

## Open letter: Decision on potential modification of the protection status of the wolf

By email: [Ursula.VON-DER-LEYEN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Ursula.VON-DER-LEYEN@ec.europa.eu)

Brussels, 18th December 2023

Dear President von der Leyen,

On behalf of almost 300 undersigned environmental and animal protection organisations, we are writing with regard to the European Commission's commitment to "decide on a proposal to modify, where appropriate, the status of protection of the wolf within the EU and to update the legal framework, to introduce, where necessary, further flexibility" by the end of the year <sup>1</sup>.

It is of significant concern that a policy decision on such a crucial issue is being prepared in an untransparent manner. Moreover, it is based on an irregular consultation process that was launched by the Commission's press release on 'Wolves in Europe' on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, which included misleading information regarding wolves. Our concerns about this were outlined to you in our letter dated 11 September 2023<sup>2</sup>.

We would like to re-emphasise that any decision to change the protection status of wolves must be based on reliable scientific data, according to the provisions of the relevant legislation, and not on anecdotal evidence submitted through a non-transparent and irregular consultation process.

Furthermore, we are concerned that the discussion of this issue has so far been largely dominated and driven by farming industry and hunting interest representatives, who are keen to position themselves as speaking on behalf of rural communities. Yet the reality is that there is actually a high degree of support among rural communities for the strict protection of wolves in the EU, as shown by an independent survey, commissioned by several animal protection organisations, which was carried out in November 2023 in 10 Member States<sup>3</sup>.

**Unless there is substantial new science-based evidence gathered by the European Commission services, we believe the science and public opinion are clear: the modification of the protection status of the wolf - either under the EU law or the Bern Convention - is not justified.**

Instead, the EU needs to:

- ensure that existing legal protections for wolves, as enshrined in the EU Habitats Directive, are upheld and enforced consistently across the Member States;
- promote uptake of coexistence measures between wolves and local communities since many of those opportunities are under-utilised by the Member States;
- support initiatives that provide accurate, science-based information about wolves to the public.

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<sup>1</sup> as stated on the EC web-page on large carnivores [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive/large-carnivores\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive/large-carnivores_en)

<sup>2</sup> The joint letter by eight European NGOs challenges a recent press release by the European Commission that suggests that wolves pose a significant danger to humans and livestock and highlights concerns regarding irregular consultation process (available at <https://eeb.org/library/ngo-reaction-to-commissions-communication-on-wolves-in-europe>)

<sup>3</sup> available at <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/news/survey-wolves-should-be-strictly-protected-majority-rural-inhabitants-say>

Protecting wolves in Europe is not only a matter of ecological significance, but also a reflection of our commitment to biodiversity conservation and the values of coexistence and tolerance. Wolves are an integral part of Europe's natural heritage, playing a vital role in maintaining ecosystem balance and biodiversity, and the return of the wolf to parts of Europe where the species had previously been extirpated is a considerable conservation success that must not be jeopardised.

We urge you to take the recommendations of broader civil society seriously in your preparation of the European Commission's decision.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick ten Brink  
Secretary-General  
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

On behalf of the undersigned environmental and animal protection organisations (*in alphabetical order*):

1. Animal Cross



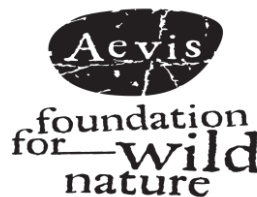
2. Associazione Italiana per l'Ambiente  
la Cultura  
le Emergenze



