

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001898/26
to the Commission
Jan-Christoph Oetjen (Renew)
(7 May 2026)**

Subject: Favourable conservation status of the wolf and biogeographical regions

Wolves pose major challenges for many farmers of grazing livestock in Germany. The wolf population and number of wolf kills are steadily increasing. While a first step has been taken with the lowering of the protection status in the Habitats Directive (FFHD), transposition into national measures is progressing slowly. So far, Germany has requested a favourable conservation status for the wolf in the continental and the Atlantic sub-regions⁽¹⁾. According to the FFHD classification, three biogeographical regions in Germany are relevant for the wolf⁽²⁾. In order to ensure legal certainty for any measures, the establishment of favourable conservation status is of key importance.

1. Is the notification of favourable conservation status for biogeographical sub-regions legally sufficient to introduce wolf population management in those regions, if the Commission confirms the favourable conservation status?
2. Must a favourable conservation status be established for all three German biogeographical regions before population management is permitted in Germany as a whole?
3. Is it necessary to establish a favourable reference population in order to be able to carry out interventions with legal certainty?

Submitted: 7.5.2026

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(16 July 2026)**

Member States are required to submit their science-based assessment of the national biogeographic conservation status of protected species every six years. The Commission does not confirm the conservation status submitted but uses this information to assess data and trends at EU level⁽¹⁾.

National biogeographic conservation status assessments are an important element for wolf management decisions. Article 14 of the Habitats Directives⁽²⁾ requires Member States to take measures to ensure that the taking of Annex V species is compatible with their maintenance at a favourable conservation status.

Therefore, population management can only take place where it does not prevent the achievement or maintenance of favourable conservation status.

The Court of Justice of the EU has confirmed that the assessment of the conservation status and of the management measures must be made, where appropriate, at local, biogeographical and cross-border levels⁽³⁾.

As a result, if an Annex V species is not in favourable conservation status at these levels, or population management would impact conservation status of that species at these levels, the discretion of Member States to manage populations of Annex V species is restricted, and measures must be taken to improve their status⁽⁴⁾.

For example, managing a wolf population in the Atlantic biogeographical region in Lower Saxony or Brandenburg would not affect the Alpine biogeographical region in Bavaria because of the large geographical distance.

Favourable Reference Population (FRP) is an important part of the parameter 'population' in the assessment of the conservation status⁽⁵⁾. Consequently, no accurate assessment of conservation status can be made without a FRP.

¹ <https://www.bundesumweltministerium.de/pressemitteilung/deutschland-meldet-guenstigen-erhaltungszustand-des-wolfs-an-eu-kommission>.

² <https://www.bfn.de/daten-und-fakten/biogeografische-regionen-und-naturraeumliche-haupteinheiten-deutschlands>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en>.

⁽²⁾ 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.

⁽³⁾ Case C-436/22, *ASCEL*, paragraph 65, https://www.stradalex.eu/en/se_src_publ_jur_eur_c_just/document/cjeu2024_C_436_22_57.

⁽⁴⁾ Case C-436/22, *ASCEL*, paragraphs 69 and 70, https://www.stradalex.eu/en/se_src_publ_jur_eur_c_just/document/cjeu2024_C_436_22_57.

⁽⁵⁾ Reporting format: https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/habitats_art17.