



Strasbourg, 28 August 2025

T-PVS/Report (2025)11

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

45th meeting

Strasbourg, 8 – 12 December 2025

**Meeting of the Group of Experts
on Large Carnivores**

10-11 June 2025

In Strasbourg and online

- Meeting Report -

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- take note of the report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores, held on 10 and 11 June 2025, including the information provided by the experts on activities and initiatives on the conservation and management of large carnivores across Europe;
- take note of the state of play in developing the conservation strategies of the Balkan and Carpathian lynx;
- take note of the document presenting best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe; consider adopting a recommendation referring to the paper;
- take note of the topical issues identified by the Group regarding large carnivore management, to be prioritised at the next online meeting of the Group in autumn 2025;
- take note of the proposals of the Group of Experts regarding its future work, including the provisional revised Terms of Reference of the Group (alongside Rules of Procedure to be prepared by the Secretariat, common for all Bern Convention thematic Groups of Experts), review of the recommendations concerning management and conservation of large carnivores, and the monitoring of the status of wolf populations.

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome address by the Bern Convention Secretariat

The Secretariat opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

The new Secretary of the Bern Convention, Ms Grazia Alessandra Siino, introduced some recent developments at the Council of Europe related to the Environment, in particular the newly adopted first [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#) and the new [Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#). The Strategy recognised the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, and its impacts on human rights. The purpose of this new Convention was to prevent and combat environmental crime, promote national and international cooperation, and establish minimum legal standards to guide States. Ms Siino wished the Group of Experts a fruitful meeting.

2. Introductory round

All the participants, both in person and online, briefly presented themselves.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The Group of Experts was informed of the objectives of the meeting.

The meeting agenda was adopted with no amendments.

4. Earlier work of the Bern Convention related to Large Carnivores and relaunching the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts was informed of the earlier work of the Bern Convention related to Large Carnivores and the relaunching of the Group of Experts.

The Secretariat recalled that the inaugural meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores was held in Oslo in June 2000. Since then, the Group has met intermittently. The last formal meeting of the Group took place in May 2012 in Switzerland (more details are available [here](#)).

The Secretariat provided an overview of the historical engagement of the Bern Convention in the field of large carnivore conservation, dating back to 1988, when Recommendation No. 10 (1988) concerning the protection of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) was adopted by the Standing Committee, followed by the adoption of the Recommendations No. 17 (1989) on the protection of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), No. 19 (1991) concerning the conservation of the Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) and No. 20 (1991) on the conservation of the European lynx (*Lynx lynx*), No. 37 (1992), on the conservation of the Cantabrian bear and No. 43 (1995) on the conservation of threatened mammals in Europe.

In 1998 five Action Plans for the conservation of large carnivores were elaborated and discussed at a meeting of governmental experts held in Slovakia, followed up by the adoption by the Standing Committee of the Recommendation No. 74 (1999) on the conservation of large carnivores, referring to the Action Plans. Over the years, a series of recommendations have been adopted, addressing both the conservation of individual species and broader issues relating to large carnivores as a group (more details and links available [here](#)). It was noted that the Bern Convention has worked in close cooperation with the Large Carnivores Initiative for Europe and in coordination with the European Commission. The most recent Recommendation of the Standing Committee, dating from 2021, has a localised scope and was adopted in the context of the Bern Convention's case-file system, which serves as the mechanism for monitoring compliance with the Bern Convention. Two ongoing, open case-files relate to the culling of

wolves in Switzerland and Norway. The Secretariat also recalled that in December 2024 the Standing Committee took a decision in favour of the EU proposal to change the protection status of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention. While taking that decision, the Standing Committee mandated the Group of Experts to monitor wolf populations in the Contracting Parties, which contributed to relaunching the Group of Experts. The Term of Reference of the Group, adopted in 2000, encompassed such a task but required revision in light of evolving conservation challenges and policy frameworks. The Term of Reference was briefly presented to the participants, and the need to elect a new Chair of the Group of Experts was highlighted.

5. Reporting from the Parties and Observers – conservation and management of large carnivores at national level

The Group of Experts was informed of recent conservation plans and other initiatives and actions implemented at national level on the conservation and management of large carnivores.

Ms Jindřiška Jelínková, representative of the **Czech Republic**, delivered a presentation outlining the country's current strategies and challenges in the monitoring and conservation of large carnivore species, with a particular focus on wolves, brown bears, and Eurasian lynxes, all of which benefit from protection under the EU Natura 2000 network. Ms Jelínková recalled that wolves are also subject to strict protection under national legislation and noted that, according to the most recent national conservation status report, the species continues to be classified as in an unfavourable state of conservation. However, recent years have seen notable progress due to natural recolonisation processes, including the first confirmed instance of reproduction in the Czech Republic in recent history. Ms Jelínková highlighted the crucial contributions of non-governmental organisations and academic institutions to species monitoring efforts and underlined that the return of wolves to the Czech landscape has generated new conservation and management challenges. The Czech authorities adopted a *Wolf Management Plan* in 2020 to ensure the attainment of a favourable conservation status for wolves while addressing the socio-economic conflicts arising from their presence, notably in the agricultural sector. As wolf-related incidents have increased, the Czech government has allocated additional financial resources to compensate for damages and to promote the implementation of preventive measures. Although an existing legal framework dating back to 2000 regulates compensation, it has been deemed inadequate, as it does not take into account the preventive actions undertaken by livestock owners. Amendments to this legislation are therefore under consideration. Ms Jelínková emphasised the importance of promoting the use of mobile and effective protective measures and reiterated the legal and societal expectation that farmers tolerate the presence of wolves in the natural environment, including certain constraints on agricultural activities. The slides from Ms Jelínková's presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Mr John Linnell, on behalf of the **Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)**, provided an update on recent developments concerning the management of large carnivores in Norway, with particular reference to the evolving political context and multiple rulings by the High Court. Mr Linnell outlined the overarching objective of national policy in this domain: to reconcile two potentially conflicting goals, the conservation of large carnivore populations and the continued viability and growth of livestock production mechanism. Mr Linnell underlined that this balance is sought through the establishment of clear population targets and pre-defined spatial distribution plans, which serve to enhance predictability for stakeholders, including land users and local communities. A central element of the Norwegian approach is the use of regulated hunting through licensing schemes aimed at confining carnivore populations within designated management zones, representing approximately 5% of the

national territory with regard to the wolf. Mr Linnell noted that population targets for species such as wolves, brown bears, and lynxes remain relatively modest. Despite these limited targets, the Norwegian authorities have invested substantially in scientific research and monitoring, including cross-border cooperation initiatives with neighbouring countries. With regard to the brown bear population, Mr Linnell observed that despite licensed hunting activities along the Swedish border, recent data show an upward trend in population numbers and that the conservation targets for lynx and bears have been met. Nevertheless, Mr Linnell emphasised that human-wildlife conflicts remain widespread, and due to the lack of effective preventive measures, the current management framework relies heavily on technically oriented regulation and strict license control mechanism. Mr Linnell concluded by reiterating that, in the Norwegian context, successful large carnivore management continues to depend on clearly defined objectives, strong scientific support, and rigorous implementation through institutional mechanisms. The slides from Mr Linnell's presentation are accessible via this [link](#) (to follow).