3. Aegean Wildlife Hospital



4. Aevis Foundation



5. African Conservation Foundation



6. AG Wildtiere



AG Wildtiere

7. Agent Green



8. Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz



9. ALAMBI - Associação para o Estudo e Defesa do Ambiente do Concelho de Alenquer



10. Albatros Foundation



11. Alianța pentru Combaterea Abuzurilor



12. ALKA Wildlife



13. Almargem - associação de Defesa do Património cultural e Ambiental do Algarve



14. Alpe Adria Green Slovenia



15. Alsace Nature



16. AMUS



17. ANIMA  
Hellenic wildlife care association



18. Anima Helvetia



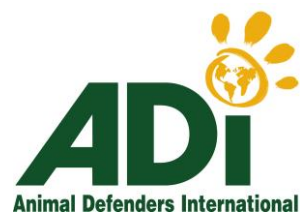
19. Animal Action Greece



20. Animal Alliance of Canada



21. Animal Defenders International



22. Animal Protection Party of Canada



23. Animalistes per la independència



24. APS Amici dei Parchi di Montevoglio e dell'Emilia



25. ARCHELON The Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece



26. ARCTUROS



27. Arend de Haas, Rewilding Academy



28. ARION-Cetacean Rescue and Rehabilitation Research Center



29. ARK Rewilding Nederland



30. ASCEL Association for Gray Wolf Conservation and Study in Spain



31. ASN - Associação Sociedade e Natureza



32. Asociación Animalista Libera!



33. Asociatia Kogayon



34. ASPA Vosges



35. ASPAS, Association pour la protection des animaux sauvages



36. Associação PATO



37. Associação Transumância e Natureza



38. Association "Gyvo Žalio"



39. Association Biom



40. Association for Nature Conservation "Baltijos vilkas"



41. Association for Nature Conservation  
Tapiola ry Luonnonsuojeluliitto Tapiola ry



42. Association for the Conservation of  
Biological Diversity



43. Austrian Youth Biodiversity Network



44. Avenir Loup Lynx Jura



45. AVES FRANCE



46. Baleine Sous Gravillon



47. Balkani Wildlife Society



48. Bamff Wildland



49. Biodiversity Conservation Center



50. BiodiversityGR



51. Biofuelwatch



52. Biomass Action Group (BAG)



53. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia



54. DOF BirdLife



55. BirdLife Finland





56. BirdLife Hungary/MME



57. BirdLife Sweden



58. Bond Beter Leefmilieu



59. Born Free Foundation



60. BOS+



61. Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation



62. Bulgarian Environmental Partnership Foundation



63. Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds



64. Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (BUND)



65. BUND Naturschutz in Bayern e. V.



66. C'est Assez!



67. Calla - Sdružení pro záchranu prostředí, z.s.



68. CALLISTO Wildlife and Nature Conservation Society



69. Center for Environment



70. Center for environmental research and information "Eko-svest"



71. Center for protection and research of birds



72. Centre4NI.com



73. Čergovfilm



74. Chráníme stromy



75. CIDAMB



76. CIPRA International - International Commission for the Protection of the Alps



77. ClientEarth



78. Codrii Iasilor [Old Growth Forests of Iasi]



79. Colla ecologista l'Arrel



80. Compassion in World Farming



81. Danish Society for Nature Conservation



82. Danmarks Vilde Natur



83. Dansk Botanisk Forening



84. DAPHNE - Institute of applied ecology



85. David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation



86. De Unge Biodiversitetsambassadører (Youth biodiversity ambassadors, Denmark)



87. Děti Země (Children of the Earth)








88. Deutsche juristische Gesellschaft für Tierschutzrecht e.V.



89. Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V.



90. Dier&Recht  Dier&Recht  
*advocaat van de dieren*
91. Dierenbescherming  **DIEREN  
BESCHERMING**
92. Dierencoalitie  dierencoalitie  
Samenwerkende  
Diermedicijnenorganisaties  
Nederland
93. Dinaricum society  **DINARICUM**
94. Djurskyddet Sverige  **djurskyddet**  
SVERIGE
95. Drasi gia tin agria zoi / Action for Wildlife  Δράση για την άγρια ζωή
96. Dyrenes Beskyttelse  **DYRENES  
BESKYTTELSE**
97. Earth Action, Inc.  **EARTH ACTION**  
because the earth is not for sale
98. Ecoflix  **ecoflix**
99. Ecological Alliance  ΟΛΟΚΛΗΡΟΤΗΤΑ  
ΣΥΜΜΑΧΙΑ
100. Ecological Recycling Society  **Ecological Recycling Society**

