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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.12.2024)

The Commission proposal¹ to adapt the protection status of the wolf under the Bern Convention² is based on analysis of the wolf situation in the EU, published in December 2023 by the Commission, which includes the scientific data and information underpinning the proposal³. The analysis shows that the populations of wolves have significantly increased in the last two decades and they are occupying ever larger territories. There are more than 20 000 wolves with generally increasing populations and expanding ranges, and breeding packs in 23 EU Member States. This is a conservation success, made possible by protective legislation, more favourable public attitudes and habitat improvements.

The Commission recognises that Portugal has implemented a robust national legislation to protect the wolf and that the specific situation of the Iberian wolf in Portugal requires a tailored approach. A potential change of the protection status of the wolf in the Habitats Directive⁴ would not remove the obligation for Member States to reach or maintain good conservation status of wolf populations. It will rather provide additional flexibility to the Member States that need it, without obliging other Member States, such as Portugal, to change the protection status of the wolf at national level.

¹ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-council-decision-position-be-taken-eu-bern-convention_en

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/env/items/813295/en>

⁴ 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.