

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS, HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

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

Strasbourg, 11th October 2024

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

Dear Mme Hofmann,

At its third ordinary meeting of 2024 on 10-12 September, the Bureau of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention re-examined the above-mentioned complaint in light of the most recently submitted reports by the authorities and complainant.

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for their update reports, the data on the population, the principles and results of the culling so far and the information on the protective measures and requirements in place.

The Bureau took note of the procedure in place for the cantons to apply for culling permits at the federal level and reiterated that only serious damage could give ground to an exception foreseen by the Article 8 and expressed concern that “potential damage” constituted a misinterpretation of the Article 8 of the Bern Convention. It stressed that proactive culling applied to discrete packs could not be considered as culling only applied to wolves when other measures were exhausted.

Noting that the authorities considered the current status of the wolf population satisfactory despite the number of packs remaining unchanged, the Bureau remained concerned with the potential extent of wolf culling and the arbitrary minimum number of packs as low as 12, with the possible cumulative effect of the politically motivated, proactive, so preventive, and reactive regulation, leading to a large-scale culling.

The Bureau expressed concern about reported inaccurate controls of damages caused by wolves and alleged manipulation of data for the purpose of justifying further culling.

The Bureau noted the ongoing CHWOLF’s complaint to the Federal Administrative Court was pending, while other complaints filed by international organisations were rejected due to the division of responsibility between FOEN and the cantons. It stressed that ensuring compliance with the Bern Convention remained on the federal level, regardless of the internal organisation within a signatory State.

The complaint is elevated to a **possible file**. Both parties were invited to make a brief presentation at the 44th Standing Committee meeting

If your authorities decide to send an update to their latest report to be presented at the 44th Standing Committee which is **meeting in-person in Strasbourg from 2nd December to 6th December 2024**, kindly submit this to the Secretariat no later than **4th November 2024**.

As recalled by the Bureau at its meeting in Autumn 2022, 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.

Furthermore, if the representative at the meeting will use a PowerPoint presentation or speaking notes, kindly send these to the Secretariat before the meeting and **no later than 25th November 2024**, in order to accommodate the interpreters and enable the efficient functioning of the meeting.

The same deadlines apply to the complainant organisation for the submission of an updated report and/or PowerPoint for the attention of the Standing Committee.

Due to the exceptionally busy agenda, timekeeping is crucial and **presentations must be strictly kept to a maximum of 10 minutes**. The Chair will keep strict time control during the presentations. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping to ensure the smooth functioning of the meeting.

On behalf of the Bureau, 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)
Ms Iva OBRETENOVA, European Commission, EU Focal Point to the Bern Convention