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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

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**Standing Committee**

46th meeting

Strasbourg, 7-11 December 2026

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**Bureau of the Standing Committee**

22-24 September 2026

Strasbourg

**Open file: 2022/02**

**Alleged violation of the Convention in relation to deliberate  
killing of *Lutra lutra***

**(Austria)**

**- COMPLAINANT REPORT -**

*Document prepared by the  
Wiener Tierschutzverein (Tierschutz Austria)*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The otter regulation remains in effect until December 13; it then expires and must be re-adopted by the Carinthian state government. ***Carinthia has not yet implemented any changes.***

Officially, 55 animals may still be hunted and killed per year. The actual number is estimated to be higher.

In any case, the hunting of the strictly protected otter under a quota system remains a violation of the strict species protection provisions of the Bern Convention. Nothing will change regarding this type of hunting—which is not covered by species protection laws—under the new regulation either.

The state of Carinthia's argument is - completely unscientific—claiming that the figure of 55 corresponds to the annual population growth and that this would keep the population stable.

In fact, it is scientifically recognized that the otter is a strongly territorial animal and that the population regulates itself through the many natural capabilities that come into play in the struggle for survival.

If the Carinthian state government makes any changes at all in its new regulation, it will depend on which trap types remain permitted and exactly how the wording is phrased. The wording of the trap clause currently reads as follows. The section is very open to interpretation.

#### § 4 Trapping

(1) For captures between 1 March and 31 October, only traps may be used that, by virtue of their functionality, design, and size, ensure the animals remain unharmed during capture.

Only traps of the type permitted under hunting law for catching other similarly sized species of the marten family may be used.

Live-capture traps for otters must be designed in such a way that, as far as possible, other wildlife species cannot be caught in them. The live traps must be checked at least twice daily.

(2) (2) For catches made between 1 November and the last day of February, all permitted capture devices and methods may be used or employed; ***however, live traps should be used as a priority. When using Conibear traps, they must be used only with a specific bait and underwater. Furthermore, only Conibear traps with a side length of 30 cm may be used.***

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