
Human-animal conflicts and social dimension

Engaging key stakeholders for lowering conflicts between humans and wolves: insights and results from the LIFE WolfAlps EU project

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The recently concluded European LIFE WolfAlps EU project was focused on guaranteeing the long-term conservation of the Alpine wolf population by improving wolf-human coexistence. One of the main actions throughout the 5-year project period was the involvement of key actors who interact in different ways with the wolf such as breeders, hunters, environmental associations, politicians, journalists, hikers, tour operators and educators, with the aim to explore the economic, political and social aspects of the wolf presence in the Alpine territories. Its influence on community life is directly related to the amount of space that humans and wolves share. Therefore, following European guidelines, the project organised 11 dialogue thematic (regional and local) platforms and a very large number of local meetings tailored for each stakeholder in all project's countries.

Here we will present the main findings of these participatory paths, which were attended by more than 3,000 people. First, the adopted engagement strategy will be explained and its key points briefly presented. Afterwards, urgent issues and needs of the participants according to the local context, the relevant issues for each stakeholder's category, the main common discussion points and feedback to the project and the activities locally implemented, strengths, challenges, recurrent problematic issues and the main ideas and suggestions on innovative actions and/or strategies for managing wildlife conflicts, supporting pastoral activities, and engaging the public will be briefly illustrated. We will discuss what the project has done to contribute to the advancement of knowledge on this sensitive topic.