

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS, HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

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Worblentalstrasse 68, CH-3063 Ittigen,
CH-3003 Berne / Switzerland

Strasbourg, 20 December 2024

Subject: Complaint No. 2023/3: Open File: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy

Dear Ms Hofmann,

The Standing Committee of the Bern Convention examined the above-mentioned complaint at its 44th meeting on 2-6 December 2024 in light of the most recently submitted reports by the authorities and complainant. Here follows the Standing Committee decision:

The Standing Committee:

Thanked both parties for their reports and presentations.

Expressed strong concern about the new wolf culling policy posing a risk of a large scale, culling of – theoretically up to 65% of the population, the minimum threshold being currently fixed at 12 packs, as well as its concern for the pack whose territory contains the Swiss National Park.

Reminded the authorities that, if the decision of the Standing Committee on downgrading the protection status of the wolf comes into force, following the 3-month period after its adoption, the provisions of the Bern Convention still apply and need to be observed, notably Art 1(1), Art. 2, Art. 7 and Art. 9. The wolf populations need to be maintained at, or brought to, a level which corresponds to ecological and scientific requirements in accordance with Article 2. The populations need to be kept out of danger and measures to be taken shall include the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation, as appropriate, in order to restore satisfactory population levels. Exceptions are only possible under the specific circumstances mentioned in Art.9 (1).

Stressed that sound knowledge, based on the best available scientific findings, should be considered in devising wolf management policy. The current minimum population threshold of 12 wolf packs is far below the threshold recommended for the Alpine region.

In terms of managing the wolf population, recognised the distinct, complementary roles of the federal government, responsible for the compliance with the provisions of the Bern

Convention, and cantonal authorities, in charge of implementing the wolf management policy. Stressed that the consistency of the overall approach had to be safeguarded.

Strongly encouraged further investment into livestock protection measures, as a proven method of limiting depredation, and efforts in promoting coexistence with the wolf, leading to an increase in the social acceptance of the species.

In view of the facts presented by both the complainant and the authorities, and regardless of the species protection status being “protected” or “strictly protected”, elevated the complaint to an **Open File** and invited both parties to send their progress reports for consideration by the Spring Bureau in 2025.

I would like to invite the authorities to send a progress report including the above-requested information and any other relevant updates no later than **14 February 2025, to be addressed at the 2025 spring meeting of the Bureau.**

Case-file reports should contain a summary of the information requested by the Standing Committee or its Bureau, and be as concise as possible. Report should be strictly kept to a maximum of 5 pages, submitted in text editor format such as WORD format and not exceed 2 MB in size. Annexes and links to other resources or online Drive/Cloud folders are encouraged for longer, more detailed/technical information, and/or heavy media.

The same deadlines apply to the complainant organisation for the submission of an updated report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for your ongoing cooperation with the Bern Convention and for your work in protecting species and habitats.

Yours sincerely,



Mikaël Poutiers
Secretary of the Bern Convention

Cc: Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe;
Verein CHWOLF (Complainant);
Avenir Loup Lynx Jura (NGO).