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# COCO FIELDWORK IN FULL SWING

As the CoCo project progresses, we're delighted to share a snapshot of our teams' activities across every participating country. From Latvia's rain-soaked fields to the unexpected disease outbreaks in Greece, our dedicated teams have been working tirelessly, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in the face of varied challenges.

Some hurdles were anticipated –adverse weather, logistical complexities, and the occasional technical hiccup. Yet, as always in fieldwork, surprises have emerged. In some regions, conditions have been more favourable than expected, allowing for rapid data collection and fruitful collaboration. In others, unforeseen events have required quick thinking and creative problem-solving, reminding us of the importance of flexibility in research.

We are deeply grateful to the more than 800 farmers across Europe who have participated in our interviewees so far,. Their whose insights and openness have enriched our understanding and informed the project's direction. Their willingness to share experiences has been invaluable, and we look forward to continuing these conversations as the project unfolds.

Thank you to all partners and team members, especially the fieldworkers who have expent the last months travelling throughout the study area territories, and partners for your dedication, commitment and enthusiasm. The journey is ongoing, and together we are making meaningful progress towards our shared goals.

Daniel Martín Collado, CITA Aragón.

# PROJECT UPDATES

The project is made up of eight interrelated work packages as described on the project website. Here we provide a short update on ongoing activities.

## Across Borders: CoCo Fieldwork Driving Coexistence

Recent CoCo fieldwork has shed light on diverse approaches to coexistence across Europe. In [Slovenia](#), farmers and students are collaborating to bridge the gap between wild and rural landscapes. [Romania](#) is pioneering innovative solutions and harnessing local expertise to advance European dialogue on living with wildlife. In [France](#), pastoralists share their experiences with the return of large carnivores. [Greece](#) offers fresh insights into human-wildlife relations, amplifying rural voices. Fieldwork in [Italy](#) focuses on preventing damage and building understanding in the Maremma region and Cuneo province, while in [Spain](#), two women are bridging pastoralism and conservation from mountain pastures to research.

Our field teams are currently on the ground describing the case study areas in detail. Five of these have now been added to the website: Sierra de Gredos, El Espinar, Picos de Europa, and Montaña Palentina in Spain, as well as Vidzerne and Sëlja in Latvia.

» [Visit our interactive case study map to explore these regions](#)

## Knowledge Consolidation: Mapping the Pastoralism-Wildlife Policy Landscape

To better understand how policies shape pastoralism-wildlife interactions, over the past months, Umeå University researchers Prof. Camilla Sandström and Dr. Auvikki de Boon and Adelphi researcher Katrina Marsden have led five workshops to [map the policy landscape](#) across 12 European countries. In these workshops, we explored the content of agricultural and environmental policies, in terms of the goals they are aiming for and the tools used to steer towards those goals. We also examined the processes through which these policies are made and implemented. We discussed how these policies and processes interact – whether they complement each other or are in conflict – and whether there are any gaps in how they address the challenges related to pastoralism-wildlife coexistence.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the workshops. We now start the work of summarising the individual country results and comparing approaches across the countries to identify opportunities for cross-country learning to mitigate conflicts and to make policy-relevant recommendations at the end of the project both at the EU level, but also for the individual countries.

## Diversity of Livestock Protection Strategies: The Pastoralists' Survey

CITA is leading the launch of a detailed quantitative field data survey on livestock management practices and pastoralists' relationship with wildlife, covering a wide diversity of pastoral systems currently in use across 12 European countries and 29 case study areas. The goal is to document the diversity of livestock farming systems and gather valuable insights on pastoralists' views and experiences, including their perceptions of predators and other wildlife, the impacts these have on pastoral systems technical management and workload, the effectiveness of different husbandry strategies to prevent or reduce damage and the governance approaches needed to pave the way toward a state of coexistence acceptable to rural communities.

Field teams began their work in June and have been progressing at a fast and steady pace. So far, more than 800 farmers have been visited across Europe, and the project aims to reach 1,000 by the end of the year. The survey is generating a vast amount of data, which will start to be analysed and shared from September next year. Beyond the data, each survey visit represents a long and thoughtful conversation, together building an exchange of ideas and perspectives among thousands of farmers, researchers, students and technicians about how to shape the future of interactions between livestock and large predators in Europe.

