

**Question for written answer E-003629/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Large predators - the wolf in Tyrol

Since being granted protection under the Fauna-Flora-Habitats Directive, some species previously identified as particularly vulnerable have now achieved a favourable conservation status throughout the EU. The wolf population has also been stabilised across Europe, and in many regions it even exceeds the thresholds set. According to an expert opinion drawn up by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna, in biological terms all the subpopulations of wolves in Europe now together constitute a pan-European population. In some European regions, in particular Tyrol, expert reports have already found that on many high Alpine pastures using fences, shepherd and dogs to protect flocks is impossible owing to the small-scale farming methods employed (disproportionately large size of alpine pastures and herds), the topography and tourism. This is posing a threat to the Alpine region.

1. Why has the Alpine region not yet been declared a wolf-free zone, and what steps need to be taken to ensure that in regions where alternative flock protection methods cannot be used wolf-free zones are established?
2. Why does the definition of 'favourable conservation status' refer to individual countries when the wolf population is a pan-European one, and would the removal of individual wolves have an adverse impact on the favourable conservation status?
3. Can the Commission say what steps it plans to take to safeguard traditional farming practices, such as pastoralism and alpine pastoralism, and protect herds against wolves, and does it plan to revise the FFH Directive?