



THE ALPINE CONVENTION IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TREATY OF PROTECTION OF A CROSS-BORDER MOUNTAINOUS REGION  
italian presidency 2013-2014  
alpine convention



# Overview on the status of bear, wolf and lynx on the Alps

## The role of the Alpine Convention

**Claudio Groff – Alpine Convention  
Conference on LC protection in the Carpathians  
Roznov pod Radhostem 18-21 October 2016**

Photo Matteo Zeni - ABNP



# Program:

THE ALPINE CONVENTION IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A CROSS-BORDER MOUNTAINOUS REGION  
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- I - Introduction: the **Alpine Convention** framework
- II - **Status** of the **Large Carnivores** in the Alps



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# Alps: a human dominated lanscape compared to Carpathians



# Alps-Carpathians

## Reasons of a better cooperation

- L.C. move on huge distances
- Natural corridors needed
- L.C. force regions and states to get (and stay) in touch
- The carpathians provide “source” populations for the Alps (lynx, wolf)





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# The role of the Alpine Convention

## THE PLATFORM LARGE CARNIVORES, WILD UNGULATES AND SOCIETY

- **Base: need for a new cross-border and participatory approach!**
- Alpine Convention as political host, mandated by ministerial conference;
- GOs as driving forces, interest groups and stakeholders as observers;
- Strategic documents and guidance;
- Expert opinion based;

The screenshot shows the website for the Alpine Convention. At the top, there are language options: English, Deutsch, Italiano, Français, Slovenčina. Below this is the Alpine Convention logo and the text 'ALPINE CONVENTION'. A navigation bar includes 'THE CONVENTION', 'ORGANIZATION', 'ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'NEWS AND EVENTS', and 'CONTACT'. Under 'ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS', there is a link for 'Working Groups/Platforms'. The main content area features a photograph of a herd of deer in a snowy landscape. Below the photo, the text reads: 'LARGE CARNIVORES, WILD UNGULATES AND SOCIETY PLATFORM. Presidency: Italy. Sustainable wildlife management requires balancing and harmonizing ecological, economical and socio-cultural interests; an antagonism needs to be managed: wildlife - society. 1. What is Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society Platform (WISO)? The objectives of the Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society Platform (also called the Platform WISO) embedded in the Alpine Convention are to find solutions to manage large carnivores and wild ungulates harmoniously, and based on an integrated approach. The platform goes beyond a strictly ecological approach'.

The cover of the document features the European Union flag at the top. The title is 'Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores'. Below the title is a small map of Europe with a red dot indicating the Alpine region, labeled 'EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP'. At the bottom, it says 'Prepared by Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe c/o Istituto di Ecologia Applicata, May 2007 Via Cimena 71 - 00141 Rome' and 'Final Draft 7<sup>th</sup> May 2007'.

## The L.C. Platform (since 2009)

Large carnivores and wild ungulates are to be preserved in balance with their habitat, other wildlife and human interests. Conflicts with human interests are to be dealt with and negative impacts to be counterbalanced.

- To develop **practical goals and management options** for the recovery and conservation of wolf, lynx and bear populations in the Alps
- To work towards an Alpine-wide **genetic monitoring** program for large carnivores.
- Cooperation with the **ECONET Platform** of the Alpine Convention and with the **EU Platform**

## The L.C. challenge in the Alpine Convention

- Wiso presidencies: Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Italy, Italy
- Different L.C. populations
- Different landscapes and economies (northern and southern Alps)
- Different policies and approaches (8 countries)
- Different involvements in the Platform
- Diplomacy needed
- Agreements not always easy...



