



Downgrading of wolf protection expected to be announced at European Council on 5 June, while several EU countries announce maintenance of strict protection nationally

Brussels, 4 June 2025 - At tomorrow's Transport Council (5 June), EU countries representatives are getting ready to adopt a proposal on wolf protection declassification, seemingly using wolves as a bargaining electoral commodity in defiance of science, the Treaties, and European law, instead of recognising them as Europe's common heritage.

The plan announced by President Ursula von der Leyen to reduce the protection status of the wolf - in the pre-election period of Mandate No. II - aims to win the favour of a small minority of farmers, instrumentally supported by COPA-COGECA¹ and the European hunter lobby.²

'The attempt to downgrade the wolf has only succeeded thanks to the passivity of the EU Member States, the inexplicable renunciation of the European Parliament to exercise its prerogatives, and the opacity of the decision-making dynamics within the Berne Convention, where the EU-27 holds a majority position, but a process of independent scientific evaluation of the proposals made by the Contracting Parties is absent,' - the Associations explain.

In the negotiations, the European Commissioner for the Environment³ in the Van der Leyen mandate I and II has been completely overshadowed by a Commission President who, in a totally unusual manner, has personally led the downlisting campaign to reopen the 'hunting' and therefore the 'killing' of a species with strict protection status. This is a serious drift, paving the way for an obscurantist return to the man-nature conflict, in stark contrast to all the EU's biodiversity protection objectives.

The pretext for this move was a report⁴ commissioned and financed by the European Commission itself to a consultancy firm: a non-academic document, lacking peer -review, and judged to have no basis to justify the downgrading by the European Scientific community, which has publicly expressed its opposition to the downgrading on several occasions. Brussels Institutions decided to ignore scientific advice, even though European law does not allow it, and go ahead.

In Europe, wolf predation accounts for just 0.07% of sheep and goat losses, the main targets of attacks. And yet, despite the fact that predation weighs insignificantly in the EU's agricultural budget and the wolf is still classified as vulnerable and endangered in many areas of

¹ <https://copa-cogeca.eu/press-releases>

² <https://www.face.eu/2025/04/press-release-downlisting-the-wolf-a-way-forward-for-the-eu/>

³ Virginijus Sinkevičius (2019- 2024); Jessika Roswall (2024 - 2029)

⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5d017e4e-9efc-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Europe, the President of the Commission has advocated culling. Not even the fact that European taxpayers finance, through CAP funds, both prevention measures and compensation for the predations suffered by farmers, has helped to stop this dangerous political drift.

The associations are already informing European citizens about what happened.

Some EU Member states - such as **Poland, Portugal, and the Czech Republic** - have already declared their intention to maintain strict wolf protection. Others, such as Malta, Belgium and Hungary, may follow.

In the meantime, five associations - **Earth, Green Impact, LNDC Animal Protection, Nagy Tavak** and **One Voice**, with the support of seventeen others⁵ - have appealed to the Court of Justice of the European Union to have the downgrading decision annulled. The proceedings are ongoing, despite the fact that the European institutions have preferred to force the procedures and timing of the negotiations in order to achieve an immediate result that will hopefully turn into an electoral boomerang.

In Europe, the Associations call for **'a serious and structural reform of European Nature legislation: a reform that goes beyond the current instrumental logic of 'lists' and 'annexes', now used for purely political purposes, and that adopts an ecosystem and climate approach, no longer centred on individual species or habitats but of large scale ecosystems. Management entrusted to those with real skills, ethics and respect for nature.'**

In Italy the Associations call for biodiversity management to be entrusted to the Carabinieri Forestali, with the support of a network of Universities, research institutes and an independent ethics committee'.

The wolf downgrading in Brussels will weigh heavily on the candidates in the next local, national and European elections. The wolf must remain a collective good and no longer an electoral commodity.

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Further Information

[Appeal to the European Court of Justice requesting the annulment of the downgrading of the wolf](#) (GreenImpact website)

- o [List of proposing and intervening associations](#) (GreenImpact website)
- o [Independent academic review \(E. Randi and M. Fisher, April 2025\) of the scientific basis used by the European Commission](#); the review shows that the downgrading thesis proposed by the European Commission has no scientific basis (hosted on GreenImpact website)

[700 scientists across Europe sign against the downgrading of the wolf](#)

[IUCN-Large Carnivore Initiative \(co-ordinated by Dr Luigi Boitani\): Statement against the downgrading of the wolf](#)

5

<https://www.greenimpact.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-LUPI-Caso-Corte-UE.-Lista-Ricorrenti-e-At-to-di-intervento.pdf>

[+2000 Scientists Against the Depletion of EU Nature Directives](#)

[Impact of predation on livestock farming - Sheep predation by wolves in the EU accounts for only 0.07% of the total number of sheep in the EU \(2024\)](#)

Appeal by five associations (Case T-634/24) to the European Court of Justice for the annulment of the Council's decision to downgrade the wolf to the Bern Convention, 2024 Case T-634/24: Action brought on 6 December 2024 - Green Impact and others v. Council and Commission. The appeal was supported by 17 other associations, which made an intervention on the appeal. **Appellants:** Green Impact, EARTH, Nagy Tavak, One Voice, LNDC Animal Protection. **Intervener:** LEIDAA, Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura, Io non ho paura del lupo, Animal Cross, Pole Grands Predateurs, ASPAS, Ferus, Animalista LIBERA!, Suomen eläinoikeusjuristit ry, Svenska Rovdjursföreningen, Naturskyddsföreningen, Pracownia na rzecz Wszystkich Istot, OIPA, LEAL, WWF Italia, Legambiente and ASCEL.

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More information:

European Court of Justice

In its 2024 judgments on the cases (C601/22 and C436/22) in Austria and Spain, the European Court of Justice confirmed the need to maintain strict protection and that the need to ensure a favourable conservation status of the wolf prevails over socio-economic considerations; furthermore, the wolf cannot be designated as a huntable species at regional level when its conservation status at national level is unfavourable.

Some statements by the President of the European Commission:

President **von der Leyen** said: *'The concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger for livestock and potentially also for humans. I urge local and national authorities to take action where necessary. Indeed, current EU legislation already enables them to do so.* https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_4330

European Commission President, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"In some European regions, wolf packs have become a real danger especially for livestock. Today, we are proposing a change of EU law that will help local authorities to actively manage wolf populations while protecting both biodiversity and our rural livelihoods.* https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_711

President Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *'The comeback of wolves is good news for biodiversity in Europe. But the concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger especially for livestock. To manage critical wolf concentrations more actively, local authorities have been asking for more flexibility. The European level should facilitate this and the process the Commission started today is an important step. I am deeply convinced that we can and will find targeted solutions to protect both biodiversity and our rural livelihoods.*

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6752