Mr Peep Männil, the representative of **Estonia**, provided a comprehensive overview of the recent developments concerning the brown bear population within the Baltic region, as well as the challenges faced in its management. Over the past decade, notable changes have occurred, primarily due to the necessity to expand the species' range. It was reported that during last five-year period a reproductive population established in Latvia and now the population estimates exceeded 150 individuals. In Estonia there are about 1000 bears. The historical distribution of the brown bear in Estonia was outlined, emphasising the species' long-standing exposure to regular hunting pressure. A standardised monitoring methodology was established and implemented starting in 2002/2003 to track population dynamics. Numerous cases of damage attributed mainly to juvenile bears have been documented. However, Estonia currently lacks systematic data concerning crop damage. Incidents involving attacks on humans remain relatively infrequent, with only six cases recorded since the year 2000. Mr Männil informed participants that, according to the Habitat Directive report of 2018, the conservation status of the brown bear population in Estonia is favourable. The species is managed under the framework of the national Large Carnivore management plan. Mr Männil stressed that local bear densities do not necessarily correspond to the frequency or severity of damages, underscoring the efficacy and responsibility of Estonia's bear management strategy over the last two decades. Despite these positive developments, concerns were expressed regarding the future management of the species, with an emphasis on the need for significant modifications to previous management approaches. In conclusion, the Estonian delegation proposed that Estonia be granted a geographical derogation from Appendix II of the Bern Convention and Annex IV of the EU Habitats directive. Furthermore, it called for the initiation of discussions on the potential downlisting of certain brown bear populations in selected countries. The slides from Mr Männil' presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Ms Andrea Solić, on behalf of the **Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Platform**, provided an update on current actions and challenges related to maintaining wild wolf populations in anthropogenic landscapes in Europe, with a particular focus on Croatia. Ms Solić recalled that a draft action plan had been proposed in the previous year with the aim of supporting coexistence with large carnivores, but this plan has not yet been formally adopted. While some initial measures have been implemented, progress remains limited. Monitoring efforts have been initiated on several occasions, but none have yielded sustainable outcomes to date. The general context remains challenging, and there has been no significant shift in trends related to coexistence or population dynamics. The estimated wolf population in the region currently stands at approximately 160 individuals. Ms Solić shared an example of ongoing actions relevant to the work of the Group of Experts, notably the LIFE Wild Wolf project, co-financed by the European Union. The project brings together 18 partners across 18 European countries and aims to improve, or where already favourable to maintain the conservation status of wolf populations

persisting in or expanding into human-dominated landscapes. Ms Solić noted that, in Croatia, only six damage compensation cases have been recorded, none of which were attributed to wolves. Nevertheless, the region of Dalmatia remains the least tolerant towards wolf presence. Within this context, the LIFE Wild Dog Dalmatia initiative seeks to address human-wildlife conflicts and promote coexistence through targeted measures. In terms of research, Ms Solić presented findings related to wolf-dog hybridisation. While no first-generation hybrids were identified, evidence of backcrossing with wolves was detected. A study on protective vests for hunting dogs was also conducted, with positive feedback from most hunters. While useful in increasing tolerance by mitigating damages, such measures risk reinforcing the perception that wolf attacks are more frequent than they are, especially in areas with low wolf density. Finally, Ms Solić highlighted the launch in 2024 of stakeholder platforms as part of the EU-LIFE Wild Wolf framework, citing the Dalmatian Stakeholder Platform as a particularly effective example, despite implementation challenges. These platforms aim to establish basic communication protocols and rules to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and improve coexistence strategies. The slides from Ms Solić presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Mr Eloy Revilla, Director of the **Estacion Biologica de Doñana**, provided a comprehensive update on the reintroduction and recovery of the Iberian lynx, highlighting it as one of the most successful large carnivore conservation initiatives in Europe. Mr Revilla recalled that the Iberian lynx was recognised relatively late as a distinct species, having evolved in the glacial refugia of the Iberian Peninsula over the past two million years, in coevolution with European habitats. Between 1950 and 2000, the species experienced a dramatic decline, with population collapse driven by a combination of factors including direct persecution, habitat loss, a severe decline in rabbit populations, which is its primary prey, and other compounding pressures. In 2002, the species was officially listed as *Critically Endangered*. This status was downgraded to *Endangered* in 2015 and further to *Vulnerable* in 2024, reflecting significant recovery. As of the most recent estimates, the Iberian lynx population exceeds 2,021 individuals, with approximately 1,730 located in Spain. Dr. Revilla presented data illustrating the temporal and spatial expansion of the species' distribution across distinct periods. Dr. Revilla identified six key factors behind the success of the Iberian lynx recovery: a science-based plan, strong legal protection, coordinated multi-level governance, sustained political and financial commitment, robust monitoring with adaptive management, and transparent communication to engage stakeholders and the public. In conclusion, Mr Revilla identified the recovery of the Iberian lynx as a model for large carnivore conservation in Europe, offering valuable lessons for other initiatives across the continent. The slides from Mr Revilla presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Ms Ilka Reinhardt, on behalf of the **Federal Documentation and Consultation Centre on Wolves (DBBW)**, provided an overview of the status and distribution of wolf populations in Germany. Ms Reinhardt reported that both population growth and geographic distribution vary significantly across regions. Since Germany is a federal country the responsibility for monitoring lies with the federal states. In order to ensure a uniform evaluation of monitoring data across administrative boundaries, national monitoring standards were developed. The monitoring data collected by the federal states are compiled annually on a national level. This is done by the DBBW. The DBBW was established in 2016 by the Federal Agency of Nature Conservation (BfN) and is a project-based consortium of different scientific institutions: The Leibniz Institute for Zoo- and Wildlife Research (IZW) is the national reference centre for dead wolf monitoring. Until 2022 all wolves found dead were sent to the IZW where wolf carcasses undergo an examination scheme oriented towards human medicine. As the number of wolf carcasses recently reached about 200 per year only a representative sample of carcasses are sent to the IZW for detailed analyses. The information to the wolves found dead are timely published on the DBBW-website. The Senckenberg Centre for Wildlife Genetics serves as national reference centre for wolf

