

## **European conservation organisations call for urgent EU investigation after the killing of Italian GPS-collared wolf “Mirco” in Austria**

### **Coalition announces formal complaint to the European Commission and forthcoming Case File request under the Bern Convention**

**Albareto (Italy), 7 July 2026** – A broad coalition of European environmental organisations, scientific experts, wildlife professionals and conservation advocates has formally called on the European Commission to investigate the recent killing in Austria of *Mirco*, a young Italian GPS-collared wolf that was part of a long-term scientific research project coordinated by the Dolomiti Bellunesi National Park and the University of Sassari.

The letter, addressed to Commissioner for Environment Jessika Roswall and copied to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, raises serious concerns regarding the compatibility of Austrian wolf management practices with the EU Habitats Directive, the Bern Convention and the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

According to the signatories, publicly available information and official documentation suggest that the wolf killed may not have been the individual covered by the removal authorisation issued by the Tyrolean authorities. Scientific tracking data reportedly indicate that, when the authorisation was adopted, *Mirco* was still in Italy and had not yet entered Austrian territory. After crossing the border, his movements were reportedly communicated by the Italian research team to the Austrian authorities as part of ongoing scientific cooperation.

The coalition argues that, if these circumstances are confirmed, the case raises fundamental questions about the legality of the removal, the identification of the target animal, the proportionality of the measure, and the protection afforded to wolves involved in internationally recognised scientific monitoring programmes.

The organisations also highlight that *Mirco* is the second Italian GPS-collared research wolf killed in Austria in 2026. In February, another monitored wolf, *Andrea*, equipped with a GPS collar by the University of Udine, was shot in Carinthia under similar legal provisions. Together, the two cases raise broader concerns about the treatment of scientifically monitored transboundary wolves and the impact of current Austrian policies on international research and cross-border conservation.

Beyond the individual cases, preventive wolf culling, non-compliant monitoring under the Habitats Directive, overly broad and scientifically unjustifiable criteria for classifying so-called "risk wolves" and "damage-causing wolves", the use of scientifically unvalidated deterrence methods, and legal provisions allowing wolves to be killed even when the individual animal responsible cannot be reliably identified are criticized. Since 2022, Austrian authorities have authorized and carried out the killing of approximately 70 wolves.

The coalition notes that Austria's most recent reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive assessed the conservation status of its wolf population as

**unfavourable—inadequate (U1+)**, raising further questions regarding the compatibility of current lethal management practices with European law.

The organisations are asking the European Commission to verify whether Austrian authorities have correctly applied the strict conditions governing derogations under the Habitats Directive, including the requirements of necessity, proportionality, selectivity and the absence of satisfactory alternatives.

Alongside the letter submitted to the European Commission, the coalition confirms that it is finalising a **formal complaint** requesting the Commission to examine possible breaches of **EU nature conservation law**. At the same time, the organisations are preparing the documentation necessary to request the opening of a **Case File under the Bern Convention**, with the aim of allowing the Standing Committee of the Convention to assess whether Austria's current wolf management practices comply with its international conservation obligations.

“The management of large carnivores is one of Europe's greatest conservation challenges, but it must always remain grounded in science, transparency and the rule of law,” the coalition states. “When scientifically monitored wolves are repeatedly killed under legal frameworks that appear incompatible with European legislation, it becomes essential for the European institutions to assess whether these practices comply with the obligations that Member States have undertaken.”

The initiative has been endorsed by more than twenty organisations and experts from Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, representing a broad cross-border coalition committed to science-based wildlife conservation and the protection of Europe's large carnivores.

The full letter has been submitted to the European Commission and copied to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, relevant Italian scientific institutions, and the partners responsible for the research projects involving the monitored wolves.

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[Link to the letter \(ENG\)](#)