## The Role of Other Land Users: Hunters and Landowners Survey

In addition to the pastoralists survey, a questionnaire has been distributed to hunters and landowners in the same case study areas. It is also open to other interests with strong territorial links. The questionnaire covers similar topics to the farmers survey and gathers viewpoints on the interactions between pastoralism and wildlife in the area.

The survey is managed by INRAE, French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment together with the CoCo country partners, the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) and European Landowners Organisation (ELO).

## Co-creation

Knowledge co-creation is a collaborative process where stakeholders, practitioners, and researchers jointly generate, share and apply knowledge, blending diverse perspectives and experiences to ensure solutions are tailored to local conditions and have shared ownership. The CoCo project embraces this approach to address pastoralism-wildlife conflicts by engaging stakeholders such as pastoralists, hunters and landowners not only through surveys but also as project partners and subcontractors, ensuring their voices shape decision-making and research. Ongoing dialogue through consultation forums and active outreach further incorporates diverse knowledge into all project processes. To guide its direction, [CoCo has established an Advisory Board](#) composed of experts from the [EU Platform on Coexistence Between People and Large Carnivores](#), scientists and regional stakeholders, providing structured feedback and connecting the project to key coexistence areas, thereby strengthening the co-creation process across all activities.

# RELEVANT POLICY NEWS

## Habitats Directive adapted to lower protection status of the wolf

The [change in the protection status of the wolf in the EU](#) came into force 14 July 2025. The Commission proposed a targeted change to the annexes of the Habitats Directive, moving the wolf from strictly protected (annex IV) to protected (annex V). This gives additional flexibility to Member States in managing their local wolf populations, for example, allowing hunting. As the wolf will remain a protected species, Member States' conservation and management measures will still need to achieve and maintain favourable conservation status. Member States will still have the possibility to maintain a higher level of wolf's protection, if deemed necessary under national law.

## Post-2027 CAP and MFF proposals

In July 2025, the European Commission published its proposal for the [Multi-annual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#) and the [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) for the 2028-34 period](#). The proposal envisages an increased EU overall budget of €2 trillion in current prices. Amongst the proposed changes to the MFF is a closer alignment with the Commission's current priorities (i.e. security, defence, improved competitiveness, and significantly greater flexibility to adapt to unforeseen events). On the other hand, environmental topic areas seem to be lower priority. The CAP would be combined with Cohesion policy in a new "European Fund for Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion, Agriculture and Rural, Fisheries and Maritime, Prosperity and Security. Member States are expected to outline their use of the funding through National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) covering the full seven-year period. A [first analysis of the environmental implications](#) of the proposal by IEEP suggests that the environmental aspects of the CAP would be weakened but they potentially have more flexibility to combine environmental and social elements.

# PROJECT NEWS AND EVENTS

## CoCo Meets the Polish Presidency of the EU | Brussels, 15 May 2025

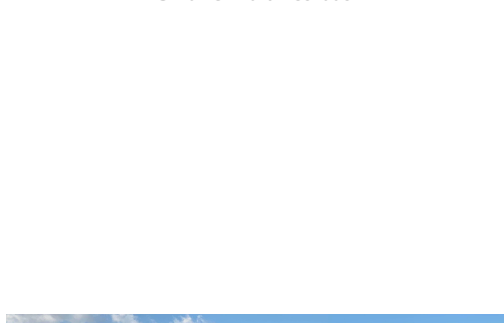
At the [conference on Sustainable Management of Protected Animals Causing Agricultural Losses](#), hosted by the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Prof. John Linnell, CoCo Project lead and professor at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, shared his insights on the challenges and opportunities of coexisting with Europe's large carnivores. Through collaboration among 18 institutions in 12 countries, the CoCo Project seeks to bridge science, policy, and community needs to promote coexistence between people and large carnivores.



