



NO TIME TO LOSE

CIC and FACE statement on the conservation and management of large carnivores in Romania

On the occasion of the

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON LARGE CARNIVORES – CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

From 6 – 7 June 2019 in Bucharest, Romania

On 4 October 2016, Romania's then Minister of Environment, Water, and Forests announced a decision not to issue harvest quotas for Brown bears, Wolves, Lynx, and wild cats, citing concerns about the monitoring related to those large carnivore populations. Since this date, targeted improvements have been implemented in relation to large carnivore monitoring.

Prior to this, Romania was cited as an exemplary case study for the coexistence of viable large carnivore populations and people.

On 9 June 2017 the General Association of Romanian Hunters & Anglers (AGVPS) and WWF Romania, together with FACE and WWF Europe, convened a joint workshop on large carnivores in Romania, organised under the guidance of the EU Platform on Coexistence with Large Carnivores, of which CIC and FACE are members. [This workshop concluded](#), among other things:

- “That conservation and management of large carnivores should be determined on the basis of sound scientific evidence, using the best available and reliable data.”
- “The current hunting ban is not solving the problems in Romania” – *instead, the ban has led to heightened conflicts*

The CIC and FACE remain open to any improved large carnivore monitoring methods that complement successful methods in practice in Romania to-date.

Already before the 2016 decision of the Romanian Government [the different populations of the Brown Bear, Wolf and Lynx were stable](#), even increasing. Hunting was used as a management tool before accession of Romania to the EU and later, through the granting of derogation permits (Article 16, EU Habitats Directive).

Hence, **the CIC and FACE recommend removing the current hunting ban on large carnivores**, but at the same time, recognise that measures based on the Action Plans¹ have to be taken to ensure that the management of large carnivore populations in Romania remains sustainable.

The CIC and FACE agree that the current hunting ban on large carnivores in Romania has not been able to effectively deal with the related issues. It has led to increased large carnivore populations, and as a result also heightened conflicts, especially in rural areas. Currently, the level of the damage and even attacks on humans is increasing. This includes already three persons who have died since the start of 2019 as result of encounters with Brown bears. This is resulting in a lower acceptance of the

¹ Orders of the Ministry of Environment of Romania No. 625/2018 (Brown Bear) and 626/2018 (Wolf)



species within rural communities and some touristic areas of national and regional significance.

Tolerance and acceptance of large carnivores is critical to having abundant populations like in Romania. Therefore, local communities must be involved in and feel ownership of the conservation and management of these species. Controlled legal hunting plays an important role in management and conservation, and without it, the risk of erasing the social tolerance for these species will grow exponentially. In this context, evidence shows that in the absence of legal hunting, small-scale farmers and other land users, which are in permanent conflict with carnivores, may revert to solving management issues by themselves. Nobody wants to be part of a decision which leads to a rise in the levels of illegal killing anywhere in Europe.

Herein, we recall also remark number 35 of the European Parliament resolution of 15 November 2017 on an Action Plan for nature people and the economy (2017/2819(RSP))² and the sustainable development of rural areas.

As a means of guiding the sustainable management of large carnivore populations, Romanian stakeholders have agreed in a consultative process on Action Plans for Brown bears and Wolves in the framework of an EU-LIFE+ project, under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment of Romania. The Action Plans were published in the Romanian Government Gazette. To-date, only certain parts of the Action Plans have been implemented and the processes for issuing the derogation permits are bureaucratic and slow. The Action Plans are missing a framework to determine the harvest quotas for large carnivore species. This is a matter of urgency. We welcome the recent proposal on intervention quotas for problem Brown bear and Wolves.

This does not replace the necessity for preventive quotas to be issued in conformity with the Action Plans. Together, these quotas will alleviate conflicts.

The absence of quotas is seriously hindering the conservation and management of large carnivores in Romania. They are instead resulting in accelerated and increased risk of human-wildlife conflicts.

It is the opinion of the CIC and FACE that the Action Plans should be implemented in full and harvest quotas issued as a matter of urgency.

In light of this situation, the CIC and FACE invite the Government of Romania, making use of the MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON LARGE CARNIVORES – CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS to draw on the experiences of other EU countries in the management of their large carnivore populations, including through the use of derogations, and to issue scientifically justified intervention and preventive harvest quotas for Brown bears, Wolves, and Lynx.

The CIC and FACE urge the Government of Romania, to mobilise the EU Large Carnivore Platform, including existing regional platforms, to better fulfil its' role as mediator and to act as a credible partner in mitigating conflict situations between humans and large carnivores.

² Recalls that the coexistence of people and large carnivores, particularly wolves, can have negative impacts in certain regions on the sustainable development of ecosystems and inhabited rural areas, particularly with regard to traditional agriculture and sustainable tourism, and on socio-economic activities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take concrete measures to address these issues, so as not to endanger the sustainable development of rural areas, while recognising the available flexibility with the Habitats Directive.