

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004276/25
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(30 October 2025)

Subject: Regulatory gap in the management of wild horse populations in Greece and the EU

Populations of wild horses, resulting from animals released or abandoned a long time ago, can today be found in the mountainous and semi-mountainous areas of Greece. These populations entail a whole host of ill effects, such as risks to road safety, damage to crops and effects on biodiversity. Meanwhile, regional authorities and management bodies point out that where there is no recognised owner, there is no clear legal framework for the management of these animals. In addition, overlapping provisions of veterinary and environmental law create ambiguity in the application of EU rules.

Given that similar situations can also be found in other Member States, can the Commission say:

1. Will it consider providing interpretative guidance or amending the relevant regulations to clarify their application to wild horse populations?
2. Will it propose non-lethal and sustainable management measures, taking into account animal welfare and the protection of ecosystems?
3. Does it intend to map and activate available financial tools for monitoring, sterilising, feeding and protecting areas with such populations?

Submitted: 30.10.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(27 January 2026)

Wild horses are not explicitly listed under the Habitats Directive ⁽¹⁾ and currently the Commission does not plan to issue interpretative guidance or amend the relevant regulations.

Where negative effects on biodiversity arise from wild horse populations, it is for the national competent authorities to take appropriate actions to mitigate these effects and adopt sustainable management measures, considering animal welfare.

To tackle the challenges posed by wild horse populations effectively and support initiatives related to monitoring, sterilisation, feeding, and protecting affected areas, Member States are encouraged to explore available financial tools, like the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ⁽²⁾ and the EU programme for the environment and climate action ⁽³⁾.

⁽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, pp. 7-50.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en.

⁽³⁾ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.