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## CoCo at the 6th Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform meeting | Ioannina, Greece, 19-22 May

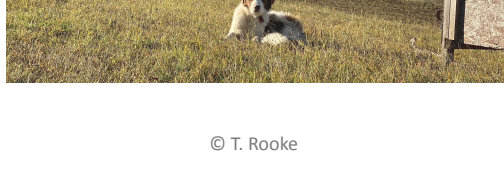
The [6th Dinaric Balkan Pindos Platform conference](#) brought together government officials, experts and various stakeholders to discuss updated information on management and monitoring of large carnivore populations in the region and to address shared challenges in this regard. Several CoCo partners were actively involved in the conference. Katrina Marsden and John Linnell, both contributed to key sessions and discussions.



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## CoCo at the Wolves Across Borders Conference | Lunteren, Netherlands, 2-6 June 2025

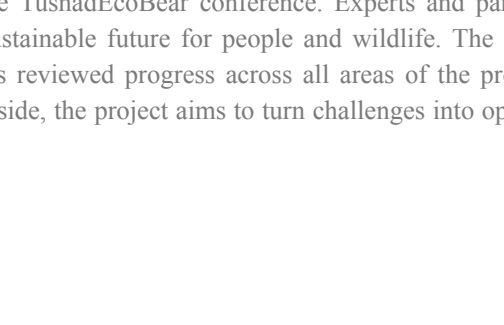
The [Wolves Across Borders Conference](#) covered a wide range of topics on wolf ecology and management. John Linnell and Valeria Salvatori took part in a panel discussion on coexistence and presented some of the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores on multi-level stakeholder platforms and youth engagement.



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## Biodiversity and Agriculture: How We Value Life in All Its Forms | Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, 26 June 2025

The Research and Development Institute for Hunting and Mountain Resources (ICDCRM), a CoCo-Partner, hosted the [workshop "Biodiversity and Agriculture — How We Value Life in All Its Forms"](#) as part of the FarmBioNet project. The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, including representatives from national and local authorities in the farming and agricultural sector, as well as farmers, NGOs and research organisations to identify the most appropriate biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and assess their applicability across different agricultural systems.



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## CoCo at the 76th EAAP Annual Meeting | Innsbruck, Austria, 25-29 August

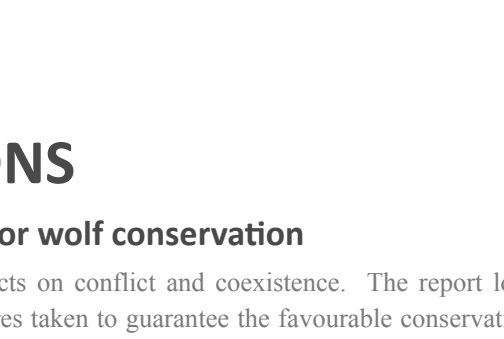
The Spanish CoCo partner, the Agri-Food Research and Technology Center of Aragón (CITA) [presented the first preliminary results](#) of the CoCo project pastoralists survey during the 76th Annual Meeting of the European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP), which brought together more than 1,400 international experts in the Tyrolean capital to debate the future of livestock production in Europe.



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## Tusnad Eco Bear Conference | Tusnad, Romania, 21-22 October

The [conference](#), 21-22 October, in Tusnad, Romania brought together the diverse views, skills and experiences of invited experts to contribute science-based proposals to improve the quality of people-bear coexistence as part of future urban and national policies. The CoCo project is a co-organiser through our Romanian Partner: the Research and Development Institute for Wildlife and Mountain Resources (ICDCRM). The project organised the workshop "Designing potential scenarios for collaboration between pastoralism and wildlife management".



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## The CoCo Consortium Meeting

The [CoCo consortium meeting 2025](#) was organised by ICDCRM back-to-back with the TusnadEcoBear conference. Experts and partners from across Europe came together to explore how tradition and collaboration can shape a sustainable future for people and wildlife. The consortium meeting marked almost one year of hard work and dedication. At the meeting, partners reviewed progress across all areas of the project, from cutting-edge research to hands-on fieldwork. By sharing knowledge and working side by side, the project aims to turn challenges into opportunities for both people and wildlife.

## CoCo Advisory Board Meeting

The CoCo Advisory Board meeting took place 4 November 2025. Following an update on the project, the [advisory board members](#) gave feedback focusing on links to their own work. In particular, the board examined how the project could increase its impact with stakeholders and feeding into key policy events.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Sign up for the EAAP webinar series!