genetics. All federal states send their genetic wolf samples (monitoring and livestock damage samples) to this genetic lab. About 6000 samples are analyzed here every year. Since the population size is given as the number of packs and pairs, the genetic identification of wolf family groups is the backbone of the current wolf monitoring in Germany. The third scientific institution in the DBBW consortium is the LUPUS Institute for Wolf Monitoring and Research that advises state and federal Nature Conservation authorities on demand on wolf related issues, e.g. in respect to monitoring, wolf behaviour, etc. The LUPUS Institute compiles the state monitoring and damage data on a national level that are published in yearly status and damage reports. Information about wolves in Germany is regularly provided on the DBBW-website (www.dbbw-wolf.de). In the context of the DBBW-project a wolf database was developed and is available to the nature conservation authorities of all federal states in order to archive and process their regional wolf data and to provide data relevant for the national data compilation. Ms Reinhardt referred to the development of wolf caused damages in Germany. This mainly affects sheep and goats. The amount spent annually by the federal states on herd protection measures is approximately 30 times as high as the compensation payments. While data for 2024 are still being compiled, preliminary figures indicate a decrease in damage cases last year. The reported number of livestock losses, approximately 6,000 animals per year, may appear high in isolation. However, Ms Reinhardt stressed that, when compared with the total number of animals disposed of annually through rendering plants for unrelated reasons, wolf-related losses represent a very small fraction. Therefore, while damage exists, it should be understood in context and does not, in itself, justify major management interventions. The slides from Ms Reinhardt presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

6. Conservation and management of large carnivores at the population scale/regional level

The Group of Experts was informed of recent conservation plans and other initiatives and actions implemented at the population scale/regional level on the conservation and management of large carnivores.

Mr Marco Cipriani, on behalf of the DG Environment of the **European Commission**, informed participants of the latest developments at EU level concerning large carnivores, with a particular focus on the wolf. Mr Cipriani reported that the process of downlisting the protection status of the wolf under the Habitats Directive has now been effectively concluded. The European Commission had submitted a proposal on 7 March 2025 to amend the annexes of the Habitats Directive in line with the revised listing of the wolf under the Bern Convention. Both EU co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union agreed with the proposal, with only three Member States abstaining. The adoption reflects a broad consensus among Member States. The amendment will be published shortly in the Official Journal of the European Union and will enter into force 20 days following publication. As this concerns a modification to a directive, Member States are required to transpose the changes into their national legislation within a period of 18 months. Mr Cipriani recalled that, under the amended provisions, Member States retain the discretion to maintain the current strict protection status for the wolf, should they deem it appropriate. However, they must notify the Commission accordingly. Mr Cipriani further underlined that the Commission would continue to closely monitor the implementation of this change, both bilaterally with Member States and through established advisory and expert group structures. In parallel, the Commission remains committed to supporting coexistence measures. This includes the continuation of a dedicated contract running until the end of 2027, which supports the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, as well as regional and national activities in several Member States. Moreover, the Commission is actively engaged in collecting and disseminating scientific studies and analyses related to large carnivores and continues to implement a

range of communication activities. Mr Cipriani reaffirmed the Commission's ongoing commitment to the conservation of the wolf and other large carnivores, in the context of promoting sustainable coexistence, and emphasised that this commitment remains unchanged, irrespective of the recent downlisting of the wolf's protection status.

In addition, Ms Iva Obretenova, also on behalf of the DG Environment of the **European Commission**, provided complementary information concerning ongoing EU-level monitoring activities. Ms Obretenova informed the participants that, in the course of the current year, Member States are expected to submit their national assessments on the Conservation Status of species and habitats protected by the EU Nature Directives, as required by Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. These national reports, which will of course also cover large carnivores, are anticipated to be submitted over the summer. Based on these submissions, the European Environment Agency and the Commission will then prepare the assessment of the conservation status at EU biogeographical level. This synthesis process will require time, and the resulting EU assessment is expected to become available by the end of 2026. Ms Obretenova noted that these assessments will be highly relevant to the discussions within this expert group, particularly in the context of ongoing considerations related to large carnivore conservation and management.

Mr Luigi Boitani, on behalf of the **Istituto di Ecologia Applicata** and the **IUCN SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe**, presented an overview of the current status of wolves in Europe, drawing on the findings of a recent assessment carried out by the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe under contract with the European Commission. The initiative involved over 50 experts across Europe and covered six large carnivore species. Mr Boitani reported a continued and significant expansion of wolf distribution across the continent, with the species now occupying an estimated 2.2 million km², representing a 40% increase in range since 2016. Notable areas of expansion include the Italian Peninsula, Central Europe, particularly from western Poland into Germany and the Netherlands, and more unexpectedly, the Netherlands, where 11 wolf packs are now established. Wolves have also reappeared in regions from which they were long absent, such as the Peloponnese in Greece. Increasingly, wolves are being recorded near or within urban areas in Rome, Milan, and other Italian cities, raising concerns about human-wildlife interactions and the emergence of habituated or human-confident wolves. The current European wolf population is estimated at approximately 23,000 individuals in EU and non-EU countries combined. While the majority of populations show positive trends in both range and numbers, data remains limited for the Dinaric-Balkan population, where the trend is currently classified as unknown due to insufficient monitoring. Mr Boitani highlighted the methodological diversity in population estimates across Europe, cautioning against direct comparison between countries. He also presented data on livestock depredation, noting that approximately 62,000 sheep are killed annually by large carnivores in the EU, representing 0.02% of the total EU livestock population. While the overall economic impact is limited at EU level (approx. €18–20 million annually), the local impact can be severe, particularly in areas where preventive measures are lacking. However, Mr Boitani stressed that the quality and comparability of depredation data remain highly variable due to inconsistent compensation schemes and reporting practices across Member States and regions. Finally, Mr Boitani reflected on the implications of the recent EU decision to downgrade the wolf's protection status, warned of a likely increase in culling pressures and emphasised the importance of integrating such measures within robust monitoring frameworks and experimental designs to generate evidence-based insights for future management. Mr Boitani also underlined the need to advance the use of the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) concept and referred to a recently published methodological report, commissioned by the European Commission, proposing improved approaches to defining FCS reference values. Mr Boitani called on the Bern Convention and its bodies to consider how this policy shift might be used as a catalyst for improved

