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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
ENVIRONMENT

Directorate E – Compliance, Governance & Support to Member States

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Dear Mrs Hameleers,

Thank you for your letter of 15 March 2023 to Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius.

I am replying on his behalf.

You called upon the European Commission to re-open the infringement procedure against Sweden regarding its wolf management policies and bring the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) as soon as possible, as well as to investigate the legality of Sweden's lynx management policies.

As a native species of European wildlife, the wolf is an integral part of our biodiversity and natural heritage and plays an important ecological role in ecosystems. Under the Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup>, most wolf populations in Europe enjoy strict protection, with derogation possibilities.

The Swedish wolf population is currently categorised as endangered<sup>2</sup>. Hence, extreme care needs to be taken when allowing hunting based on derogations from the strict protection that applies to the species.

Sweden needs to ensure that such derogations fully comply with the Habitats Directive. In particular, it has to make sure that there is no negative impact on the conservation status of wolves in Sweden and that there are no satisfactory alternative solutions to hunting. According to the Habitats Directive, the wolf population also has to be restored to a favourable conservation status.

Please note that infringement case (INFR(2010)4200) against Sweden is still pending. In this context, the Commission is currently assessing possible next steps in this regard.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7)

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/pdf/144226239/attachment>

Regarding the Eurasian Lynx, which is also strictly protected under the Habitats Directive, we are aware that Sweden authorises licensed hunting on a regular basis on similar grounds as for wolves. We are therefore monitoring the situation carefully.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed

Nicola Notaro  
Head of Unit