# Brown bear at the scale of the continent

- Specie is expanding.
- Many populations extend far beyond national borders.
- Despite initiatives, not much population-level, transboundars monitoring or management so far.
- Alpine pop. small and isolated





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# Alps: recent history

Bear never totally extinct

**Since 1973**

Management of autochthonous population

**1995-2002**

## Reintroduction project

Feasibility study

First opinion survey (1997)

10 bears moved from Slovenia to the Alps

### Goals:

- 40-60 individuals in 20-40 years
- A **metapopulation** connected with Dinaric in the long term

**2002-today**

New population monitoring and management



1976: first collar in Eurasia

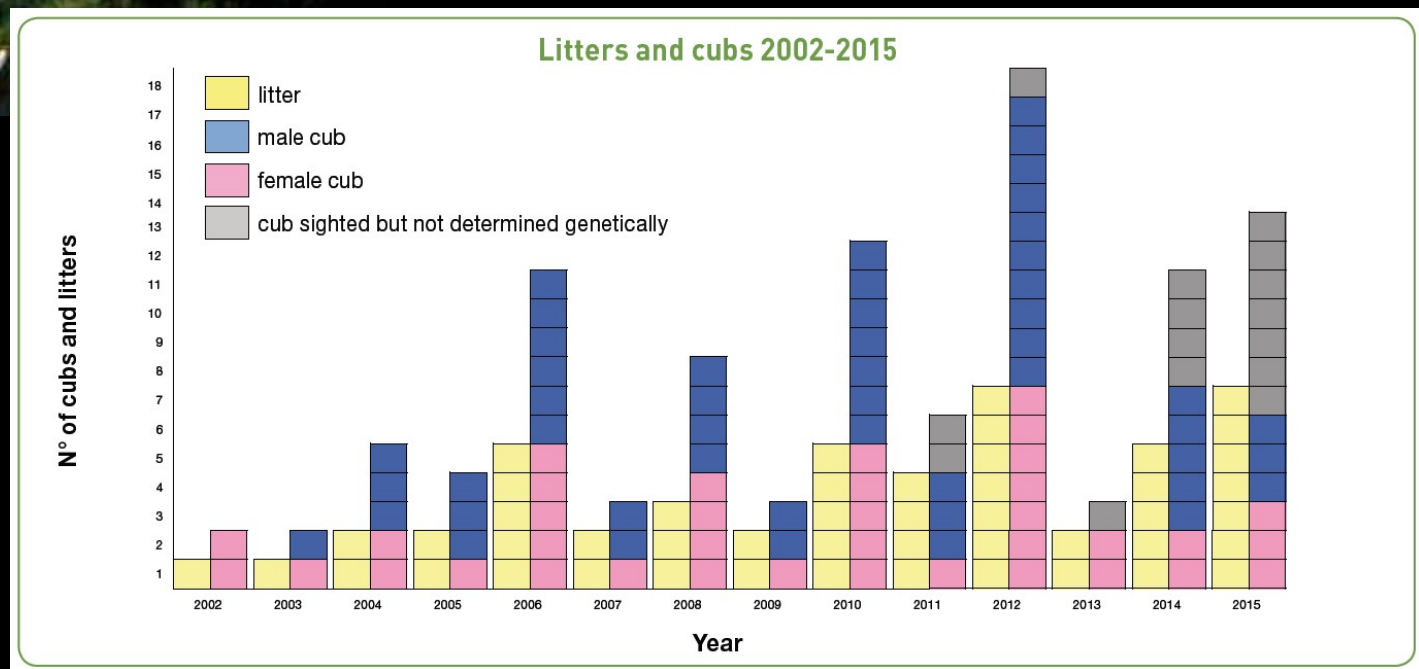
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# Reproduction 2002-2015



