriton Arsenis (S&D)**

Subject: Iberian wolf protection

In Spain in the mid-1970s, the Iberian wolf, one of the crowning glories of European fauna, was regarded as vermin and was on the verge of extinction. In 1995 Spain adopted the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and categorised the Iberian wolf as a species of concern and as a European priority in areas south of the Duero River. However, in the north (where most of the population lives), the wolf is still hunted. As a result of this territorial, administrative and legal division, which has no scientific basis, damages north of the Duero River are borne by the owners of the enclosed land, whereas in the south damages are paid by the administration. Furthermore, there are other problems, such as delays in aid payments, false claims for wolf damages being submitted, the absence of any global, independent and scientific population censuses, and disparities in the management criteria used by the different autonomous communities.

In light of the above, we would like to ask the Commission:

1. Does it think it appropriate to harmonise Iberian wolf protection across the whole of Spain so that the country can benefit from the LIFE (financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation) project funds, as is the case in Portugal?
2. Is the Commission aware that there no global census has been taken of this species? The absence of a uniform, scientific and fair census methodology for all the regions is causing duplicates in the final statistics.
3. To resolve this conflict and encourage the conservation of the Iberian wolf – a species of great ecological importance and special conservation interest for the EU – would it be possible for the ranchers within the 'land of wolves' to receive aid reserved in the Common Agricultural Policy for areas with natural limitations? Could sustainable development initiatives in depressed areas home to wolves be encouraged and supported, through, for example, eco-tourism?