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## **WOLVES: THE PROVINCE OF BOLZANO IS NOT COMPLYING WITH EUROPEAN LAW AND THEN CRIES "WOLF, WOLF!"**

***Pro Natura and Green Impact** appeal to the judges of the Bolzano Regional Administrative Court to refer the matter to the European Court of Justice for an interpretative opinion on the legal compliance of the Province's actions.*

**In recent decades, the Province of Bolzano has never regularly promoted farming practices with adequate prevention systems against wild predators, generating conflicts with European policies** for the conservation of endangered species, which are subject to binding protection, coexistence and, in extreme cases, non-lethal intervention regimes.

Successive provincial laws on grazing and wolf culling have allowed farmers to avoid using fences, guard dogs or the continuous presence of a shepherd, in clear violation of European legislation. In fact, **almost all mountain pastures are listed in the law of June 2023 as 'unsuitable' for herd protection practices.**

Local grazing methods involve the intermittent presence of shepherds and the dispersal of flocks, with inadequate use of guard dogs, often replaced by 'gather together' dogs, and little use of electric fences, despite the subsidies available through the EU.

For this reason, **Pro Natura and Green Impact have filed a motion to join the appeal to the Regional Administrative Court brought by the associations LEIDAA, OIPA and LEAL** against the Province of Bolzano, ISPRA and the Municipality of Malles Venosta, challenging the legality of the killing of two wolves ordered by the Province of Bolzano.

*'It's like leaving your front door wide open with valuables in plain sight and then shooting the thieves, benefiting from the insurance payout,' say Pro Natura and Green Impact. 'The wolf is a resource, not a problem. Its return to the Alps should be welcomed: it shows that we can still save biodiversity. Some risk is inevitable in any activity, but prevention, as required by European regulations, works and reduces attacks on livestock to almost zero.'*

**The wolf killed with provincial authorisation on the night between 12 and 13 August, at an altitude of 2,800 metres – the first in Italy in 50 years – belonged to the local population currently threatened with extinction according to the latest scientific findings.** The fact that, at the time of the killing, the downgrading of the species had not yet been implemented in Italy is a further aggravating factor.

**Predation on livestock** by wolves averages **0.07%** of the sheep and goat population in Europe, and in the case of South Tyrol, the figures are even lower.

It should also be noted, for example, that **the Province instructs hunters to kill thousands of ungulates per year (+16,000 in 2023)** due to damage to agricultural and pastoral activities, while

these same animals could be regulated naturally by wolves at no cost, simply by relying on the ecological balance without human intervention.

**The removal of the wolf's natural prey by hunters creates an imbalance in the natural food chain, to the detriment of pastoral activities.**

It should be remembered that wolves, as natural predators, play a fundamental role in maintaining adequate levels of biodiversity through their feeding habits.

In South Tyrol, however, there are some virtuous examples that follow the guidelines of European law by adopting effective prevention systems. These examples demonstrate how it is possible to coexist with wolves without suffering significant damage. **These are the models to follow to adapt to change.**

**Contacts:**

Green Impact, Gaia Angelini (President) <a href="mailto:Gaia.angelini@greenimpact.it">Gaia.angelini@greenimpact.it</a> Mobile: 348 0586408 <a href="http://www.greenimpact.it">www.greenimpact.it</a>	Pro Natura, Piero Belletti (Secretary General) <a href="mailto:segretario@pro-natura.it">segretario@pro-natura.it</a> Mobile: 348 4528931 <a href="http://www.pro-natura.it/">www.pro-natura.it/</a>
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References:

- **Provincial Law No. 10 of 13 June 2023** '*Protected grazing areas and measures for the removal of wolves*' and subsequent related and implementation measures.
- **Provincial Law No. 11 of 16 July 2018** "*Prevention and intervention measures concerning large carnivores*."
- **Canis Lupus in the Alps, classified as 'Vulnerable' (IUCN)**, <https://www.iucn.it/classe-mammalia.php?ordine=CARNIVORA&famiglia=CANIDAE>
- Impact of predation on livestock farming - Predation of sheep and goats by wolves in the EU accounts for only 0.07% of the total number of sheep in the EU (2024). Source: Science, 24 January 2024. <https://www.science.org/content/article/plan-allow-wolf-hunting-europe-protect-livestock-could-backfire-some-scientists-say#%3A%7E%3Atext%3DAs%20the%20number%20of%20wolves%2Cstatement%20that%20accompanied%20the%20proposal>
- Culling of ungulates in South Tyrol: <https://servizio-forestale.provincia.bz.it/it/gestione-fauna-selvatica/statistiche-prelievo>