management, monitoring, and coexistence strategies for large carnivores in Europe. The slides from Mr Boitani presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Mr Martin Dula, representing **Mendel University** in Brno, presented the main findings of the LECA project ("Supporting the Coexistence and Conservation of Carpathian Large Carnivores"), co-financed by the Interreg Central Europe programme. Emphasising the ecological importance of the Carpathians as a stronghold for large carnivores such as bears, wolves, and lynx, Mr Dula highlighted both the conservation success and the growing human-wildlife conflicts in the region. The project seeks to enhance cross-border cooperation through harmonised monitoring, conflict mitigation, and anti-poaching strategies, structured around three thematic pillars. Activities are being implemented in four cross-border pilot areas, namely Czech-Slovak, Slovak-Polish, Slovak-Hungarian, and Slovak-Polish-Ukrainian, complemented by reference sites in Romania and Slovenia. Mr Dula also underscored the value of combining conventional and innovative monitoring tools, such as genetic sampling, camera traps, GPS collars, and stress hormone analysis, as well as the importance and challenges of involving local stakeholders. The project will result in thematic guidance documents, regional recommendations, and an updated Carpathian Action Plan, to be disseminated at a final conference in 2026. An additional achievement is the development of the "Carnet" mobile application to engage hunters, foresters, and other stakeholders in data collection. Mr Dula concluded by reiterating the need for strengthened, evidence-based collaboration across the Carpathians to support the effective management and conservation of large carnivores. The slides from Mr Dula presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Ms Andrea Solić presented the state of large carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region, highlighting the progress of the **Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Platform**. The initiative aims to establish a long-term collaborative framework among ten countries, spanning both EU and non-EU members, through a voluntary coordination mechanism and knowledge exchange. Despite the absence of a binding legal framework, the platform fosters cooperation across differing legislative, funding, and management contexts. The region's shared bear population is managed under diverse regimes, while populations of Eurasian lynx and Balkan lynx remain fragmented and in varied conservation status. Since its inception in 2020, the platform, facilitated by Adelphi and Carnivora Magna, has supported information exchange, capacity-building, and technical assistance, with engagement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including government agencies, academia, NGOs, and international partners. Significant challenges persist, particularly regarding the lack of reliable data and monitoring on population trends. The platform's initial situational analysis has informed national and regional priorities such as transboundary monitoring, connectivity assessments, intervention protocols, and stakeholder engagement. Positive developments include the removal of wolf bounties in North Macedonia and progress in management planning across several countries, driven in part by peer influence within the platform. Nonetheless, transboundary action remains limited, with the Prespa region serving as a notable exception. The platform underscores the need for harmonised methodologies, improved data sharing, and better integration of conservation requirements into infrastructure planning and funding frameworks, particularly for non-EU states with limited access to financial resources. The slides from Ms Solić presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

7. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Group elected Mr Luigi Boitani, representing Italy, as the Chair of the Group of Experts. There was no candidate for a Vice-Chair.

8. Development of the conservation strategies of the Balkan and Carpathian lynx

The Group of Experts provided input on the draft conservation strategies of the Balkan and Carpathian lynx.

Mr Urs Breitenmoser, on behalf of the **Large Carnivore Expert Group** (IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group), presented an update on the development of conservation strategies for the Balkan and Carpathian lynx subspecies, with a focus on enhancing transboundary cooperation and alignment with international frameworks. Mr Breitenmoser noted that, following the successful listing of the Balkan lynx under Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), initiated by North Macedonia and Albania and strongly supported by the European Union, a concerted action proposal was adopted to address urgent conservation needs. This initiative also includes cooperation with the Bern Convention and the Carpathian Convention, reflecting an unprecedented integration of multiple international instruments for terrestrial mammals in Europe. The draft strategies aim to address the critical conservation status of both the Balkan and Carpathian lynx, characterised by small, fragmented populations, historical genetic bottlenecks, and limited institutional coordination. For the Balkan lynx, a range-wide strategy has been drafted through an online expert process and reviewed during a physical consultation meeting in Skopje in June 2025. The final version will be submitted to the CMS, Bern Convention, and relevant range states for endorsement. A similar process is ongoing for the Carpathian lynx strategy, expected by autumn 2025. Both strategies follow the IUCN SSC species conservation planning cycle, emphasising a logical framework approach with clear visions, goals as the downlisting the Balkan lynx to “Endangered” by 2040, threat analyses, measurable objectives, and coordinated implementation mechanisms, including the establishment of a coordination committee for the Balkan lynx. These efforts are further supported by the development of IUCN SSC guidelines for reintroduction, aiming to restore a viable metapopulation structure in continental Europe and ensure effective, cross-border conservation governance. The slides from Mr Breitenmoser presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

Mr Jochen Krebühl, speaking on behalf of the **Foundation for Nature and Environment Rheinland-Pfalz**, provided an update on conservation efforts targeting the Carpathian lynx, with a particular focus on the *Linking Lynx LIFE project*. This project aims to enhance the long-term viability of lynx populations by improving connectivity between fragmented subpopulations, including through ongoing and planned reintroduction and reinforcement activities across Germany and other parts of Central Europe. Building on earlier work presented to the Bern Convention Standing Committee in 2019, the Linking Lynx initiative has now developed into a structured expert network, with six thematic working groups covering sourcing, policy, public engagement, monitoring, genetics, and health. The project also promotes harmonised standards and protocols for lynx conservation across the Carpathians and Alpine regions. The expert group collaborates closely with IUCN and KORA, and its outputs are informing European-level guidelines and supporting ongoing national projects. While the network has made significant progress in establishing tools, protocols, and a knowledge base actively used by field practitioners, Mr Krebühl also highlighted several challenges, including limited availability of suitable breeding stock, high demand from in situ projects, and logistical constraints related to transport, veterinary care, and housing of animals not fit for release. The group continues to work towards developing a coordinated system for sourcing, breeding, and monitoring lynx populations in line with best practices and Bern Convention recommendations. The slides from Mr Krebühl presentation are accessible via this [link](#).

