



Strasbourg, 7 November 2025

T-PVS/Report(2025)17

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**

9h30-12h30, 30 September 2025,
online

- Meeting Report -

Document prepared by the Secretariat

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- take note of the report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores, held on 30 September 2025;
- take note of the document presenting best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe;
- take note of the draft Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts, including the scope of its possible interventions, proposals regarding its future work, including on the recommendations concerning management and conservation of large carnivores, development of new recommendations and the monitoring of the status of wolf populations.

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

The Secretary of the Bern Convention, Ms Grazia Alessandra Siino, opened the 2nd meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores and welcomed the participants. She emphasised the importance of the discussions on the revised draft terms of reference and deliverables, noting their role in clarifying the group's mandate and improving its effectiveness. She recalled that this work forms part of a broader effort to align the Convention's activities with the [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#), and encouraged participants to focus on both new guidance and the evaluation of existing practices.

The Chair, Mr Luigi Boitani, thanked the Secretariat for the organisation of this meeting and the Secretary of the Bern Convention for her introductory remarks. He then gave the floor to the participants for an introductory round (see Annex II).

2. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted with no amendments (see Annex I).

3. Revised provisional Terms of Reference of the Group

The Chair opened the discussion on the revised provisional terms of reference (see Annex III), inviting comments and suggestions, and emphasised their importance in defining the group's future work.

Participants broadly supported the draft, noting its ambition and improved clarity, while raising questions regarding the group's composition, governance, and decision-making, as well as the process for Standing Committee approval and the feasibility of certain deliverables. In particular, the survey on implications of the downlisting of the wolf and the document providing examples of those may not be ready before the end of the year, only a proposal of the scope and focus of the survey may be presented in time for the Standing Committees' consideration.

The Secretariat clarified that the terms of reference establish a broad framework, with specific deliverables to be proposed by the Group and endorsed by the Standing Committee, and explained that members are nominated by Contracting Parties, while representatives of the Observers may follow the Group of Experts' meetings. The Group will not have decision-making powers besides electing its Chair.

The Chair noted the general agreement on the draft and confirmed that the comments and concerns raised would be included in the ToR revised accordingly and transmitted to the Standing Committee.

4. Review of the existing Standing Committee recommendations

The Chair recalled that one of the group's main activities in the past had been the drafting of recommendations for adoption by the Standing Committee, and introduced the review of existing recommendations related to large carnivores. He invited participants to discuss the continued relevance of past recommendations, possible revisions or updates, and the potential need for new ones.

Participants welcomed the initiative and agreed that several recommendations were outdated or overly broad, suggesting a more targeted approach with clearer timeframes and periodic reviews. It was

proposed to prioritise recommendations based on relevance, urgency, and potential impact, and to divide work among members according to their expertise. Some participants supported ranking the recommendations collectively, possibly through an online tool, while noting the need to distinguish between pan-European and national recommendations.

The Secretariat clarified that recommendations linked to specific case files require a different treatment from general ones and reminded the Group of the limited resources available. It remained to be confirmed whether amending or replacing existing recommendations, which need updating, would be the best way to proceed.

Participants identified several recommendations as priorities for further consideration, including:

- [Recommendation No. 115](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 1 December 2005, on the conservation and management of transboundary populations of large carnivores
- [Recommendation No. 137 \(2008\)](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 27 November 2008, on population level management of large carnivore populations
- [Recommendation No. 148 \(2010\)](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 9 December 2010, on the conservation of large carnivores in the Caucasus
- [Recommendation No. 163 \(2012\)](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 30 November 2012, on the management of expanding populations of large carnivores in Europe
- [Recommendation No. 173 \(2014\)](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 5 December 2014, on hybridisation between wild grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) and domestic dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*)
- [Recommendation No. 198 \(2018\)](#) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 30 November 2018, on the use of artificial feeding as a management tool of large carnivore populations and their prey, with a particular emphasis on the brown bear

They agreed to focus on those with the highest relevance and practical impact.

5. Proposal to the Standing Committee recommendations concerning large carnivores – next steps

The Chair concluded that the Group would continue this work, refining priorities and approaches for revision or replacement, and report back to the Standing Committee.

6. Reviewing other topics proposed at the meeting

The Group of Experts reviewed the list of deliverables to be presented at the Standing Committee meeting in December 2025 and proposed several adjustments. It was noted that Deliverable 2, relating to the collection of information on the implications of the wolf's downlisting, would be difficult to finalise within the given timeframe. Updated conservation status reports will only be available later in the year and Member States have until 2027 to transpose the recent amendment to the Habitats Directive. Furthermore, a survey format may not fully capture all considerations.

Given the political sensitivity of the issue and the limited availability of national information, participants considered it appropriate to run the survey in 2026. Only the focus and scope of the survey would be presented as a preliminary step at the Standing Committee meeting in December 2025. Parties may be invited to share examples of the changes on the national level at future Committee meetings.

Participants also discussed the need to strengthen systematic monitoring of the wolf's

protection?/population? status and derogations, noting existing gaps in reporting and follow-up. The Secretariat recalled the Bureau's recommendation to inform the Standing Committee of this work, and the Group agreed on the importance of maintaining a balanced and realistic approach.