- 48 litters
- 101 cubs

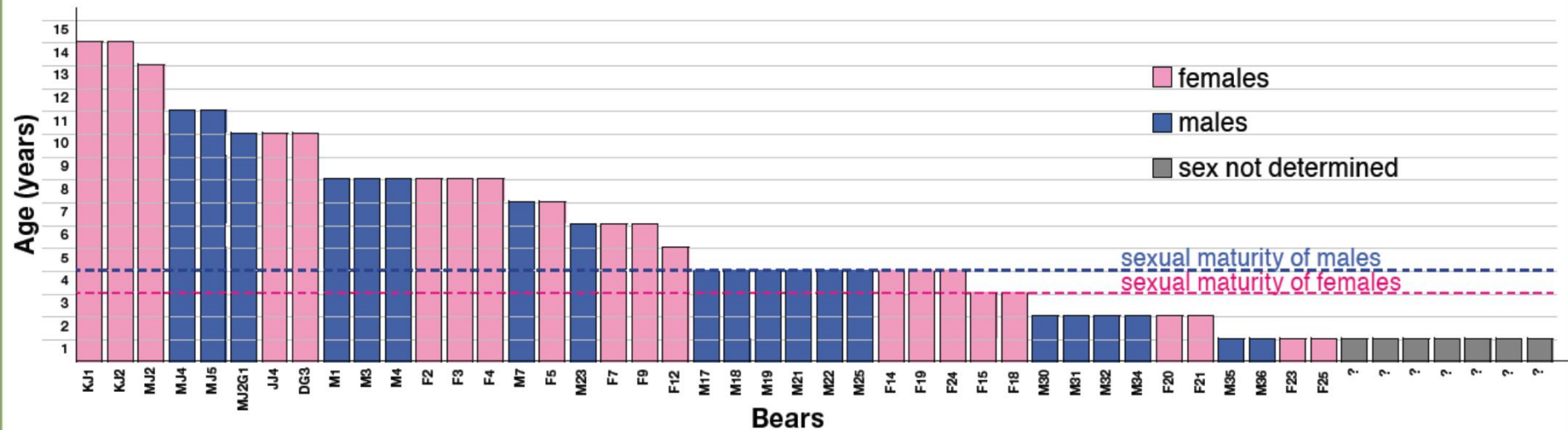




# N, structure and sex ratio

## 48-54 bears in 2015

Structure of the population at the end of 2015

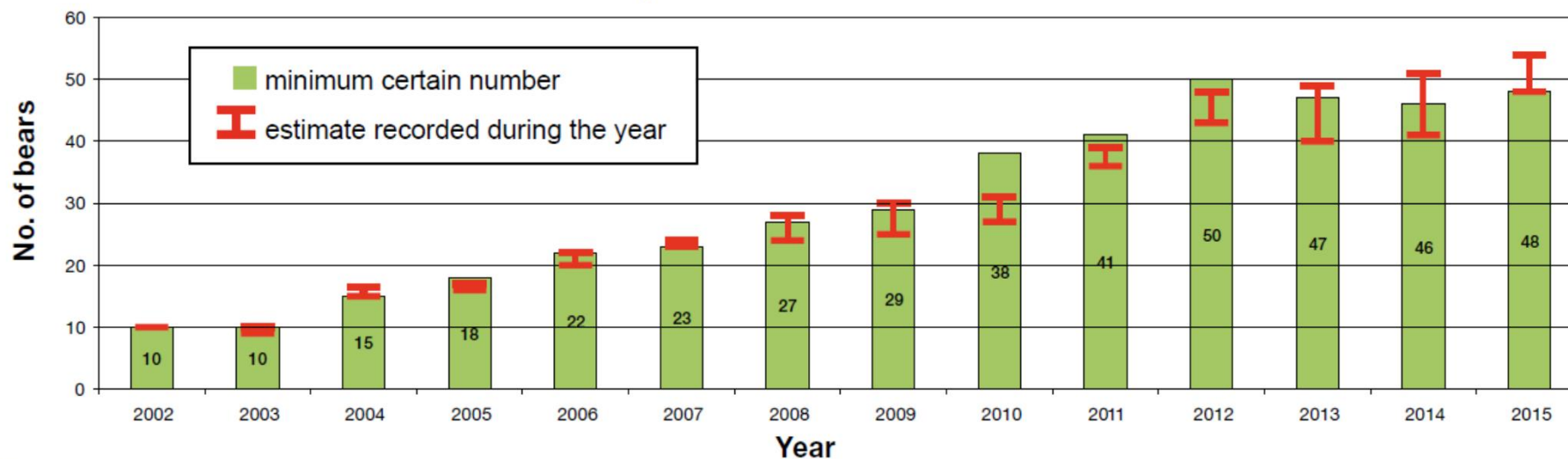


**Structure: 23 adults (48%), 14 youngs (29%), 