

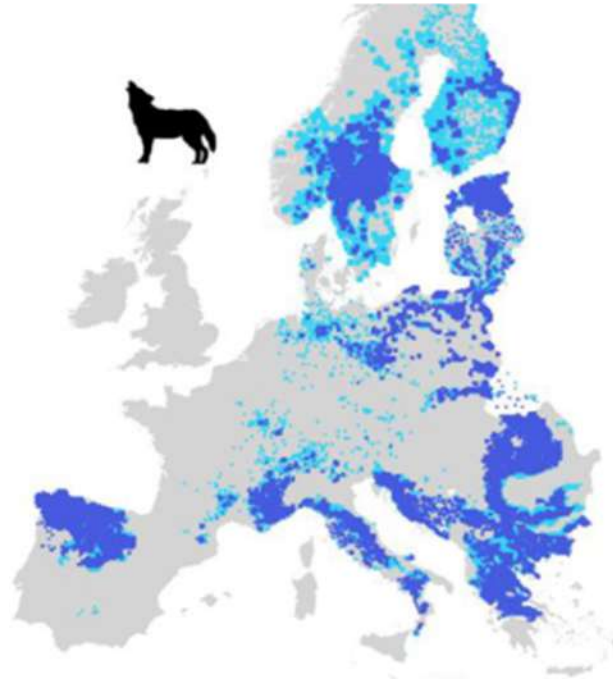


# The impact of the wolves' population on the environment and rural communities

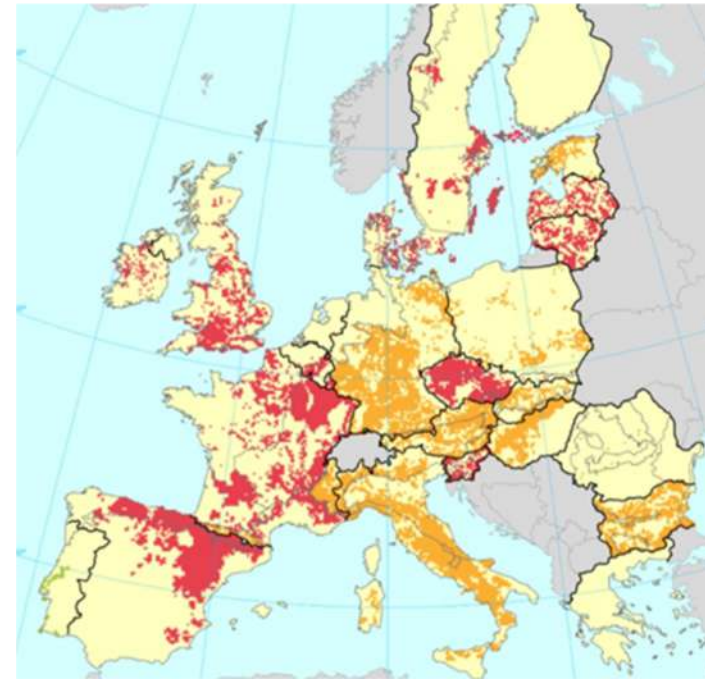
**Michèle Boudoin**, Chairwoman of the Copa-Cogeca  
Working Party on Sheepmeat / December 2019



## Wolf population in the EU, their impact on the environment and rural communities



**EU wolf population** size is around **13 -14 000**. The trend is **increasing** and **EU status is Least Concern**.



Wolf population is overlapping with the important **protected habitat type of semi-natural dry grasslands** for which management **extensive farming systems** play a crucial role.



# Wolf population in Europe

## WOLVES IN GERMANY

German communities where wolves have been sighted — alone, in pairs or in packs.

