

EN

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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.3.2025)

Following the adoption of the EU proposal¹ to change the protection status of the wolf under the Bern Convention², after its entry into force, the Commission will present a targeted legislative proposal to implement this change in EU law and to modify accordingly the protection regime of the wolf under the Habitats Directive³.

The change of protection status of the wolf under EU law, once agreed and transposed into national law, would increase management flexibility for Member States. However, they would remain obliged to maintain or restore a favourable conservation status of the wolf populations on their national territory, in accordance with the Directive's requirements, with the relevant rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union⁴ and with the international commitments under the Bern Convention.

The legal protection status of species is differentiated, in the Habitats Directive, through their listing under the different Annexes⁵. However, the requirement to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status is the overall objective set by the Directive, and it applies to all species (and habitat types) covered by it.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting on the conservation status of species and habitats covered by the Habitats Directive is carried out by national authorities. The related guidelines establishing common formats and criteria⁶ have been elaborated and are regularly updated in the competent expert group, in close cooperation with representatives from all Member States, stakeholders and the European Environment Agency⁷.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_6202

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

³ 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.

⁴ E.g. Case C-436/22 on wolf hunting in Spain: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2024-07/cp240118en.pdf> and Case C-601/22 on derogations to kill wolves in Austria: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2024-07/cp240111en.pdf>

⁵ In particular, species listed in Annex IV are subject to a strict protection regime, while species in Annex V are only subject to a protection regime (allowing more management flexibility).

⁶ https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/habitats_art17/Reporting2025/Final%20Guidelines%20Art.%2017_2019-2024.pdf

https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/habitats_art17/Reporting2025/Explanatory%20notes%20Art%2017%20final_update%20Nov%202023.pdf

⁷ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en>