



PRESS RELEASE

FACE: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR HUNTING & CONSERVATION

Note on the European Commission's request to Sweden to bring wolf hunting into line with EU standards

By encouraging dialogue between stakeholders in the frame of the *Large Carnivores Platform* while at the same time pursuing an infringement procedure against a Member State with a wolf population in favourable status, the European Commission is assuming a contradictory and ambiguous policy on large carnivore management, creating at the same time the cause and the solution to the conflict.

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 19 June 2015 – Five years after initiating an infringement procedure against Sweden, the European Commission has sent yet another reasoned opinion about how the wolf population is being managed. The Commission suggests that the 'local' wolf population has not yet reached favourable conservation status (FCS), despite the fact that the legal obligation is FCS at Member State level, which has been reached in Sweden according to the results recently published on the Habitats Directive.

The Swedish wolf population is favourable in terms of expansion in range, habitat quality and population size which was reported as 320 to 380 individual during the period 2007 to 2012¹. To reduce damages and selectively manage the Swedish Government authorized strictly supervised hunts in 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Considering this year's offspring the population today is well above 500 wolves. This is evidence that the measures put in place by the Swedish Government – which include hunting – were appropriate to maintain or restore the local wolf population at favourable conservation status.

Sweden is Europe's leading country on wolf research and its FCS is based on a vulnerability analysis. Sweden is actually one of few countries that is actually capable of producing such an analysis, which generates an accurate pedigree for every individual wolf belonging to this population.

In the view of the Commission Sweden is failing to meet its obligations because it is not considering other satisfactory alternatives and is not ensuring that the licensed hunts are undertaken under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent.

It must be noted that **the hunt undergoes strict limitations and rules**, as the number of wolves that can be harvested has been calculated by the Scandinavian Wolf Project, ensuring that the quota will in no way affect the FCS of the entire population.

The hunt is selective as it targets wolf packs that are identified on the base of genetic mapping.

¹ Eionet (European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity) Species assessments at EU biogeographical level. Assessments on the conservation status of the habitat types and species of Community interest have been carried out in EU 27 for the period 2007-2012, compiled as part of the Habitats Directive - Article 17 reporting process. Link to the [report](#).

The hunt is also directed at packs in areas with the highest socio-economic impact and damages, highest densities and highest level of inbreeding.

The hunt is done under **strictly supervised conditions** obliging every leader of a hunt to be registered and be connected to a SMS system that informs all participants in real time if a wolf is shot and when the quota has been reached. Every wolf is examined by County Board officials as well as the State Veterinary Office, providing valuable data for future population mapping.

There are **no other satisfactory solutions** than hunting since the main problem is the high wolf density in certain areas and considerable economic losses for local populations. Sweden is acting in pursuance of article 2.3 of the Habitats Directive which clearly states that economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics shall be taken into account in achieving the objectives of the directive. Wolf management through hunting is accepted by the majority of the Swedish population and contributed to substantially lower the conflict level in areas with a high abundance of wolves.

Regarding this infringement case, FACE regrets that the European Commission ignored to consult the *European Platform for the Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores*, established by the former Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potočnik to foster dialogue on how to reduce conflicts generated by large carnivores. FACE participates to the *Platform* believing that solutions to conflicts between people and large carnivores can be achieved through constructive dialogue among key stakeholders at local, national and EU levels. The decision of the European Commission weakens the role and effectiveness of the *Large Carnivores Platform*.

*****ENDS*****

NOTES TO EDITORS:

FACE is the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation. Established in 1977, FACE represents the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit-making nongovernmental organisation (NGO). FACE is made up of national hunters' associations from 35 European countries including the EU-28. FACE also has 5 Associate Members and is based in Brussels.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987, and more recently of Wetlands International. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting-related issues, from international conservation agreements to local implementations with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe. www.face.eu

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Filippo Segato, Secretary General, filippo.segato@face.eu T: +32 (0) 2 732 6900.