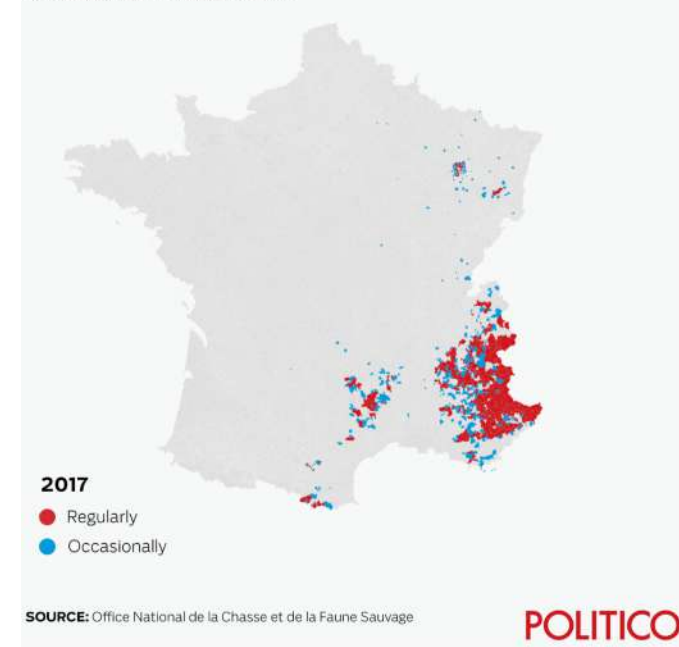


**All different populations of wolf in Europe are either stable or increasing.**

The IUCN estimates now put the upper range for Iberian (Spain) subpopulation at 2,880 wolves (2500 in 2016) and Karelian (Finland) subpopulation at 234 wolves (200 in 2016.).

## WOLF SIGHTINGS IN FRANCE

French municipalities where wolves have been sighted, either occasionally or regularly, between 2003 and 2017.



In Western and Central Alps the total number wolves in 2015/2016 was estimated to be 420-550, and in 2017/18 it may be estimated to 550-700, **increasing on average by 10-20% per year.** (IUCN) In France, threshold of scientifically fixed viability of 500 wolves was reached by the end of the winter of 2018.



## Damages by wolf and other large carnivores- Farmers' experience





## Damage vs. Manage- Farmers' experience



I woke up, **ran into the fence**, saw the sheep running towards me. It was dark, something was chasing them ... I could hear howling ...

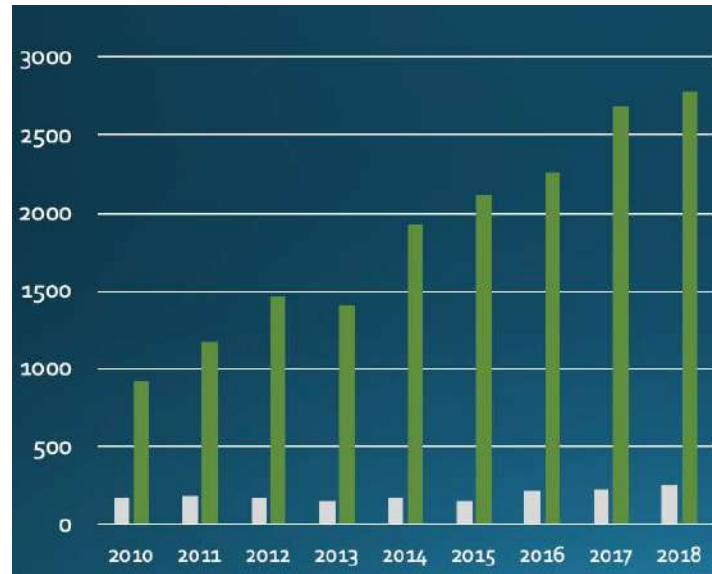
When everything stopped, I visited the flock and it was immediately clear that the damage was big. In the morning **I counted 30 victims**, mostly lamb and several sheep.“

Croatian farmer, 2019

## Damage vs. Manage - Impact in France

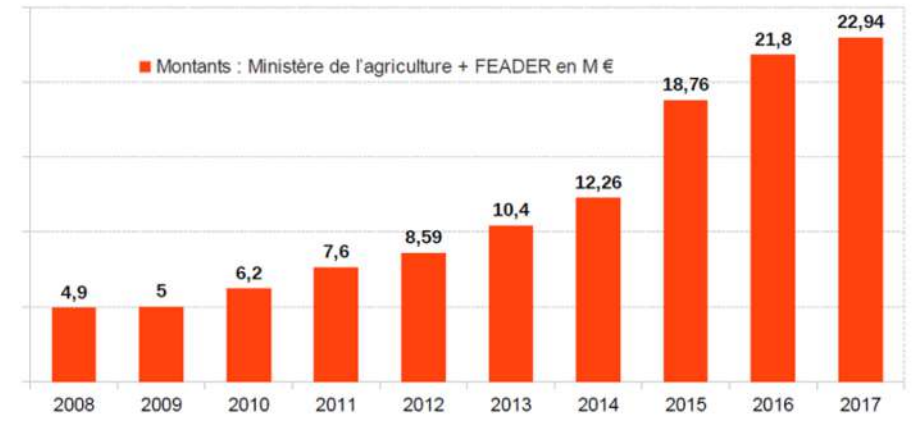
In 2018 **wolf** compensation amounted to **€3.44 million**. There were **3265 attacks** with **10 853 killed animals**.

In 2018, **€24.66 million** were provided to finance flock protection measures (compared to €4.9 million in 2004)



□ Unprotected    ■ Protected

Evolution des aides à la protection des troupeaux contre la prédation

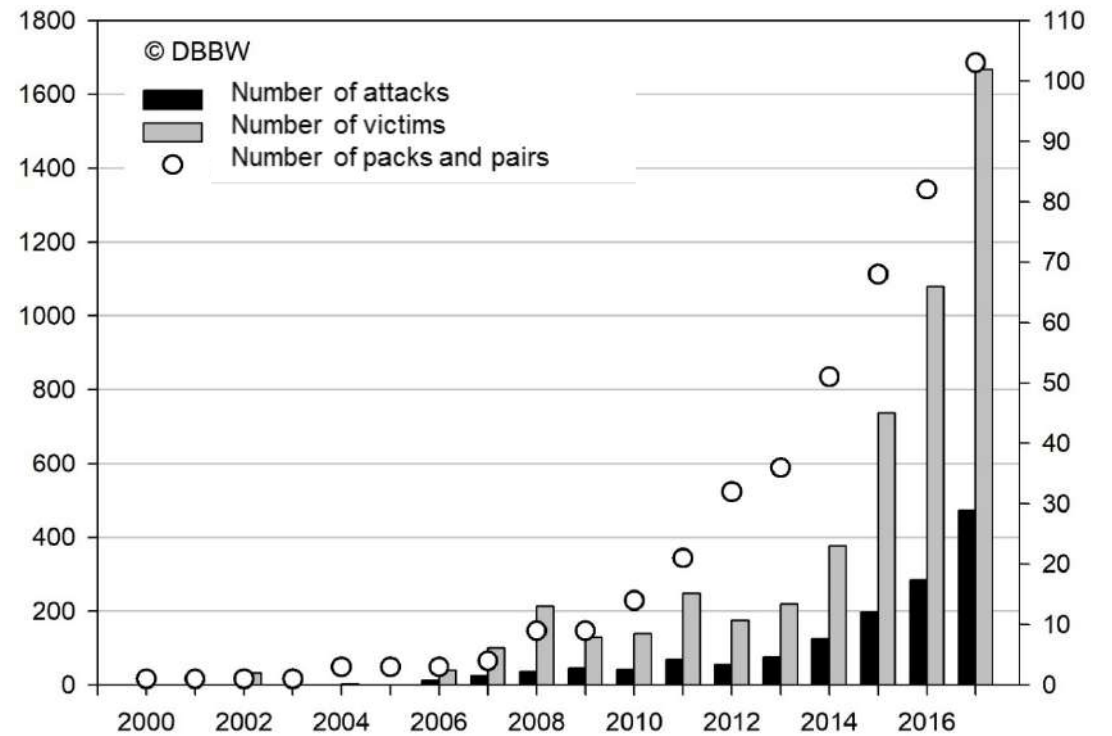




## Damage vs. Manage – Impact in Germany

In Germany, **an average of 3.6 animals per wolf attack** were killed in 2017.

