

# FACE PRESS RELEASE

European Federation for Hunting and Conservation



## LARGE CARNIVORE HUNTING AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL GETS GREEN LIGHT

**Brussels, 10 May 2019** - FACE has consistently promoted the value of sustainable hunting as a management tool for large carnivores in Europe. Although some like to advocate for total protection, which typically drives conflict at the local level, the case for sustainable hunting and its role in improving coexistence was supported by the Opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the EU.

More specifically, the Opinion gives the green light for licensed wolf hunting under derogation for population management purposes provided certain strict criteria are fulfilled under EU law. The Opinion is not binding, but it is usually followed by the Court.

The case before the Court concerns a number of questions from the Finnish Supreme Administrative Court. The core issue is whether Finland may derogate from the strict protection provisions to allow a licensed hunt for wolves under Article 16.1.e of the EU Habitats Directive. Finland has argued, amongst other points, that the objectives of the derogations were to reduce poaching, prevent harm to dogs and improve the general feeling of security of people living near the areas occupied by wolves. The Opinion of the Advocate General supports that these objectives can be used to grant derogations.

*“FACE welcomes the Advocate General’s clarification that the Member States have leeway in order to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics when managing wolves and other large carnivore species – just as FACE has consistently argued”,* says Torbjörn Larsson, FACE President.

Although the Finnish questions specifically relate to the management of the Wolf, this case and its outcomes will also be relevant for the management of other strictly protected species across the EU, including other large carnivore species, such as Bear and Lynx.

The Advocate General reiterates previous findings of the Court that granting derogation permits remains possible by way of exception for species also in an unfavourable conservation status where it is duly established that they are not such as to worsen the unfavourable conservation status of those populations or to prevent their restoration at a favourable conservation status.

Member States must be able to identify clearly and precisely in the derogation decision the objectives being pursued, establish that the derogation is capable of achieving those objectives and demonstrate that there is no alternative means of achieving them.

*“The Opinion of the Advocate General, although not binding, sends an important message that there is a possibility for the Member States to act in a flexible and pragmatic way for both biologically and socially sustainable large carnivore management”, concludes Torbjörn Larsson.*

The final ruling by the EU Court of Justice is expected during the second half of 2019. The opinion of the Advocate General, which was issued this week, can be read [here](#).

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** FACE is the European Federation 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. FACE is made up of national hunters’ associations from 36 European countries including the EU-28. FACE is supported by 7 associate members and is based in Brussels. FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use and has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987. Visit [www.face.eu](http://www.face.eu)

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