



THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN HUNTERS

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Ms. Ursula Von Der Leyen

President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1040 Bruxelles

Brussels, 14 November 2023

Open Letter: Wolves in Europe – Moving forward for the future of rural communities and conservation

Dear President Von Der Leyen,

I write to you as President of FACE - the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation - which represents 7 million hunters in Europe. I wish to commend the European Commission for launching its consultation in September, gathering up-to-date data on wolf populations and their impacts. This is an important step in line with requests expressed by the European Parliament.

The large number of responses received shows that the wolf impacts rural communities. We expect that the majority who engaged did so because they felt their voices have not been heard, possibly accounting for 90%+ of the responses.

However, **we now urge you to move quickly to the next step** to put in place practical solutions to ensure appropriate management frameworks are in place to ensure coexistence. Successful management systems continue to break with the interpretation of “strict protection” under the Habitats Directive, coupled with confusion around the difficulty of applying “flexibility”. We hope practical solutions will be identified with some already in place well before the next European elections.

In our view, the EU needs “a large carnivore package” to:

1. Amend the annexes of the Habitats Directive;
2. Clarify the flexibility in the EU guidance document on strict protection so that this document reflects and gives real meaning to your recent statements, notably in your press release on ‘Wolves in Europe’ of the 4th of September 2023;
3. Implement a new approach to assess the conservation status of the wolf in line with its transboundary ecology.

We remain at your disposal should you require any further information.

Torbjörn Larsson
President

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