

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004868/25
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D)
(9 December 2025)**

Subject: African swine fever, wild boar overpopulation and the wolf's protected status in the European Union

In recent weeks, more than 14 European Union Member States have reported outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF), a disease affecting domestic pigs and wild boar with severe ramifications for animal health and the pig industry, a key meat-producing sector.

The high prevalence of the disease among wild boar populations puts an overpopulation problem that has long been a cause for concern into sharp relief. Although the exodus of people from rural areas is conducive to the proliferation of wild boar, various studies stress the importance of the lack of large natural predators ⁽¹⁾ and the close relationship between animal epidemics and disturbances in food chains, in which the wolf plays a key role as the main predator of wild boar.

Considering the above:

1. What view does the Commission take of the relationship between wild boar overpopulation, the spread of ASF and the current situation as to protection of wolves in the Union?
2. Did the Commission consider this type of situation when it proposed downgrading the wolf's protected status?
3. Will the Commission reconsider arrangements for the strict protection of wolves in light of these developments?

Submitted: 9.12.2025

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

There is a certain relationship between the density of the wild boar and the spreading and persistence of the African Swine Fever (ASF) virus.

One of the measures in the EU ASF guidelines ⁽¹⁾ to control and eradicate ASF is the control and reduction of the wild boar population in the affected areas with tools and methods based on scientific literature and evidence.

As apex predators, wolves play an important ecological role contributing to healthy ecosystems through selective predation, particularly of wild ungulates (deer, wild boar).

The in-depth analysis on the situation of the wolf in the EU ⁽²⁾ indicates that wolves can limit the rates of increase and densities of wild ungulates and thereby may reduce the incidence of diseases such as ASF.

The Commission tabled a proposal ⁽³⁾ for the change of protection status of the wolf on the basis of multiple considerations, notably the significant increase of wolf populations and expanding ranges across all mainland EU with breeding packs in 23 EU Member States.

However, even after the change in its status, the wolf remains a protected species under the Habitats Directive ⁽⁴⁾, for which Member States are still required to achieve or maintain favourable conservation status.

As such the wolf should be able to continue to play its ecological function, including in terms of regulating wild boars and other ungulates.

The Commission currently has no plans to reconsider the legal status of the wolf as a protected species that can be subject to management measures.

¹ Tarjuelo, R., Luque-Larena, J. J., & Mougeot, F. (2024). Moving towards an ecological management of overabundant ungulates: Insights from wildlife-vehicle collisions and hunting bag data. *European Journal of Wildlife Research*, 70(51). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10344-024-01801-7>.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Notice on the guidelines on the prevention, control and eradication of African swine fever in the Union (ASF guidelines), C/2023/7855, OJ C, C/2023/1504, 18.12.2023.

⁽²⁾ The situation of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the European union, An in-depth analysis (2023), <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5d017e4e-9efc-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

⁽³⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/43/EEC as regards the protection status of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), COM/2025/106 final.

⁽⁴⁾ 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.

Member States are allowed to maintain the wolf as a strictly protected species under national legislation if they deem it necessary and appropriate.
