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Over the last two years, the wolf (*Canis lupus*) has been the subject of **media attacks** based on anti-scientific attitudes, alarmism and the exploitation of individual news stories. **In Italy, even the traditional media are reporting on the reality of the wolf in a way that is confused with fairy tales, often to the detriment of substantial truths and verified information.** While the downgrading of the wolf is being discussed in the Italian Parliament, **13 associations** are sending a **letter** to the press.

Open letter addressed to the press and journalists

Wolves are only bad in fairy tales: let's tell the truth together.

***It took** half a century of continuous protection for the Italian wolf - *Canis lupus italicus* - to escape the risk of extinction. But **a single European act** was enough to make it lose the right to the 'strict protection' that had enabled it to survive. Downgraded in Europe to a potentially huntable species, the Italian wolf is once again at risk.*

Dear Members of the Press, Dear Journalists,

From strictly protected animal to potentially huntable species: in June 2025, the wolf was 'downgraded' by a European act [amending the EU Habitats Directive](#). However, individual EU Member States can decide whether to transpose the downgrade into national law or to keep the wolf 'strictly' protected on their national territory.

The European downgrading is the latest act in an asymmetrical battle. It is a sad moment for the Italian wolf (*Canis lupus italicus*) and for Italy, the first country in Europe to protect it, even before European regulations came into force, when only a few specimens had survived the extermination of hunting in the 1970s.

Even sadder is the coincidence with the [eighth centenary of the death of St Francis](#), the patron saint of Italy (how can we forget the '[wolf friar](#)' of Gubbio?), to whom the first conservation project in the Abruzzo National Park (1971), entitled [Operation St Francis](#), was dedicated.

The journal [Science](#) recently published [a letter](#) in which scientists explain how the downgrading of *Canis lupus* in Europe has no scientific basis; furthermore, there are currently two legal appeals (from 2025 and 2024) before [the European Court of Justice](#) (Case T-563/25; Case T-634/24) filed by various associations to annul the downgrading of the wolf at European level which, if upheld, could overturn the EU decision and re-establish strict protection.

Over the last two years, the wolf (*Canis lupus*) has been the subject of **media attacks** based on anti-scientific attitudes, alarmism and the exploitation of individual news stories. Some segments of the farming community, supported by a significant part of the hunting community, have been at the forefront of this. The result has been a dystopian narrative that has ended up contradicting European wildlife protection regulations, scientific knowledge and the very ethology of the species, often referring to individual incidents that have been distorted and amplified by social media.

Unfortunately, today even the traditional media in Italy are reporting on the reality of the wolf in a way that is confused with fairy tales, to the detriment of the substantial truth of the facts and verified information.

It is time to set the record straight, to restore the wolf's dignity and to recognise its fundamental role as [an 'ecosystem engineer'](#), whose presence is in the collective interest for the proper functioning of the natural balance, for the benefit of our generation and future generations.

The protection of *Canis lupus italicus* – a genetically unique subspecies of *Canis lupus* – was a major victory for *Italian* conservation efforts, which should be celebrated as part of our national heritage.

Instead, we are witnessing the dismantling of the efforts made and the goals achieved in 50 years of commitment. We are witnessing a leap backwards to medieval values.

We had hoped that the media would focus on promoting knowledge and respect for wild species and their role in ecosystems, **both before and after the change in the law**. On the contrary, we have witnessed the revival of the distorted fairy tale of the 'big bad wolf', based on prejudice and ignorance.

Therefore, we appeal to you before it is too late. **We summarise below some established facts and truths that we hope will find space and representation in the Italian media when discussing the wolf.**

We would like to highlight some of the most relevant information:

- statistically, wolf [predation](#) on the European sheep and goat population accounts for only 0.07% of causes of mortality; there are nine wolf subpopulations and two genetic subspecies in Europe, but data on their monitoring is scarce and not comparable because the methodologies used are different.
- According to official sources, [1,639 dead wolves](#) were found in Italy in the period 2019-2023, with an annual average of 327.8 animals and an upward trend. There are multiple causes of mortality, and these numbers have a direct impact on the conservation risk of the species.
- Systems to prevent predation by wolves work and are subsidised in Europe with [tens of millions of euros per year](#), with EU funds as part of the 'coexistence' policy, but they are rarely used by the agricultural world, which prefers to generate alarmism by crying 'wolf'. One example among many: [Piedmont Region](#), second half of 2025, financial allocation +500,000 euros;
- the wolf is a [natural bioregulator](#) of its habitat and preys on animals such as wild boar, which are killed by hunters without this having any medium-term impact on their reproduction rate. In fact, the most stubborn detractors of the wolf are hunters themselves, who see their prey dwindling and struggle to gain credibility as 'saviours of the agricultural world', as they tend to present themselves. Furthermore, poaching in Italy and Europe is widespread and rarely prosecuted;
- The growth rate of wolf populations does not increase indefinitely. On the contrary, where we are close to reaching optimal density, the reproductive rate approaches zero. This is the case in the Western Alps where, despite a significant presence of the predator, which has saturated almost all available habitats, [there is a very modest growth rate of 1.04](#). The hypotheses put forward by many in the agricultural sector and especially in the hunting world regarding the unstoppable growth in wolf numbers are therefore unfounded.

These are just some of the proven and verified facts about wolves that have been completely ignored by the press.

We remain at your complete disposal for further information and clarification, including from **leading international experts**, many of whom are Italian. We also have archive material (photos, videos, b-roll) that you are free to publish. We would like to invite you to collaborate and engage in dialogue, reminding you that downgrading

does not translate into a licence to kill, which is instead the last resort according to current legislation

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Like humans, wolves are part of the biosphere, an interconnected system of life that depends on natural resources. This fragile balance is now severely compromised by the intensity of human activities, which exert increasing pressure on nature and its animal inhabitants.

Wild mammals, including all large land and marine animals (whales, elephants, lions, wolves, etc.), represent only a very small fraction (about **4%**) of the total biomass of mammals on the planet. Approximately **96%** of the biomass of all existing mammals (out of approximately 7,000 species) consists of humans (34%) and domestic animals raised for food or other human needs (62%).

If this awareness is not enough to trigger a sense of collective and mutual responsibility, then there is nothing left to save.

Thank you for your attention,

on behalf of the 13 undersigned associations:

Piero Belletti, **Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura**; segretario@pro-natura.it mobile: 348 452 8931

Gaia Angelini, **Green Impact**; gaia.angelini@greenimpact.it mobile: 348 058 6408

Francesco Romito, **I am not afraid of the wolf**; francesco@iononhopauradellupo.it mobile: 388 345 5840

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- Act amending the protection status of wolves in Italy, included in **Draft Law No. 1737 – European Delegation Law 2025 (already approved by the Chamber of Deputies) – final vote currently scheduled in the Senate on 10-12 March 2026.**

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