

Large Carnivore Platform, Workshop Bucharest June 2017

Statement of the participants on recent developments in large carnivore management in Romania

On 4th October 2016, Romania's Minister of Environment, Water, and Forests, Cristiana Pașca Palmer, announced a decision not to issue harvest quotas for brown bears, grey wolves, lynx, and wildcats, citing concerns about the monitoring and data collection methods related to the different large carnivore populations in Romania. Views on the justification of this decision are divided between stakeholders engaged with large carnivore management.

In order to facilitate a more open discussion about how decisions on large carnivore management are made, the General Association of Romanian Hunters & Anglers (AGVPS) and WWF Romania decided to organise a joint workshop on large carnivore conservation and management in Romania. AGVPS and WWF Romania were supported by their EU representative bodies, the European Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation (FACE) and WWF International, who are members of the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores (hereafter referred to as the Platform), a grouping of organisations which aim to minimise conflict related to large carnivores.

Following the workshop, the participants agreed on the following joint vision:

To promote ways and means to minimize, and wherever possible find solutions to, conflicts between human interests and the presence of large carnivore species, by exchanging knowledge and by working together in an open-ended, constructive and mutually respectful way.

To work together to improve coexistence between people and large carnivores, in particular, those people in rural areas living closest to them. This is particularly important in Romania with its significant large carnivore populations of internationally recognised importance.

The participants agreed that management of large carnivores should be determined on the basis of sound scientific evidence, using the best available and reliable data. This should involve continued research, development and integration of monitoring methods involving all interest groups in the collection methods. The participants acknowledged the important role of hunters, private landowners and land managers, and other stakeholders in the management of large carnivores in Romania.

If a broad participation/ involvement of all relevant stakeholders is sought on large carnivore management from an early stage, it is more likely to be successful than if policies are imposed from the top down without consultation. Governments and agencies should take this into account in their decision-making process regarding large carnivore management.

The participants identified the following objectives as a priority for further discussion:

- Create an inclusive, transparent process to effectively deal with large carnivore issues;
- Create a clear policy lead for decisions on large carnivore management;
- Improve the methodology for monitoring large carnivores;
- Establish an effective compensation scheme for large carnivore damages;

- Urgently apply a system for effectively dealing with problem bears. The current hunting ban is not solving this problem;
- Create an economic motivation to address coexistence issues, building on Romania's established reputation as a large carnivore destination.

In order to realise these objectives, the participants invite the government of Romania, making use of the EU Platform to help moderate and facilitate the process, to guarantee representative stakeholder involvement in future decisions related to the management and monitoring of large carnivores.

They ask the government of Romania to build on the conclusions reached at this workshop and to consider continuing the process through the establishment of a national Platform on large carnivores.

Workshop participants

9 June 2017

