Resolution on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe

2022/2952(RSP) - 24/11/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 306 votes to 225, with 25 abstentions, a resolution on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and The Left groups.

The resolution stressed the importance of ensuring a **balanced coexistence between humans, livestock and large carnivores**, particularly in rural areas, and that it should be recognised that fluctuations in the population levels of certain species can lead to a number of environmental, agricultural and socio-economic difficulties.

Parliament deplored the impact that attacks by large carnivores have on animal welfare, including injuries, abortion, reduced fertility, loss of animals or entire herds, and the deaths of guard dogs, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to do their utmost to prevent suffering and damage to livestock animals.

The Commission is invited to continue to assess progress in achieving a favourable conservation status of species on the basis of scientific evidence, in order to properly assess and **monitor the population range and size of large carnivores**, including their effects on nature and biodiversity.

The Commission and Member States should strengthen cross-border collaboration and monitoring should be coordinated using a harmonised methodology.

Parliament recognised that large carnivore attacks are increasing across Europe, that they have already claimed human victims and that they have had negative effects on livestock farmers. It stressed that **good monitoring of trends in damage to livestock** farmers is a prerequisite for effective policies and stressed the importance of standardised reporting formats in this respect.

The resolution called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- assist regions facing coexistence conflicts to clarify how to make appropriate and responsible use of the flexibility that already exists under Article 16(1) of the Habitats Directive;

- carry out regular assessments of the scientific data to enable the protection status of species to be adapted as soon as the desired conservation status has been reached;

- organise opportunities for different stakeholders, including rural actors, to discuss the impacts of large carnivores; urges them to provide information on practical solutions and financing possibilities for preventive measures against attacks on livestock, and to conduct a clear awareness campaign;

- evaluate the impact that attacks by large carnivores have on animal welfare, as well as on farmers' well-being, incomes and higher labour and material costs, also taking into account whether or not preventive measures were implemented and how effective they were;

- develop a solid and comprehensive assessment of all relevant threats and pressures on each species of large carnivores and their habitats at European level and in each Member State, either by natural causes or human induced factors;

- map priority connectivity areas for large carnivore populations and to identify the most important ecological corridors, dispersal barriers, high-mortality road sections and other important landscape features pertaining to the fragmented nature of large carnivore distribution;

- protect and preserve traditional agricultural practices, such as pastoralism, the model of supervised grazing, the practice of transhumance recognised by UNESCO and the way of life of pastoral farmers, through concrete solutions;

- recognise that the currently available preventive measures, including fences and guard dogs, which are successful in some EU regions, may present additional financial and labour burdens for farmers, are not always supported by EU or national funding and have a varying degree of efficiency and effectiveness depending on the local conditions;

- scientifically identify and support the best feasible preventive measures to reduce attacks and the damage of the predation of livestock by large carnivores, taking into account the regional and local characteristics of the Member States, and to support farmers to apply for those preventive measures;

- identify adequate and long-term funding opportunities for appropriate preventive measures and adequate compensation for farmers not only for any losses suffered and costs incurred as a result of large carnivore attacks, but also for the mitigation measures implemented, in order to ensure the coexistence of large carnivores and sustainable livestock farming practices.