9. Learning from contextualised practice

Mr John Linnell, from the **Norwegian Institute for Nature Research**, presented the paper entitled *Best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe, with a special focus on brown bear and grey wolf*, co-authored with Mr Luigi Boitani. This document was prepared to initiate a structured discussion on management approaches to both strictly protected and protected large carnivore species, not least in view of the downlisting of the wolf. Mr Linnell emphasised that existing legal and policy frameworks offered limited practical guidance on the management of large carnivores, especially in case of a change in the protection status, and that this guidance was urgently needed due to persistent controversies, court rulings, and open infringement cases. Drawing on diverse European experiences, the document does not take a normative stance but seeks to present a structured overview of practical issues that must be addressed to ensure best practices are applied under either legal status. It distinguishes between non-lethal and lethal management approaches, providing a checklist of key considerations for each. The section on lethal management includes issues often overlooked in conservation contexts, such as hunting safety, hunter training, animal welfare, ethical considerations, quota setting, monitoring, transparency, and legal robustness. It was highlighted that hunting or targeted removal, when properly implemented, is not inherently incompatible with achieving favourable conservation status. Mr Linnell underlined the need for clear objectives, stakeholder communication, adaptive management systems, and legal clarity to prevent conflict escalation and ensure legitimacy. The document, which compiles practical knowledge and examples from various European contexts, is intended as a living tool to support authorities and practitioners. Mr Linnell invited the group to provide comments during the meeting or subsequently by email, noting that this version represents an initial effort to initiate wider consultation and refinement. The report is accessible at this [link](#).

The Group of Experts provided guidance on learning from contextualised practice in conservation and management of large carnivores. Some restructuring of the document was recommended, to optimise the scope and sequence of topics addressed, as well as potentially, if and where relevant, extending it to other species of large carnivores. While the part on non-lethal measures can be applied to any large carnivore species, irrespective of their legal protection status (Appendix II or III of the Convention), some parts of the lethal measures section, that are explicitly referring to ordinary hunting activities, would only be relevant and legally applicable to protected species under Appendix III. The diverse ecological and socio-economic contexts of the Bern Convention Parties across the continent should be considered in providing examples and adapting any solutions inspired by the best practice. Further comments provided orally and in writing after the meeting will be incorporated in the revised draft, to be considered by the autumn Bureau in September, the Group at its follow-up online meeting in October, and the Standing Committee in December 2025. The representatives of the European Commission also expressed the opinion that depending on the progress in the revision of the paper, the second meeting of the Group in October should consider if it is not opportune to submit the paper for adoption by the 45th Standing Committee, through a Recommendation.

10. Contemporary issues of large carnivore conservation and management

The Group of Experts identified the key issues and needs, as well as the challenges and opportunities in terms of large carnivore conservation and management, in particular at the European level. These proposals reflect a broad range of topics raised by participants and are intended as a starting point for further discussion, refinement and prioritisation.

1. Conservation Status and Population Management

- Explore the technical and scientific potential conditions and criteria for downlisting of certain brown bear populations, based on clear criteria. Any work engaged in this direction should consider the developments by another Working Group under the Convention, exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention.
- Carefully review the conservation status of populations with unknown status and trends before any proposal for new management measures or status change of other large carnivore species.
- Emphasis on the need for science-based thresholds and clear procedures for revising species status in annexes and appendices at continental and national levels. The link with the work of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention was made again.
- Deal with the concerns that large-scale ecological assessments may risk “free-riding” between countries; proposals to reconcile ecological and practical management scales.
- Call for conservation status assessments to be more species-specific (e.g. biogeographic units often unsuitable for wolves).
- Assess the Favourable Reference Value (FRVs) of wolves, at sub-population levels, particularly after recent downlisting proposals.
- Ensure limitations and prohibitions on hunting when a species remains in an unfavourable conservation state, even if downlisted.
- Clarify when and how to use derogations for Appendices II and III species, with strong science-based monitoring.
- Introduce genetic reinforcement measures for small, vulnerable populations.
- Operationalise the population-level approach.
- Strengthen biologically sound transboundary management, while clarifying how to implement it legally and politically.
- Address habitat fragmentation and maintain ecological connectivity, including assessing planned infrastructure impacts at the population scale.
- Maintain continuous monitoring of FCS as a management priority.
- Examine the relationship between FCS in the EU Habitats Directive and the “Satisfactory conservation status” as specified in several Recommendations throughout the years and most recently, in the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030 (under target 2.1).

2. Monitoring and Enforcement

- Suggestion to review and summarise all Bern Convention Recommendations related to large carnivores for clarity and coherence.
- Call for improved enforcement of common monitoring criteria and harmonised population estimation methods for wolves and bears across countries.
- Proposal to systematically include stakeholders in monitoring efforts, provide feedback and share results of monitoring with stakeholders; if hunting is allowed, biological samples should be collected for health checks and research.
- Proposal to monitor the conflict, especially when the management regime changes - does this reduce the conflict (decrease damages, increase acceptance, etc)?
- Support for stronger cross-border collaboration and data analysis to show the effects of different management measures, including in term of affecting livestock loss.
- Highlighting the necessity to monitor closely large carnivore populations and to better harmonise monitoring for transboundary populations.

- Call for the application of the precautionary principle where data is insufficient or unreliable.
- Proposals to strengthen institutional capacity and ensure better law enforcement to combat illegal killings and wildlife crime.
- Research suggestions to explore the role of large carnivores in shaping forest structures and supporting ecosystem restoration.
- Suggestions to clarify appropriate land use and management practices within the Emerald Network and Natura 2000 sites to support large carnivore needs.
- Proposal for clear responsibilities and penalties to ensure compliance with conservation requirements.

3. Coexistence and Conflict Management

- Proposal to develop best practices and guidance for integrating large carnivore conservation needs into other sectors (agriculture, transport, forestry, energy, defence).
- Proposal to focus geographically on regions where there is less attention and scarce resources to deal with large carnivore management (e.g. DiBaPi Region, South-East Europe, Balkans) and where challenges are specific.
- Proposal to address effective and science-based conflict management and promoting co-existence, including better communication with stakeholders, policymakers and the general public.
- Suggestions to improve public information on behaviour during encounters with large carnivores to reduce fear and promote coexistence.
- Calls for innovative conflict prevention and mitigation measures and species-specific approaches, especially where wolves may be considered more controversial by some interest groups.
- Proposal to manage stray dog populations as part of conflict mitigation strategies.
- Suggestions to address differences in status and management rules for large carnivore species with different protection status, taking the social, legal and political context into account, including facilitating management actions of EU and non-EU countries sharing a population.
- Assess the technical feasibility and desirability of zoning - such as protection zones and areas with limited presence, while avoiding extensive negative zoning to maintain connectivity and facilitate migration.
- Proposal to introduce and strengthen the monitoring of impacts from derogations and management actions on conflict mitigation and co-existence.

