



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
ENVIRONMENT  
General Affairs, Knowledge & Resources  
The Director

Brussels  
ENV.A/GG

**Petition submission to stop the LIFE project “Letsgo Giglio” which, among other actions, foresees the eradication of mouflon on the Island of Giglio**

Dear petitioners,

Thank you for your petition regarding the LIFE project “Letsgo Giglio” and the eradication of mouflons.

We have carefully examined your letter and the additional materials submitted. In addition, we analysed several documents provided by the LIFE LETSGO Giglio project, coordinated by the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, and external experts. This information allows the European Commission to continue providing its full support to the project.

While no genetic tests have been performed on the mouflon (*Ovis aries*) population on the Giglio Island, it is believed they had arrived from Sardinia and Germany between 1957 and 1960, making them a recently introduced species in the insular context of the Tuscan Archipelago. Existing literature well describes and explains the impact a small population of herbivores may have in a insular context like this. This may include, impoverishing its genetic variability and consequently its importance by the conservation point of view. Insular ecosystems have evolved without herbivores. Therefore, their presence is not compatible with the natural evolution of ecosystems. The damage to plant and animal species, as well as to the soil structure, which the species causes on islands has been studied in different contexts worldwide with similar and consistent results. In the context of the LIFE LETSGO Giglio project, the impact of mouflons on traditional agriculture was not the determining factor in the decision-making process, which led to the planned eradication, but the potential impact of the species if left without any control due also to the total absence of predators that could in turn control the population size.

Despite the mouflon not being regulated at the EU level by the Invasive Alien Species Regulation, it can be still considered invasive in certain environments. The invasive status of mouflons in the Giglio Island is also fully supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In addition, the eradication protocol prepared by the LIFE LETSGO Giglio project received backing from the technical body of the Ministry

of Ecological Transition, the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA).

It should be noted that, while not excluding culling, non-lethal procedures are the core of the eradication action.

Since November 2019, several events were organised, aiming to inform citizens about the LIFE LETSGO Giglio project, its purpose and objectives, and to exchange opinions.

We fully understand and appreciate the strong feelings this action may have raised, like it happens for many other eradications, but we believe the initiative by the Park authorities should be judged first for the objectives it pursues aiming at protecting the natural biodiversity of the island.

We are confident that a constructive discussion with the Park authorities will lead to the best solution in the interest of animal welfare as well as biodiversity.

We understand that the recent agreement signed by Park authorities, WWF Italy and LAV Lega Anti Vivisezione goes precisely in this direction. The agreement, while acknowledging the need for this eradication, foresees the suspension of culling limiting the activities to capture and relocation.

Yours sincerely

*Electronically signed*

Gilles GANTELET