101. Ecologistas en Acción



102. EDEN center



103. Elephant Reintegration Trust



104. Eliante



105. ELLINIKI ETAIRIA-Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage



106. EMS Foundation



107. Endelave Natur og Miljø



108. Environmental Organisation iSea



- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| 109. | Environmental Pillar   | <hr/>  <hr/> |
| 110. | Eurogroup for Animals  |              |
| 111. | EuroNatur  |              |
| 112. | EUROPARC<br>Europeanwide Protected Areas Network                   |              |
| 113. | European Alliance for Wolf Conservation                            |             |
| 114. | European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration         |            |
| 115. | European Environmental Bureau (EEB)                                |            |
| 116. | European Wilderness Society  |            |
| 117. | European Young Rewilders   |            |
| 118. | FAPAS - Associação Portuguesa para a Conservação da Biodiversidade |            |

119. Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura



120. FERUS Ours-Loup-Lynx Conservation



121. Focale pour le Sauvage



122. Fondation Brigitte Bardot



123. Fondation SOS Chats Noiraigue



124. Foundation Conservation Carpathia



125. FOUR PAWS International



126. France Nature Environnement





127. French Mammal Society



128. Friends of Fertő Lake Association



129. Friends of the Earth Europe



130. Friends of the Earth Czech Republic



131. Freundeskreis freilebender Wölfe



132. Fundacja Dzika Polska



133. Fundacja Rolniczej Różnorodności Biologicznej AgriNatura



134. Future 4 Wildlife



135. GEOTA



136. Gesellschaft zum Schutz der Wölfe e.V.



137. Global Rewilding Alliance



138. Global White Lion Protection Trust



139. Global Youth Biodiversity Network (Europe)



140. Great Lakes & Wetlands Association



141. Green Impact



142. Greenpeace European Unit



143. Grupo Lobo - Associação para a Conservação do Lobo e do seu Ecosystema



144. Hellenic Animal Welfare Federation



145. Hellenic Ornithological Society



146. Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature - HSPN



147. Humane Society International/Europe (HSI)



148. Humanité et Biodiversité



149. IFAW



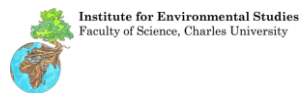
150. IG Berner Wald



151. IG Wild beim Wild



152. Institute for Environmental Studies,  
Faculty of Science,  
Charles University



153. Institute of Vertebrate Biology CAS



154. International Otter Survival Fund



155. Io non ho paura del lupo APS



156. Italian Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN Italia)



157. Kemeru National Park Fund



158. Landschappen



159. Latvian Ornithological Society



160. Latvijas ainavas

Wildlife NGO, LATVIA

161. Lesochranárske zoskupenie VLK (WOLF Forest Protection Movement)



162. Legambiente



163. Lipensko pro život



164. Lobo Marley



165. Loomus



166. LPN - Liga para a Protecção da Natureza



167. LPO France



168. Luchs- und Wolfsschutz Bayerischer Wald



169. Luontoliiton susiryhmä (The Wolf Action Group)



170. MEDASSET - Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles



**MEDASSET**  
Mediterranean Association to  
Save the Sea Turtles

171. MedINA



**MedINA**

172. Menschen für Tierrechte –  
Bundesverband der Tierversuchsgegner  
e.V.



173. Merman Conservation Expeditions Ltd



174. Milvoz - Associação de Protecção e  
Conservação da Natureza



175. MOm/Hellenic Society for the Study and  
Protection of the Monk Seal



176. My sme les



177. NABU Bundesverband Germany



178. NABU (Naturschutzbund Deutschland)  
Kreisverband Heidekreis e.V.



179. Naturschutzbund Deutschland)  
Landesverband Niedersachsen e.V.)



180. Natagora



181. National Wolfwatcher Coalition



182. natur&emwelt a.s.b.l.