4. Raising awareness and Sustainable Development

- Suggestions to strengthen the positive narrative about large carnivores as keystone species and highlight their ecological roles and ecosystem services.
- Proposals to improve communication strategies and public relations, involving authorities and media actors to counter negative stereotypes.
- Proposal to develop sustainable ecotourism linked to large carnivores as an economic incentive for conservation.
- Emphasis on promoting coexistence as a core concept, with tailored messaging and practical measures for conflict reduction.
- Calls for closer coordination and information exchange between sectors and levels of governance, underpinned by science-based management, the precautionary principle and the rule of law.

This list of proposals is a starting point, which will need to be reviewed, consolidated and prioritised at the next meeting of the Group of Experts to help focus efforts on the most pressing and feasible actions for large carnivore conservation across Europe.

11. Proposals to the Standing Committee for further issues to address

The Group of Experts discussed about reviewing the recommendations of the Bern Convention Standing Committee concerning large carnivores.

The Group will focus on identifying priorities for future action by the Bern Convention in the conservation and management of large carnivores at the occasion of its online follow-up meeting in the autumn.

Furthermore, the Group engaged in an exchange regarding its role and examined the Terms of Reference.

11.1 Discussion on the need to review the Bern Convention Steering Committee recommendations concerning large carnivores

The Group of Experts held an exchange on the need to review the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention related to the management and conservation of large carnivores.

The Secretariat presented the working document *Overview of the Bern Convention Steering Committee Recommendations Concerning Large Carnivores*, which enumerates 21 non-binding recommendations adopted since 1988. These instruments vary in geographical scope and thematic focus, ranging from pan-European to regional and local levels. The Secretariat noted that while some recommendations remain pertinent, others may require contextual updating or may have lost relevance due to evolving conservation priorities. As systematic monitoring of the implementation and impact of these recommendations is limited, the Secretariat proposed a pragmatic approach: to identify the most relevant recommendations, assess gaps in current guidance, and consider presenting the content in a more accessible and user-oriented format. This could involve a desk-based review with proposals to be developed in view of the next meeting of the Group, scheduled for the second half of the year.

The Group welcomed this approach and emphasised the particular relevance of certain recommendations of the Standing Committee, notably [Recommendation No. 173 \(2014\)](#) on hybridisation between wild grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) and domestic dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), and stressed the need to update it. Experts also highlighted the added value of developing a new recommendation addressing the issue of human-confident large carnivores, while noting that some existing recommendations have become less applicable due to their scope or the context of their adoption.

The Group agreed with the suggestion to entrust an expert with conducting a detailed review of the Standing Committee's recommendations on large carnivores. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Standing Committee considers inviting Parties to report on the implementation of the most relevant recommendations on an annual or biennial basis.

The Secretariat recognised that this proposal was aligned with ongoing reflections on improving the understanding of how Parties engage with the recommendations.

It was suggested that clarification be sought on the Standing Committee's expectations regarding the

monitoring of large carnivore populations, to ensure the Group can effectively support the implementation of its mandate, particularly in the context of the downlisting of the wolf. Monitoring of the latter could concern on the one hand side the potential immediate and mid-term changes in terms of the legal framework and policy following the species downlisting, and on the other – monitoring of the resulting population dynamics.

11.2 Identifying other priorities for future action by the Bern Convention regarding Large Carnivore conservation and management, and the role of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts engaged in an exchange regarding its role and the priority issues to be addressed in its future work. This discussion included the potential revision of existing recommendations as well as the development of new recommendations for submission to the Standing Committee under the Bern Convention. Many core topics are already covered, and the respective recommendations may only need to be popularised, some – possibly updated. The topic of managing bold individuals may need to be considered in addition. The proposal to consider lowering the protection status of certain listed species at a population level (regionalised approach to up- or down-listing) was also reiterated.

The discussion requires concluding at the follow-up online meeting in the autumn, before specific proposals can be made to the Standing Committee.

11.3 Exchange on the Terms of Reference of the Group

The Group of Experts reviewed the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Group, initially adopted in 2000, and formulated proposals for their revision.

The Secretariat will prepare a revised draft of the Terms of Reference, which will be submitted to the Group of Experts for comments at the next meeting. Following this consultation, the revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the Bureau, and the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention for approval together with provisional rules of procedure, to be proposed by the Secretariat and most likely streamlined for all the thematic groups of experts of the Bern Convention.

12. Next meeting of the Group of Experts

The next online meeting of the Group of Experts should be scheduled for the autumn, after the Bureau meeting on 16 - 18 September 2025, most likely in early October. The next meeting in person would be held in 2026, its venue to be decided.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

14. Closing of the meeting

The Secretariat and the Chair thanked the members of the Group of Experts for the productive meeting and looked forward to working with the Group in the future. The meeting was declared closed.

Appendix I – Agenda

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on the Large Carnivores

10-11 June 2025, in Strasbourg and online

| TIME | AGENDA ITEM | RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>TUESDAY, 10 JUNE 2025</i> | | |
| 9.00 | <p>1. Opening of the meeting and welcome address by the Bern Convention Secretariat</p> <p>Opening remarks by the Secretary of the Bern Convention, Alessandra SIINO</p> | |
| 9.10 | <p>2. Introductory round</p> | Participants in the meeting introduce themselves rapidly to get to know each other better |
| 9.40 | <p>3. Adoption of the agenda</p> <p>The agenda of the meeting is briefly presented, commented on and adopted.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Meeting Agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2025)15</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Participants are informed of the objectives of the meeting. The meeting agenda is adopted.</p> |
| 9.45 | <p>4. Earlier work of the Bern Convention related to Large Carnivores and relaunching the Group of Experts</p> <p>The Secretariat provides a brief overview of the earlier work of the Bern Convention related to large carnivores.</p> | |
| 10.00 | <p>5. Reporting from the Parties and Observers – conservation and management of large carnivores at national level</p> <p>Representatives of Bern Convention Contracting Parties and Observer Organisations are invited to present contextualised, updates and inspiring examples of initiatives at national level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implementation of the national wolf management plan in the Czech Republic, Jindřiška Jelínková, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic)</i> • <i>The Norwegian situation, John Linnell, the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research</i> • <i>The status of brown bear in Estonia and Baltic population and management challenges of brown bear in Estonia, Peep Männil, Estonian Environment Agency</i> • <i>Large carnivores in Croatia, Andrea Solić</i> • <i>Reintroduction of Iberian lynx, Eloy Revilla</i> • <i>The work of the Federal Documentation and Consultation Centre on Wolves (DBBW)</i> • <i>Other possible inputs</i> | Participants are informed of recent conservation plans and other initiatives and actions implemented at national level on the conservation and management of large carnivores. |
| 10.30 | Break | |

