

## **The French Government's Absurd and Outrageous Attempt to Bring Down Wolf's Status**

**Stéphane Le Foll (French Minister of Agriculture) just announced that the French government delegated the Berne Convention and the European Union to downgrade the wolf from "strictly protected species". Not only futile, this anti-ecological approach only sinks France further into an abandonment of any possible vision to have livestock and wolves coexist.**

With such an announcement, does the Minister really care for the breeders? The chances of success are so low that on July 8th, 2014, Stéphane Le Foll himself declared he was "not favourable" to this procedure that, according to his own words, was "bound to fail"! The downgrading of the wolf would require acceptance by two-thirds majority of the members of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and unanimity in the Council of Europe after examination by the European Commission. But the latter already replied to France on May, 27th, 2014 that "a revision of the legislation is not necessary because the Habitats Directive provides sufficient flexibility to ensure the coexistence of wolves with pastoral activities".

How to justify such a pronouncement among neighbours who don't even kill wolves at all, such as Germany who has as many wolves as France and Italy who has five times more? Our country's policy in this field is already the worst in Europe, with no verification of the availability of protective measures, for which breeders receive subsidies, compensation for the same predation even if breeders do not protect their livestock, authorization of shooting even if the livestock is not protected, even if wolves do not attack, even if livestock is not outdoors, shooting entrusted to hunters without regulation, possibility of shooting in the heart of national parks, with now even a youth brigade paid by the state to kill wolves!

The Minister announces his approach as part of a "plan to support French breeding". But the wolf hunt does not help farmers. The predation continues on insufficiently protected livestock. In order to meet society's expectations, the Minister would do better in supporting farmers by moving towards biodiversity-friendly practices. The French people are overwhelmingly favourable to wolves and they may not be always willing to continue to pay taxes for subsidies for a handicapped sheep-breeding sector.

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