

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000715/26
to the Commission
Charlie Weimers (ECR), Beatrice Timgren (ECR), Dick Erixon (ECR)
(19 February 2026)**

Subject: Commission intervention in Swedish wolf management and licensed hunting

According to Swedish media reports, the Commission has stated that it does not accept Sweden's establishment of 170 wolves as a reference value for favourable conservation status, citing a lack of scientific evidence. The reference value previously stood at 300. The latest survey showed that there were approximately 355 wolves in Sweden. Numbers will now increase, along with insecurity in rural areas ⁽¹⁾.

1. Why has the Commission chosen to reject the Swedish reference value of 170 wolves?
2. How does the Commission ensure that its interpretation of the Habitats Directive is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, takes into account local conditions and guarantees safety in sparsely populated areas?
3. What is the Commission intending to do to make wolf hunting possible in Sweden?

Submitted: 19.2.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(21 April 2026)**

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive ⁽¹⁾, Member States are requested to report the population of species protected under the directive every 6 years.

Following the receipt of the data, the Commission has asked follow-up questions to a number of Member States as regards the alignment with the Habitats Directive, including Sweden.

The reported value of 170 wolves as the favourable reference population (FRP) raises questions regarding its scientific underpinning. In the 2025 report of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) ⁽²⁾, the value of 170 individual wolves reflects a minimum viable population (MVP) estimate ⁽³⁾.

A scientifically sound FRP is, by definition, higher than the MVP to ensure long-term population viability ⁽⁴⁾. In the previous report in 2019, the FRP value for the Swedish wolf population had been set at 300 individual wolves.

The Commission proposed, in March 2025, an amendment to modify the protection status of the wolf under the Habitats Directive from 'strictly protected' to 'protected'.

This gives additional flexibility to Member States in managing their local wolf populations, including by taking measures that are well adapted to regional circumstances, including in areas with specific challenges linked to population density and human activity. This amendment entered into force in July 2025 ⁽⁵⁾.

Even after a change in status, it follows from Article 14 of the Habitats Directive, that Member States should take measures to ensure that the species concerned are maintained at a favourable conservation status, with sufficient flexibility to ensure effective and balanced management in practice.

¹ SVT (2026), <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/varmland/bakslag-for-regeringens-vargpolitik-vargstammen-kan-vaxa>

⁽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⁾ As stated in the SEPA report of 13 March 2025: 'the minimum viable population (MVP) for the Swedish part of the Scandinavian wolf population is approximately 170 individuals' and the FRP 'needs to be greater than 170'. <https://www.naturvardsverket.se/49421e/globalassets/om-oss/slutredovisade-regeringsuppdrag/slutredovisning-ru-forvaltningsatgarder-for-varg-li202402201.pdf>.

⁽³⁾ The MVP is the minimum population level required to minimise the extinction risk over a defined time frame. By contrast, the FRP is the population level ensuring that the species fulfils its ecological role in its natural habitat and range and is viable in the long term, considering uncertainties. To account for these uncertainties and for the precautionary principle, standard scientific practice is to calculate FRP by applying a multiplier to the MVP. Sweden previously applied a multiplier of 2, or 2 to 3.

⁽⁴⁾ Guidelines on concepts and definitions, Article 17 of Directive 92/43/EEC, Reporting period 2019-2024, page 25, https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/habitats_art17/Reporting2025/Final%20Guidelines%20Art.%2017_2019-2024.pdf/.

⁽⁵⁾ Directive (EU) 2025/1237 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2025 amending Council Directive 92/43/EEC as regards the protection status of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), OJ L, 2025/1237, 24.6.2025.