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 11.00 | 5. Reporting from the Parties and Observers – conservation and management of large carnivores at national level - continued | |
| 12.30 | Lunch | |
| 14.00 | <p>6. Conservation and management of large carnivores at the population scale/regional level</p> <p>Participating experts are invited to present contextualised, inspiring examples of initiatives and updates at regional level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The recent EU developments on LC, Iva Obretenova and Marco Cipriani, Directorate General for Environment, European Commission</i> • <i>The status of the wolves in Europe and the data on livestock depredation, Luigi Boitani, the Istituto di Ecologia Applicata and the IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe</i> • <i>Results of a study based on the perceptions of respondents in EU Member States with large carnivore populations, Guillaume Chapron, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences</i> • <i>The LECA project (Supporting the coexistence and conservation of Carpathian Large Carnivores), Martin Duľa, the Lead Partner Mendel University in Brno</i> • <i>LIFE WILD WOLF Miroslav Kutal, the Mendel University in Brno</i> • <i>Large Carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region, Andrea Solić, Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Platform</i> • <i>Other possible inputs</i> | <p>-----</p> <p>Participants are informed of recent studies, conservation plans and other initiatives and actions implemented at the population scale/regional level on the conservation and management of large carnivores.</p> |
| 15.30 | Break | |
| 16.00 | 6. Conservation and management of large carnivores at the population scale/regional level - continued | |
| 17.00 | <p>7. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</p> <p>The Secretariat will organise elections of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Group.</p> | The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Group of Experts are elected. |
| 17.30 | Closing of the day | |
| 19.30 | Dinner out (optional) | |

WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE 2025

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 09.00 | <p>Opening of the day</p> <p>8. Development of the conservation strategies of the Balkan and Carpathian lynx</p> <p>Linking Lynx LIFE project</p> <p>Presentation and discussion.</p> | <p><i>Draft strategies/information on their development</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>The Group provides input on the draft conservation strategies of the Balkan and Carpathian lynx.</p> |
| 09.45 | <p>9. Learning from contextualised practice</p> <p>Presentation, discussion and feedback on the paper <i>Best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe. Special focus on brown bear and grey wolf,</i></p> | <p><i>T-PVS/Inf (2025)19 - Best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe. Special focus on brown bear and grey wolf.</i></p> <p>-----</p> |

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| | <i>by John Linnell, the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and Luigi Boitani, the Istituto di Ecologia Applicata and the IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe</i> | The Group provides guidance on learning from contextualised practice in conservation and management of large carnivores. |
| 10.30 | Break | |
| 11.00 | <p>10. Contemporary issues of large carnivore conservation and management</p> <p>Identification of the issues seen by the Group members as key needs, challenges and opportunities in terms of large carnivore conservation and management. Discussion.</p> | The Group identifies the key issues of large carnivore management. |
| 12.30 | Lunch | |
| 14.00 | 10. Contemporary issues of large carnivore conservation and management - continued | The Group identifies the key issues of large carnivore management, in particular at the European level. |
| 14.45 | <p>11. Proposals to the Standing Committee for further issues to address</p> <p>11.1 Discussion on the need to review the Bern Convention Steering Committee recommendations concerning large carnivores</p> <p>11.2 Identifying other priorities for future action by the Bern Convention regarding Large Carnivore conservation and management, and the role of the Group of Experts</p> <p>11.3 Exchange on the Terms of Reference of the Group</p> <p>Discussion on concrete proposals for themes to be further addressed by the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores.</p> | <p><i>T-PVS/Inf(2025)20 - Overview of the Bern Convention Steering Committee recommendations concerning large carnivores</i></p> <p><i>T-PVS/Inf(2025)21 - Terms of reference of the Group of Experts on large carnivores</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>The Group agrees on issues it would address in its further work, including revising or preparing new recommendations for the consideration of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.</p> |
| 15.30 | Break | |
| 16.00 | 12. Proposals to the Standing Committee for further issues to address - continued | A list of proposals to be submitted to the Standing Committee is agreed on. |
| 17.00 | 13. Next meeting of the Group of Experts | Provisional dates and venue for the next meeting of the Group of Experts are discussed by the Group. |
| 17.15 | 14. Any Other Business | Any further issues are raised. |
| 17.30 | 15. Closing of the meeting | |

Appendix II – List of Participants

National Representatives and Attendees:

