

EN

E-001944/2024

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.11.2024)

1. The analysis published in December 2023 by the Commission¹ has shown that the conservation status of the wolf in Europe has significantly improved over the last decades. In particular, the estimated population has almost doubled in 10 years. A potential change of the protection status of the wolf in the Habitats Directive² would not remove the objective of wolf recovery. It would provide additional flexibility to those Member States that need it, without obliging all Member States to change the protection status of the wolf at national level. In any event, species listed in Annex V are also protected and Member States are bound by the obligation to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for these species.
2. The Habitats Directive requires Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that the exploitation of species listed in Annex V is compatible with maintaining them at a favourable conservation status. They shall include the continuation of the surveillance provided for in Article 11 and may include, where necessary, temporary or local prohibition of hunting, regulation of the periods and methods of hunting, or the establishment of a system of licences or of quotas.
3. Any future change of the protection status of the wolf in EU legislation will be subject to an amendment of the appendices of the Bern Convention by a decision of its Standing Committee³, the next meeting of which is in December 2024. Following the entry into force of such amendment, the EU would be allowed to modify the corresponding annexes of the Habitats Directive to adapt the protection level of the wolf in EU law. The Commission proposal will be limited to a modification of the protection status of the wolf only.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/env/items/813295/en>

² i.e. moving the species to Annex V of 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.

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention>