

EN
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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.9.2026)

The inclusion of sika deer on the list of invasive alien species (IAS) of Union concern under the IAS Regulation¹ follows a dedicated risk assessment² endorsed by the Scientific Forum of Member State experts and supported by a clear majority of Member States when Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1422 was adopted³. That assessment identified serious environmental, economic and health risks, including damage to forestry and agriculture, impacts on transport, hybridisation with native red deer and the potential transmission of diseases.

Unlike wolves and bears, the sika deer is an alien species in Europe. While there is no obligation to eradicate it, particularly where it is already widespread, its inclusion on the list of Union concern gives rise to an obligation to manage it.

The wolf, the bear and other large carnivores are part of the native European fauna and biodiversity heritage. As predators at the top of the food chain, they play an important ecological role, contributing to the health and balance of ecosystems, for example through regulation of prey species (roe deers, red deers, or wild boars), and of other predators (foxes, jackals), as well as contribution to natural control of diseases through selective predation. Large carnivores have therefore been listed as species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive⁴, which means that their favourable conservation status must be achieved or maintained.

A recent amendment⁵ of the Habitats Directive has changed the protection status of the wolf from ‘strictly protected’ to ‘protected’, which gives additional flexibility to Member States in managing their local wolf populations, as long as their favourable conservation status is maintained.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35-55.

² https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/98665af0-7dfa-448c-8bf4-e1e086b50d2c/library/5891b3af-e561-4750-86cc-709857e88c94?p=1&n=10&sort=modified_DESC.

³ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1422 of 17 July 2025 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern, 17.7.2025.

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, pp. 7-50.

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.