| Country | Attendee |
|----------------------|--|
| Andorra | <p>Mr Jordi SOLÀ DE LA TORRE (National Representative) (online) Cap d'unitat de fauna Govern d'Andorra / Departement de Medi Ambient i Sostenibilitat</p> |
| Austria | <p>Mr Martin WILDENBERG (National Representative) (online) Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management</p> |
| Belgium | <p>Ms Vinciane SCHOCKERT (National Representative) (online) Public service of Wallonia (Department of Natural and Agricultural Environment Studies)</p> |
| Czechia | <p>Ms Dagmar SVOBODOVÁ (online) Ministry of the Environment</p> <p>Ms Lucie BARANKOVA (online) Ministry of the Environment</p> <p>Ms Jindřiška JELÍNKOVÁ (online) Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic</p> |
| Estonia | <p>Mr Peep MÄNNIL (National Representative) (online) Estonian Environment Agency</p> |
| EU Commission | <p>Ms Iva OBRETENOVA (Representative) (online) Policy Officer, EU Commission</p> <p>Mr Marco CIPRIANI (online) Policy Officer, EU Commission</p> |
| France | <p>Mr Charles-Henri DE BARSAC Chargé de mission "accords internationaux et européens faune sauvage" sous-direction de la protection et de la restauration des écosystèmes terrestres Ministère de la Transition Écologique et Solidaire</p> <p>Mr David MENEGHEL Chargé de mission loup lynx vautour Ministère Écologie Énergie Territoires</p> <p>Ms Audrey STÉPHAN (in person / online) Policy Officer on lynx and ecological connectivities DREAL Direction Régionale de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement Grand Est (local implantation of the Ministry of Ecology)</p> |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Hungary | Mr Gábor Tamás MAGYAR (National Representative) (online) Head of Department, Ministry of Agriculture |
| Italy | Mr Luigi BOITANI (National Representative) (online) University of Rome Sapienza. and IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe |
| Poland | Mr Adrian SKIBINSKI (National Representative) (online) General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Poland |
| Senegal | Mr Babacar Ngor YOUM (National Representative) (online) Direction des Parcs nationaux |
| Serbia | Ms Snezana PROKIC (National Representative) (online) Ministry of Environmental Protection Mr Radislav MOMIROV (online) Ministry of Environmental Protection |
| Slovakia | Ms Jana DURKOSOVA (National Representative) (online) Directorate for Nature and Landscape Protection Department for Nature Protection and for State Administration of Nature and Landscape Protection Mr Jaroslav SLASTAN (online) Brown Bear Intervention Team State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic |
| Switzerland | Ms Sarah STEHLY (National Representative) (excused) Office fédéral de l'environnement |
| Türkiye | Mr Burak TATAR (National Representative) Republic of Türkiye General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks Ms Berna YALCINKAYA (online) Türkiye, General Directorate of Nature Conservation, and National Parks/Délégation Türkiye |

Independent Experts:

| Organisation | Attendee |
|---|---|
| CIC The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation | Mr Thomas PAULIC (online) Independent Expert Ms Maria Margarita ARRIETA GARCIA (online) Independent Expert |
| DBBW - the Federal Documentation and Consultation Centre on Wolves | Ms Ilka REINHARDT Independent Expert |
| Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos LC Platform (Secretariat) | Ms Andrea SOLIĆ Independent Expert |
| Eurogroup for Animals | Ms Léa BADOZ Programme Officer |
| EU Large Carnivore Platform Secretariat / DiBaPi Secretariat / adelphi | Ms Katrina MARSDEN (online) Independent Expert Head of Programme, Biodiversity |
| EuroNatur Foundation - Germany | Ms Mareike BRIX (online) Independent Expert Head of Program Large Carnivores |
| FACE | Mr Guillaume AGEDE (online) Independent Expert Policy Advisor for Larges Carnivores Ms Sabrina DIETZ (online) Independent Expert Wildlife Policy Officer |
| Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Zagreb | Mr Đuro HUBER (online) Independent Expert Professor Emeritus Ms Magda SINDIČIĆ (online) Independent Expert Associate Professor |
| Foundation for Nature and Environment Rheinland-Pfalz | Mr Jochen KREBÜHL Independent Expert |
| Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic | Mr Miroslav KUTAL Independent Expert Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic |

| | |
|---|--|
| IENE - Infrastructure & Ecology Network Europe, Belgium | Mr Radu MOT (online) Independent Expert |
| KORA – Carnivore Ecology and Wildlife Management | Manuela von ARX (online) Project Manager/Deputy Managing Director KORA Foundation |
| Large Carnivore Expert Group (IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group) | Mr Urs BREITENMOSER Independent Expert |
| LCIE CG - Norwegian Institute for Nature Research | Mr John LINNELL Independent Expert |
| Luchs Initiative / Landesnaturschutz VerbandSchiltewolf | Ms Verena SCHILTENWOLF (online) Independent Expert Dr. Volker SCHWARZ (online) Independent Expert |
| Mendel University in Brno, Department of Forest Ecology | Mr Martin DULA (online) Independent Expert |
| NABU Independent ÖFGN e.V. Germany | Mr Mathias HERRMANN Independent Expert |
| NOAH, Norway | Ms Katrin VELS (online) Legal Advisor |
| Parc Naturel Régional des Vosges du Nord, France | Ms Sandrine FARNY Independent Expert Animation du Plan Régional d'Actions en faveur du Lynx pour le massif vosgien |
| PPNEA, Albania | Mr Aleksandër TRAJÇE (online) Independent Expert |
| SOS Faucon Pelerin Lynx France Vosges | Ms Claude KURTZ President |
| Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences | Mr Guillaume CHAPRON Independent Expert Mr Håkan SAND (online) Independent Expert Associated Professor in Wildlife Ecology |
| WWF Bulgaria and Balkani Wildlife Society | Mr Aleksandar DUTSOV Independent Expert Central Balkan National Park |

Council of Europe Secretariat:

| Name | Position |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Ms Grazia Alessandra SIINO | Secretary Bern Convention |
| Ms Marta MEḂLIŃSKA | Programme Manager Bern Convention |
| Mr Jose AMENGUAL | Policy Advisor Bern Convention |
| Mr Mark BARLOW | Administrative Assistant Bern Convention |
| Ms Lilas HEULLANT | Trainee Bern Convention |

Appendix III – Revised Provisional Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores¹

1. to review the conservation status and challenges of large carnivores in the territory of Contracting Parties and observer States of the Convention;
2. to advise on appropriate conservation actions with the aim of maintaining and/or restoring the populations of large carnivores at the level prescribed in Article 2 of the Convention and in line of the specific requirements of its Chapter III;
3. to propose ways and methods to manage or mitigate economic and social conflicts regarding large carnivores to promote co-existence between large carnivores and humans;
4. Upon request, to support Parties in the drafting and implementation of national or regional conservation Plans on population scale and/or other relevant documents on the species, collaborating as necessary with the states on the technical matters involved;
5. To facilitate transboundary, intersectoral dialogue and peer exchange between decision makers, academics, civil society and other stakeholders regarding large carnivores, knowledge about them etc;
6. to identify and address potential gaps in conservation of large carnivores within BC Party geographical scope;
7. to propose draft recommendations and other relevant instruments to the Standing Committee in the field of conservation of large carnivores;
8. to promote public awareness, engagement and access to information on large carnivores and their conservation;
9. to assist the Standing Committee on any matters related to large carnivores, including any changes to the protection status of large carnivore species, and to make any science-based proposals related to large carnivore conservation.

¹ As revised at the Group's meeting on 11 June 2025 in Strasbourg. Membership, roles and functioning will be defined in rules of procedure, consistent for all groups of experts to the extent possible.