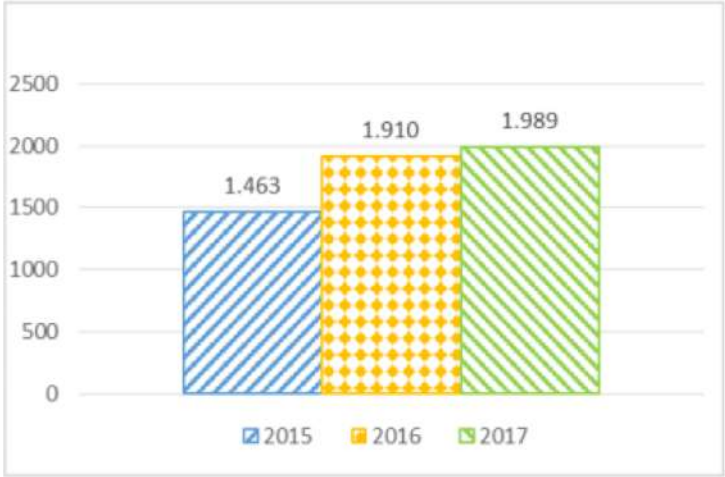
**In 2017, expenditures for wolf-induced damage were highest** in the three federal states with the most wolf territories.



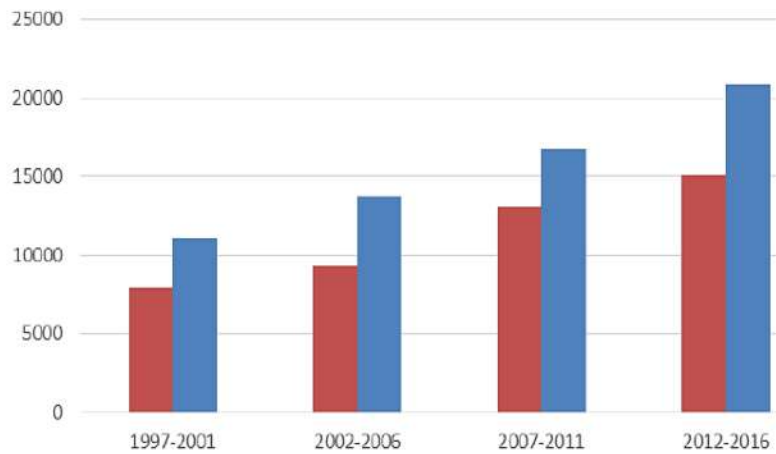


# Damage vs. Manage – Impact in Spain (regional)

Castilla y León –  
number of reported  
attacks



Asturias –  
number of claims / number of affected  
individuals







## Protection measures

Expensive **protection measures which are no longer effective** have multiple limitations:

- \* guarding dogs – costs (including feed and medical costs), number of dogs needed, can cause social conflicts and impact rural tourism etc.
- \* fencing – high costs, landscape constrains, area to be covered, extra labour, time required to set it up and move it, etc.
- \* shouting and gunfire are ineffective as the wolves return within hours or sometimes minutes, they are getting used to the presence of people etc.
- \* housing - extra silage, extra labour and extra bedding, animal welfare concerns etc.

**Keep financing these is questionable** if they do not work, especially from the agricultural and rural development funds.



## Communication on the issue – EU level

Conference ***Damage vs. Manage*** was held at the European Parliament on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (supported by the Romanian Presidency and hosted by MEPs from EPP, ALDE and S&D political groups).

In October 2019, a **Joint declaration** of Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia on wolf management was presented at the **AGRIFISH Council**:

*“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.”*



## Conclusions – Farmers' perspective

**Damages and ineffective and expensive measures**, often only partially financed, have a negative impact on sustainability of farming activities.

**Livestock grazing and pastoral farming play an essential role in preserving biodiversity and protecting species.** It is in the interest of society and the economy to preserve pastoral farming through livestock.

In many regions, the **abandonment of pastures** resulting from the increased pressures from Large Carnivores is already leading to ecological succession, afforestation of land and less attractive landscapes.

**Animal welfare** and the physical integrity of livestock is a social and societal priority.



## Our main messages

### We need to act now!

- \* **Better management of the population** of large carnivores;
- \* Effective use of the **derogations** in all EU Member States;
- \* **Revision of the Annexes** of the Nature Directives and Bern Convention;
- \* Better **management of related damages**;
- \* Maintaining the **viability of rural areas**.



THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION!