

EN

E-002224/2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.8.2025)

1. Brown bears are strictly protected by the Habitats Directive¹, which prohibits the keeping, transport, sale or exchange of bear specimens taken from the wild. Article 16 of the Directive allows for derogations from this prohibition in limited cases provided there is no satisfactory alternative and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintaining the species at a favourable conservation status.

As regards the sale of brown bear meat, the bear is listed in Annex A of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97². Commercial activities within the EU involving bears or bear meat are thus generally prohibited, except in situations described in Article 8(3) of that Regulation. Exemptions can however be granted by a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora³ national Management Authority on a case-by-case basis, if the specimen was taken from the wild in a Member State in accordance with national legislation.

2. Bears are large wild game as defined in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004⁴. Hunted animals must be brought to a game-handling facility for inspection before being declared fit for human consumption. Food business operators handling bear meat must comply with general requirements on food (e.g. traceability), with general and specific good hygiene practices and with procedures based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point principles.

3. The Commission recommends that Member States put in place effective measures to prevent conflict with bears in the first place⁵. The availability of garbage, slaughter remains, etc. to bears is often the main cause of human-bear conflicts. Therefore, limiting access to such food sources is considered effective to prevent (or at least strongly reduce) human-bear conflicts.

¹ 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.

² Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein OJ L 61, 3.3.1997, p. 1-69.

³ <https://cites.org/eng>.

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55.

⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/report-defining-preventing-and-reacting-problem-bear-behaviour-europe_en.