

Ms Ursula von der Leyen

European Commission President

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Honourable Commission President Ursula von der Leyen,

We are writing to you in light of the recent debate on large carnivores. **The intention to downgrade the wolf's protection status is not based on scientific evidence or facts, but a purely political horseplay.**

Wolves and other indigenous large carnivores have always been intrinsic to Europe's ecological communities, **playing an important ecological role in shaping habitats, biodiversity and population dynamics or allowing natural regrowth in forests and preventing zoonosis and other disease spread.**

The return of wolves has led to cohabitation conflicts in the farming sector, especially in alpine areas where traditional supervised pastoralism had meanwhile discontinued. We want to stress that prevention measures to avoid conflicts of coexistence, when properly designed and implemented, such as the 40 successful LIFE+ projects already funded by the EU, have proven to be very effective in reducing the risk of predation. **Therefore, supporting livestock damage prevention measures must be our main goal.**

Since CAP Strategic Plans can be changed yearly, it is the Commission's responsibility to ensure that MS make effectively available all the cost coverage, funding and other measures already existing. We believe the CAP and LIFE+ can and should play a major role in supporting farmers in improving the protection of their grazing livestock from predators, thereby improving coexistence and achieving the CAP objective.

A peaceful coexistence is not just a goal but the only way forward in a world on the brink of biodiversity catastrophe. Species and environmental protection are an inherent part of the Green Deal which you have promised to continue to deliver.

We are urging you again not to reduce the protection status of wolves under the Bern Convention and EU law. In a political climate where the wolf is instrumentalized to worry

farmers and instil fear within the European population, the opening of the fauna and flora habitat directive will risk the protection of beavers, bears, lynx and other species.

Kind regards

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MEP Thomas Waitz (Greens/EFA)

MEP Rasmus Nordqvist (Greens/EFA)

MEP Younous Omarjee (The Left)

MEP Cristina Guarda (Greens/EFA)

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