Furthermore, a revised version of the guidance document *Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe* was briefly presented by John Linnell. The document was appreciated but due to a short time the participants had to review the revised version of the document it was agreed that any further comments could be communicated to the authors/the Secretariat. The only concern raised at the meeting regarded references to culling in relation to species that is strictly protected on the territory of most Parties, which could possibly be addressed by modifying the title.

7. Next steps

The Chair informed the participants about the next steps, in particular bringing the revised Terms of Reference and the *Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe* to the Standing Committee at its annual meeting in December 2025.

8. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

9. Conclusions and 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 the next meeting of the Group. The meeting was declared closed.

Appendix I – Agenda

AGENDA ITEM	DOCUMENTS
1. Opening of the meeting and welcome address by the Bern Convention Secretariat	<i>T-PVS(2025)11e – report of the GoE on large carnivores 10-11 June 2025</i>
2. Adoption of the agenda	<i>T-PVS/Agenda(2025)24e</i>
3. Revised provisional Terms of Reference of the Group	<i>T-PVS/Inf(2025)37e Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts</i>
4. Review of the existing Standing Committee recommendations concerning large carnivores – next steps	<i>T-PVS/Inf(2025)20e rev – Overview of the Bern Convention Steering Committee recommendations concerning large Carnivores – revised</i>
5. Proposal to the Standing Committee on the tasks of the Group of Experts regarding the monitoring of the status of the wolf populations following the downlisting of the species	<i>T-PVS/Inf(2025)37e – Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts – proposal</i>
6. Reviewing other topics proposed at the meeting	<i>Best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe: Special focus on brown bear and grey wolf - revised</i>
7. Next steps	
8. Any Other Business	
9. Conclusions and closing of the meeting	

Appendix II – List of Participants

National Representatives:

Party	Attendee
Belgium	Ms Vinciane SCHOCKERT (National Representative) Mammal Expert, Public service of Wallonia (Department of Natural and Agricultural Environment Studies)
Czechia	Ms Dagmar MIRZOEV (National Representative) Ministry of the Environment Ms Lucie BARANKOVA Ministry of the Environment
Estonia	Mr Peep MÄNNIL (National Representative) Estonian Environment Agency
EU Commission	Ms Telma BRANCO-WUNSCH (Representative) Policy Officer DG Environment – Nature Conservation Unit Ms Kim DE RIJCK DG Environment – Biodiversity
France	Mr David MENEGHEL (National Representative) Chargé de mission loup lynx vautour Ministère Écologie Énergie Territoires
Hungary	Mr Gábor Tamás MAGYAR (National Representative) Head of Department, Ministry of Agriculture
Italy	Mr Luigi BOITANI (National Representative) University of Rome Sapienza IUCN/SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe
Serbia	Mr Radislav MOMIROV (National Representative) Ministry of Environmental Protection
Slovakia	Ms Jana DURKOSOVA (National Representative) Directorate for Nature and Landscape Protection Department for Nature Protection and for State Administration of Nature and Landscape Protection
Türkiye	Mr Burak TATAR (National Representative) Republic of Türkiye General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

Other Experts:

Organisation	Attendee
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 Eva IZQUIERDO GUTIERREZ Programme Officer
EuroNatur Foundation - Germany	Ms Mareike BRIX Independent Expert Head of Program Large Carnivores
FACE	Mr Guillaume AGEDE Independent Expert Policy Advisor for Larges Carnivores
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Zagreb	Mr Đjuro HUBER Independent Expert Professor Emeritus
Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic	Mr Miroslav KUTAL Independent Expert Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic
Fundación Oso Pardo	Mr Juan Carlos BLANCO (excused) Independent Expert
IENE - Infrastructure & Ecology Network Europe, Belgium	Mr Radu MOT (excused) Independent Expert
IUCN Species Survival Commission	Ms Aleksandra MAJIC SKRBINSEK (excused) Independent Expert Researcher and Project Manager
KORA – Carnivore Ecology and Wildlife Management	Manuela von ARX Project Manager/Deputy Managing Director KORA Foundation
LCIE CG - Norwegian Institute for Nature Research	Mr John LINNELL Independent Expert
Luchs Initiative / Landesnaturschutz VerbandSchiltewolf	Ms Verena SCHILTENWOLF Independent Expert
Mendel University in Brno, Department of Forest Ecology	Mr Martin DULA Independent Expert

NABU Independent ÖFGN e.V. Germany	Mr Mathias HERRMANN Independent Expert
NOAH, Norway	Ms Katrin VELS Legal Advisor
PPNEA, Albania	Mr Aleksandër TRAJÇE Independent Expert
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Mr Guillaume CHAPRON Independent Expert
UN Environment Programme	Ms Iskra STOJANOVA Western Balkan Projects Coordinator
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 MEĐLIŃSKA	Programme Manager Bern Convention
Ms Lilas HEULLANT	Administrative Assistant Bern Convention

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

¹ As revised at the Group's online meeting on 30 September 2025.