



22 December 2010

Ministry of the Environment Sweden*Minister for the Environment*

Janez Potočnik
European Commissioner for the
Environment
European Commission
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Janez,

Thank you for your elucidatory letter dated on the 7th of December 2010 regarding the wolf policy in Sweden. Unfortunately, probably due to the winter conditions in Europe, I did not get your letter until the 17th of December.

I agree with you completely on the need for conservation of the fragile Swedish wolf population. This is the reason that motivates the Government's wolf policy. The Government's clear objective is to achieve a long term viable wolf population in Sweden. Let me assure you that it is my and the Swedish Government's obvious ambition to develop a wolf policy in a manner that is consistent with our international obligations and the requirements in the Habitats Directive.

It is important to stress the fact that the improvement of the wolf populations genetic status is in this aspect more important than the continued growth on a narrow genetic base. The Government is taking several steps to strengthen the genetic status of the wolf population including the necessary introduction of new wolves with eastern origin. The Swedish Government and the Swedish Parliament considers that a limited and strictly controlled license hunt is needed to obtain local acceptance among the rural population regarding this highly controversial measure.

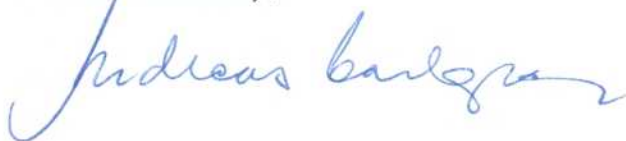
The Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE) has recently evaluated the Swedish license hunt in 2010. The LCIE states that Sweden's wolves are among the best studied in the world. LCIE also states that the overall size of the Swedish quota and the manner in which the hunt was conducted does not appear to violate any of their general guidelines and is unlikely to seriously jeopardize the potential for the viability of the population or its further development towards reaching a more favourable conservation status. The LCIE considers that the harvest was carefully modelled using state of the art statistical tools and accordingly that

the quota that was set was conservative. With respect to derogations made under Article 16(e) the organization of the hunt, according to the LCIE, appears to be within the frames outlined. In short, their view is that the hunt as conducted in 2010 could have been justified under several derogation criteria under the Habitats Directive.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has on the 15th of December authorised that a total of 20 wolves may be culled in six counties in the 2011 license hunt. This decision is based on research documentation of the wolf population and its possible distribution, the views of County Administrative Boards and the EPA's Council for Predator Issues. The evaluation of the 2010 licensed hunt has also affected the structure of the hunt. Licensed hunting is allowed in the six counties where the wolf population has reproduced during the past three years. No licensed hunting is allowed in areas where immigrated wolves or their off-spring are known to live. The leader of the hunt is required to inform the hunting team of the conditions of the hunt and the risks of wounding, and instruct them to not shoot at moving animals. The leader of the hunt must notify the County Administrative Board, without delay, of any killed or wounded wolf, and check hourly with the Board regarding the current status of the quota.

Let Me assure you that I share your ambition on a continued close cooperation in a constructive spirit on this issue. The Swedish Ministry of the Environment will of course continue to inform Your services on the development of our continuous efforts in order to achieve a long term viable wolf population in Sweden

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andreas Carlsson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.