The CoCo partner European Federation of Animal Sciences (EAAP) organises regular webinars for its membership and other stakeholders. A first webinar from the CoCo team is planned 9 December at 15:00. The project field work and first results of interviews with pastoralists will be presented. [Register now!](#)

# RELATED PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

## Towards coexistence or conflict? An analysis of regional policies for wolf conservation

WWF Spain has just published an [overview of wolf governance in Spain](#) and its impacts on conflict and coexistence. The report looks at the approaches taken by the autonomous communities. It highlights, in particular, the measures taken to guarantee the favourable conservation of wolf populations and their coexistence with human activities and criticises a lack of support for extensive livestock farming to put protection measures in place.

## Bern Convention: Best practices for species management

The Bern Convention has re-established its Group of Experts on the Conservation of Large Carnivores. At the initial meeting on 9 June, the purpose of the group was discussed, and Luigi Boitani was elected chair. All meeting documents can be found on the website. LCIE developed the document [Best practices for management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe: Special focus on brown bear and grey wolf](#), which is targeted at participating managing authorities. The following meeting of the group took place on 30 September.

## Large Carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Region: Management, Monitoring, Threats and Conflicts

The Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Region Large Carnivore Initiative has published a comprehensive report presenting an overview of the conservation status, management practices, and ongoing challenges facing large carnivores across the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Region. It provides the most up to date snapshot of large carnivore populations in this region and shows management progress since 2021. Other reports, notably an update on connectivity in the region, are available on the [website](#).

## New Report on bold wolf behaviour across Europe

A new [technical report](#) is now available, offering a comprehensive analysis of bold and habituated wolf behaviours across Europe. Produced as part of the [LIFE WILD WOLF project](#) in collaboration with the IUCN's [Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe \(LCIE\)](#), the report defines key terms and identifies recurring patterns in human-wolf encounters. Drawing on data from eight countries between 2012 and 2022, the study highlights that most cases of bold behaviour involve young wolves and are often linked to human-related factors such as food provisioning and the presence of dogs.

## Wolf attacks on dogs: a comprehensive European review

This new [scoping study](#) developed within the LIFE WILD WOLF project presents the most detailed overview yet of wolf attacks on dogs across Europe. Analysing over 2,300 incidents recorded between 1999 and 2024 in nine countries, the review highlights that hunting dogs and those left unsupervised are most at risk, particularly in areas with low natural prey density.

## Wolves and their prey all fear the human “super predator”

A [new experimental study](#) from Poland's Tuchola Forest demonstrates that both wolves and their prey show a strong fear response to humans, fleeing more often and more quickly than when exposed to other animals. The study reveals that fear of the human "super predator" drives both wolves and their prey to become predominantly nocturnal, effectively trapping them in darkness to avoid daytime human activity. These findings challenge assumptions about "fearless" wolves, suggesting that apparent boldness is more likely driven by access to human food sources rather than loss of fear.

# VISIT THE COCO PARTNERS: INRAE

[INRAE](#) is the French National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Food and the Environment, a public research institution with 18 centres across France.

INRAE produces and mobilises knowledge to promote innovation, expertise, and support for public policy for climate change mitigation and adaptation, global health, sustainable management of agricultural and forest soils, land, forests, and water, risk analysis and management, and the social, economic, and political dynamics and challenges of agroecosystem transitions. The Agroecology unit, in which the CoCo scientists are based, conducts research that aims to use action-research methods to analyse the tensions or conflicts that may arise in the implementation of agroecological approaches to farming (creation of semi-natural areas, reducing the use of plant protection products, farmer relations).

Their work aims to better understand the context and history of conflicts, the positions and visions of stakeholders, as well as the obstacles and levers for implementing change in situations where the issues are ecological, economic, and social.

As part of the CoCo project, INRAE leads the coordination and implementation of the large-scale online questionnaire, a key component of [Work Package 4](#), that aims to better understand the perspectives of pastoralists, hunters and landowners concerning their perceptions of the interactions between wildlife and livestock, the way these interactions are managed, and their needs or aims for change. The online questionnaire is up and running until end of February 2026 and will be analysed and disseminated shortly afterwards. The CoCo team has also been very active recently in carrying out the [interviews with pastoralists, both in Ariège and in the Cévennes](#).



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