

EN

E-000074/2026

Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.3.2026)

Under EU law, the Spanish wolf populations north of the Duero has been listed in Annex V of the Habitats Directive¹ since adoption, i.e. as a ‘protected’ species. This protection level gives authorities the flexibility to manage their local wolf populations, so that they can take measures that are well adapted to regional circumstances. However, pursuant Article 14, any taking in the wild of a species in Annex V, such as the wolf, must be carefully regulated since the Member State is still obliged to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the concerned populations is achieved and/or maintained. Member State authorities have the discretion to maintain or introduce more stringent protective measures². Compliance with such measures, above what is required in EU law, is for the national authorities to ensure.

It is important that the conclusion on the conservation status of the wolf is based on the best available scientific data obtained through the surveillance to be carried out by Member States under the Directive³, which holds particular importance for the implementation of Article 14⁴. This should also consider potential errors in sampling methods. Moreover, it is reasonable that surveillance takes into account factors that may have a negative impact on species’ conservation status, such as illegal killing⁵. A species cannot be hunted if effective surveillance of its conservation status is not ensured⁶.

The competent administrative and judicial authorities in the Member States are primarily responsible for the correct implementation of the above obligations. The Commission is monitoring the situation closely and has urged Spain to submit its report under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive⁷ for the period 2019-2024.

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 As enshrined in Article 193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

³ Article 11.

⁴ Case C-436/22, paragraph 65, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62022CJ0436>.

⁵ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C\(2021\)7301](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2021)7301).

⁶ Decision Court of Justice of the EU in relation to Article 14: Case C-436/22, paragraph 59.

⁷ INFR(2025)2214, [https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR\(2025\)2214&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate](https://ec.europa.eu/implementing-eu-law/search-infringement-decisions/?langCode=EN&version=v1&typeOfSearch=byDecision&refId=INFR(2025)2214&page=1&size=10&order=desc&sortColumns=decisionDate).