183. Natura 2000 Coalition



184. Natural Heritage Foundation



185. Naturalists Club Poland



186. Nature Nova Scotia



187. Nature Trust - FEE Malta (NTM)



188. Naturefund e. V.



189. Naturschutzbund Österreich



190. Naturwald Akademie



191. Natuurpunt



192. NBSCLIMATE



193. NDMALO-GE



194. Network for Urban Nature





195. Niech Żyją!



196. NOAH - for animal rights



197. Noé



198. Karpatská divočina



199. OneKind



200. Österreichische juristische Gesellschaft für Tierschutzrecht (ÖjGT)



201. OTOP



202. Palombar - Associação de Conservação da Natureza e do Património Rural



203. PAN PRO NATURA ANIMALI



204. PETA Deutschland



205. PETA Schweiz



206. Peter Jeffs Holistic



207. Plataforma de Ciência Aberta (Open Science Hub-Portugal)



208. Plataforma loboiberico.pt



209. Pôle Grands Prédateurs



210. Polish Ecological Club in Cracow, Gliwice Chapter



211. PPP-Movement

<http://ppp-movement.org>



212. Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland



213. Pro Natura Piemonte



214. Pro Natura Torino



215. Pro Wildlife



216. Protect ■ Natur-, Arten- und Landschaftsschutz



217. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania



218. Psubraty



219. Puse Latvijas



220. Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza (Portugal).



221. RENTAS



222. Rewilding Apennines



223. Rewilding Europe



224. Rewilding France



225. Rewilding Portugal



226. Rewilding Romania



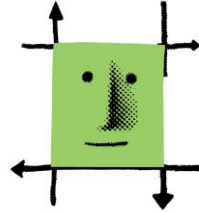
227. Rhinos in Africa



228. Riga Animal Save



229. Robin des Bois



ROBIN DES BOIS

230. ROBIN WOOD

ROBIN WOOD

231. ROH - Citizens for the Rivers



232. Romanian Ornithological Society



233. Save Estonia's Forests NGO



234. Save Wild



235. SCOTLAND: The Big Picture



236. SEPANSO Aquitaine



237. Société Herpétologique de France



238. Société nationale de protection de la nature (SNPN, France)



239. Society for Conservation Biology Europe (SCB Europe)



240. Society for Sustainable Living (STUŽ)



241. Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace



242. Society for the Protection of Prespa



243. Society for the Protection of Wolves



244. SOS Faons NE



245. SOSNA association



246. Společnost pro zvířata/Society for Animals, CZ



247. Społeczny Instytut Ekologiczny



248. Stichting Bont voor Dieren



249. Stichting Fauna4Life



250. Stiftung für das Tier im Recht (TIR)



251. Stowarzyszenie Carpatica



252. Stowarzyszenie dla Natury "Wilk"



253. Svenska Rovdjursföreningen (Swedish Carnivore Association)



254. Svoboda zvířat



255. Swedish society for Nature Conservation



256. TENDUA pour la sauvegarde de la biodiversité



257. Teraz LASY!



258. Terra Anima, društvo za poglobljeno ekologijo (Society for deep ecology)





259. The European Nature Trust



260. The Green Tank



261. The Irish Wildlife Trust



262. The Lifescape Project



263. The Wildlife Animal Protection Forum South Africa



264. The Wolf Conservation Association



265. Tierschutz Austria



266. Tourism, sports, civic and environmental association Bicycle Tourism Club NAPOCA (CCN)



267. Towarzystwo Przyrodnicze "Bocian" (Wildlife Society STORK)



268. Trees for Life

Trees for Life

269. Udruga Prizma



270. Ulvetid



271. Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development



272. Umweltdachverband



273. Unione Bolognese Naturalisti



274.	URSIA	
275.	Verein CHWOLF	
276.	Vétérinaires Pour la Biodiversité	
277.	Vogelbescherming Nederland	
278.	Vogelbescherming Vlaanderen	
279.	Werkgroep Wolf Nederland	
280.	Wild Animal Welfare Committee	
281.	Wild Europe	
282.	Wild Heritage	
283.	WildChoices	
284.	Wildland Research Institute	
285.	Wildtierschutz Deutschland e.V.	

286. Wolfs-Hirten



287. World Animal Protection



288. WWF European Policy Office, on behalf of the European WWF network



289. Young Greens of Greece)



290. Zelený dům Chrudim



291. Zielone Wiadomości



292. ZO ČSOP Armillaria



293. ZO ČSOP Radhošť



294. Zoo Logical



295. ZOOTEKA



296. Zveza ekoloških gibanj Slovenije-  
ZEG

