



Strasbourg, 6 May 2025

European Parliament confirms greater flexibility in wolf management across Europe

Joint Press Release by FACE and ELO

Strasbourg, 6 May 2025 – Today, the European Parliament voted on the European Commission's proposal to amend the protection status of the wolf under the EU Habitats Directive. By supporting the move from Annex IV ("strictly protected") to Annex V ("protected"), the Parliament has taken a key step toward a more balanced and pragmatic approach to large carnivore management in Europe.

This outcome follows years of strong calls from rural communities, landowners, farmers, and stakeholders, alongside the advocacy efforts by the **European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE)** and the **European Landowners' Organization (ELO)**. It also reflects the outcome of an intensive **18-month political process**, following the **Commission's proposal of December 2023** and the endorsement by the **Standing Committee of the Bern Convention**.

The vote acknowledges both the successful **recovery of wolf populations** under the **Habitats Directive** and the growing need for a **wider toolbox at regional and national levels**. **Wolf numbers have increased** significantly across many parts of Europe, **leading to more conflicts with human activities**.

Juan Ignacio Zoido, Member of the European Parliament and President of the European Parliament's Intergroup on "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside," expressed his support for this decision: *"I am proud that our Intergroup has served as one of the **core platforms for discussion** over the past several years for this topic. Now it's up to Member States to **take advantage of the greater flexibility** to implement **tailored conservation and management measures** that reflect local realities".*

While the wolf remains a **protected species at EU level**, this change introduces a more workable legal framework that will **help reduce excessive bureaucratic and legal burdens** in some Member States. It **empowers authorities and local actors** to respond more effectively to socio-economic pressures while

continuing to invest in **coexistence tools**, such as **damage prevention measures**, **monitoring**, and **stakeholder engagement**.

Laurens Hoedemaker, President of the FACE stated: *"FACE welcomes this vote, which will **reduce some heavy bureaucratic and legal conflicts** associated with 'strict protection'. Moreover, it shows that EU legislation can adapt where needed."*

Dr. Jurgen Tack, Secretary General of ELO, added: *"Today's vote is a clear recognition that **conservation policy must evolve alongside ecological realities**. By **introducing greater flexibility**, the EU is enabling Member States to **manage wolves more effectively**, while **still ensuring robust conservation standards**. The challenge ahead is to **translate this into evidence-based, locally adapted management plans that genuinely support coexistence**."*

FACE and ELO welcome this result as a significant and necessary development in EU nature policy. It reaffirms the principle that conservation **must evolve in response to ecological success and societal needs**, and that **long-term coexistence with large carnivores requires flexibility, responsibility, and locally adapted solutions**.

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About the European Landowners' Organization

ELO is a leading voice representing the interests of landowners, rural entrepreneurs, and rural land managers in Europe. We promote sustainable land management practices, fosters innovation, and advocates for the recognition of landowners' crucial role in shaping Europe's landscapes and rural areas.



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