

EN

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

Under the Habitats Directive¹, wolf populations north of the Duero River are currently listed in Annex V. Member States must take measures to ensure that the exploitation of species listed in Annex V is compatible with their being maintained at a favourable conservation status². According to the information submitted by Spain in the latest report under Article 17 of the Directive for the period 2013-2018, the wolf was in unfavourable conservation status in Cantabria. A new report covering the period 2019-2024 is still to be submitted by Spain³.

Without prejudice of the role of the Commission as guardian of the Treaty, the primary responsibility for correctly implementing the Habitats Directive lies with the national authorities. The Commission monitors the situation closely and is also waiting for the submission of the Spanish report under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that Article 14 of the Directive precludes Spanish legislation which permitted the hunting of the wolf, since the species was listed in Annex V and the conservation status of that species is classified as ‘unfavourable poor’⁴. Additionally, the CJEU confirmed that if there remains uncertainty as to whether the exploitation of a species of Community interest is compatible with the maintenance of that species at a favourable conservation status, the Member State must refrain from authorising such exploitation. In this context, the competent authorities cannot allow the hunting of wolves, unless the cumulative impacts of the authorised quotas and any additional taking, as well as collateral deaths and illegal killing, is compatible with the achievement or maintenance of favourable conservation status.

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 According to Article 14 of the Directive.

³ 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).

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