

EN

E-001285/2022

Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(16.5.2022)

Large carnivores, such as wolf, bear and lynx, are native species of European fauna and play an important ecological role in ecosystems. They are therefore protected under the Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup>.

As apex predators, these species typically occur at low densities and self-regulate their numbers in the territories they occupy. While several populations of large carnivores are currently recovering, the latest data reported by the Member States under the Habitats Directive show that, unfortunately, they have not yet achieved a favourable conservation status in most Member States and biogeographical regions<sup>2</sup>. Even if favourable status was more widely achieved, it would need to be maintained. Therefore, a reduction of the protection level may not be justified for large carnivore species when they are still subject to high levels of human-induced mortality.

On this basis, there is no need for the Commission to propose a revision of the Annexes of the Habitats Directive, as already mentioned in the replies to written questions E-285/2022 and P-4316/2020. The existing legal and financial frameworks provide Member States with the necessary tools to ensure the conservation of both protected wildlife and livestock grazing, and to address possible conflicts, as clarified in the Commission guidance on species protection adopted in October 2021<sup>3</sup>. The Commission has been supporting Member States and stakeholders to implement livestock protection practices and other coexistence measures, namely through the EU programme for the environment and climate action<sup>4</sup> and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7–50.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/conservation\\_status.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/conservation_status.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/guidance/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/guidance/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life_en)

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en),  
[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/promoting\\_best\\_practices.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/promoting_best_practices.htm)