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European Union

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

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Subject: Joint declaration of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia on wolf management  
*- Information from the French delegation on behalf of the Danish, Estonian, French, Italian and Latvian delegations*

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Delegations will find in the Annex information from the French delegation that they would like to provide on a joint declaration of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia on wolf management under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 14-15 October 2019.

**Conseil Agriculture-Pêche des 14 et 15 octobre 2019**

**Demande de point divers de la France**

**Présentation de la déclaration conjointe du Danemark, de l'Estonie, de la France, de l'Italie et de la Lettonie sur la gestion des populations de loups**

La France, le Danemark, l'Estonie, l'Italie et la Lettonie souhaitent informer le Conseil des mesures qu'ils souhaiteraient voir mises en place afin de permettre la meilleure gestion possible des populations de loup et de l'appel passé à la Commission en ce sens.

La déclaration conjointe de la France, du Danemark, de l'Estonie, de l'Italie et de la Lettonie s'inscrit dans le cadre de la révision du guide interprétatif sur la protection des espèces d'intérêt communautaire au titre de la directive « Habitats » et appelle à une prise en compte de la protection des espèces au titre de cette directive fondée sur les meilleures pratiques locales et permettant l'usage de toutes les souplesses prévues par la directive.

**Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 14-15 October 2019**

**French request for AOB point**

**Presentation of the joint declaration of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia and Denmark  
on wolf management**

France, Denmark, Estonia, Italy and Latvia would like to inform the Council about the measures they would like to be put in place to ensure the best possible management of wolves' populations and the request they formulate to the Commission for this purpose.

The joint declaration of France, Denmark, Estonia, Italy and Latvia has to be seen in the context of the revision of the Guidance document on the strict protection of species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive and calls for better taking into account the protection of species based on best local practices and allowing the entire flexibility provided by the Directive.

**Déclaration conjointe du Danemark, de l’Estonie, de la France, de l’Italie et de la Lettonie sur  
la gestion du loup**

**Joint declaration of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia on wolf management**

We, the Ministers responsible for agriculture and/or our representatives from Denmark, Estonia France, Italy and Latvia:

1. RECALL our commitments, as Ministers of agriculture, to help achieve the European commitments and targets in terms of biodiversity conservation.
2. NOTE that European policies in this field have been successful for large carnivores and especially for wolf. Wolf populations are indeed expanding in Europe because of local improvements in habitat quality, the increased populations of some prey species, public support and favourable international, European and national legislations. From the recent research done for the European parliament in 2018, the wolf population is estimated at 17 000 wolves, the trend of the population characterised as “Increasing” and the IUCN red list assessment “Least Concern”. The situation varies from a country to another but for all populations that are still “Vulnerable”, the trend is “increasing”.
3. EMPHASIZE that, due to several factors such as its high mobility, its adaptability, its reproductive capacity, the rapid population growth of wolves in Europe raises multiple questions of coexistence with natural and human activities, notably on pastoralism and other agricultural activities, and remains a huge challenge for Member States.
4. RECALL that, in several Member States, pastoralism exploit vast territories and constitute both a viable economic activity with associated cultural aspects (cultural events, protected designation of origin for their products, UNESCO’s world heritage list, etc.) and a sustainable way to manage these ecosystems with high biodiversity levels, especially when Natura 2000 sites are concerned.

5. EXPRESS DEEP CONCERN about the draft revised Guidance document on the strict protection of species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive proposed by the Commission in October 2018 which shows a stricter interpretation of the Habitat Directive, especially its Article 16, than in the previous Guidance document. These changes threaten the possibilities for Member States to adequately manage wolf populations. Additional flexibility is clearly needed for Member States so that they adapt their practices to local realities and fully address social, cultural and economic issues.
6. REQUEST the Commission to take carefully into consideration the concerns presented by several Member States when making a new proposal to revise the Guidance on the strict protection of species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive, taking into account this need for flexibility to sustainably manage wolf populations in particular and as far as it is compatible with the Habitats Directive.
7. REQUEST the Commission to promote monitoring of wolf populations based on adequate scientific knowledge, to have qualified information for proactive management of the matter.
8. REQUEST the Commission to consult Member States about a new proposal in order to guarantee a comprehensive and flexible approach on this crucial issue.
9. REQUEST the Commission to work with Members States to find ways to guarantee the needed flexibility where it is necessary to secure the local acceptance to the conservation of wolf and other large carnivore populations in Europe.

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