11 cubs (23%)**

**Sex ratio: 20 males, 21 females, 7 und. – M-F 1:1.05 (n=41)**

# Population trend

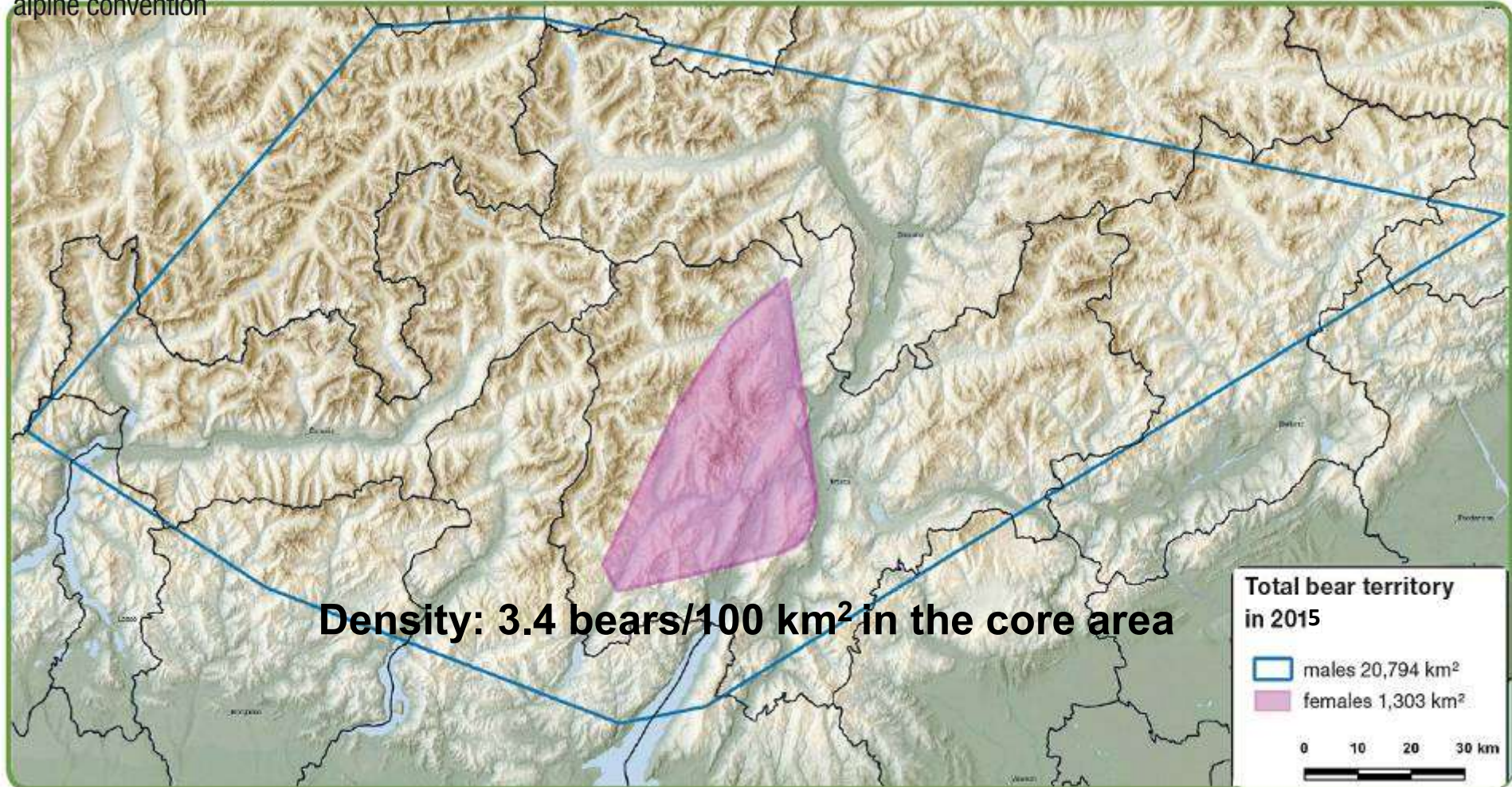
Population trend 2002-2015





# Occupied range

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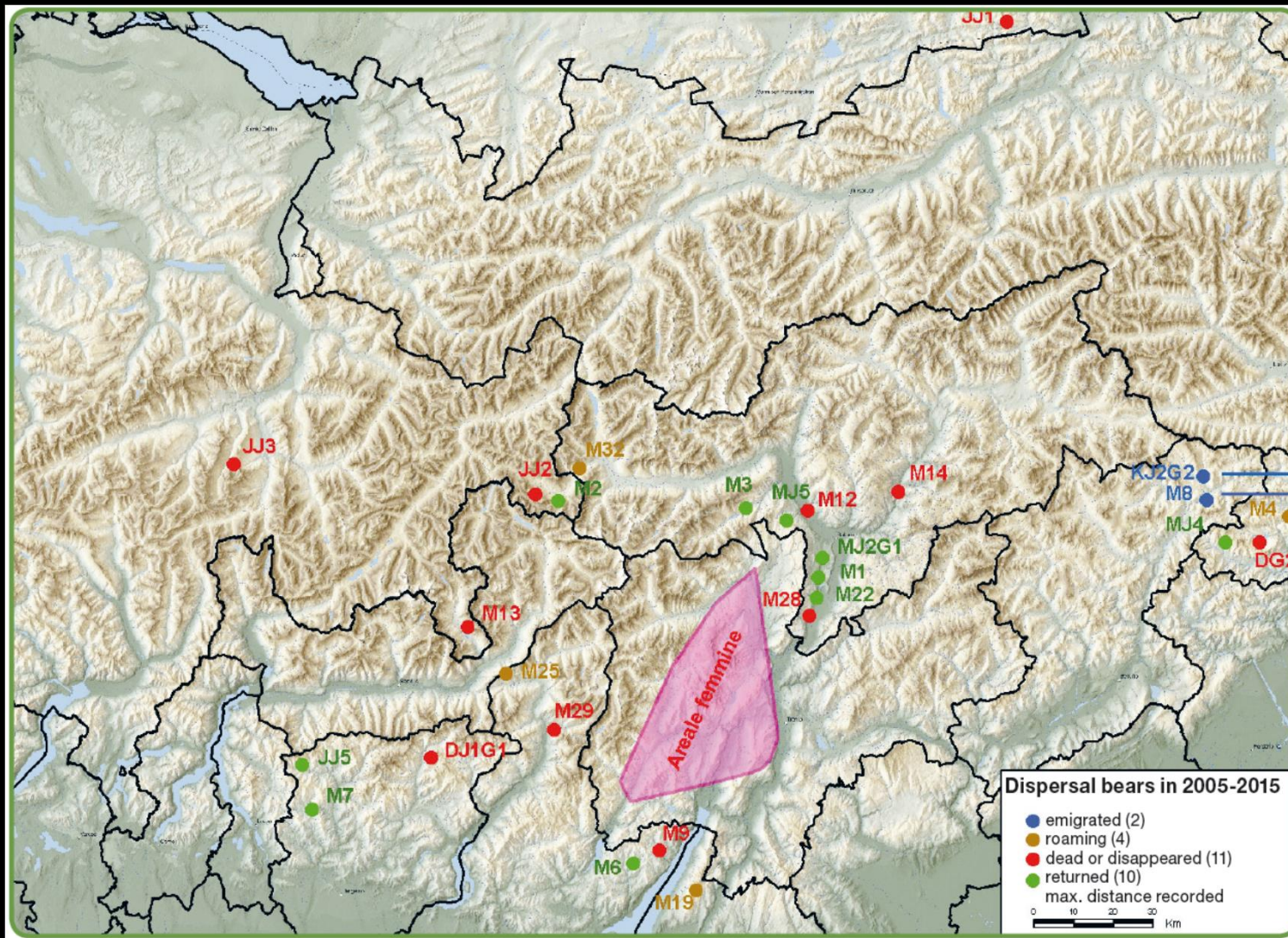
**Females area 1,300 km<sup>2</sup>, males 15-20,000 km<sup>2</sup>**



# Dispersion

## 27 bears dispersed 2005-2015

1. 11 (41%) dead or missing
2. 10 (37%) back in the core area
3. 2 (7%) emigrated
4. 4 (15%) still dispersing

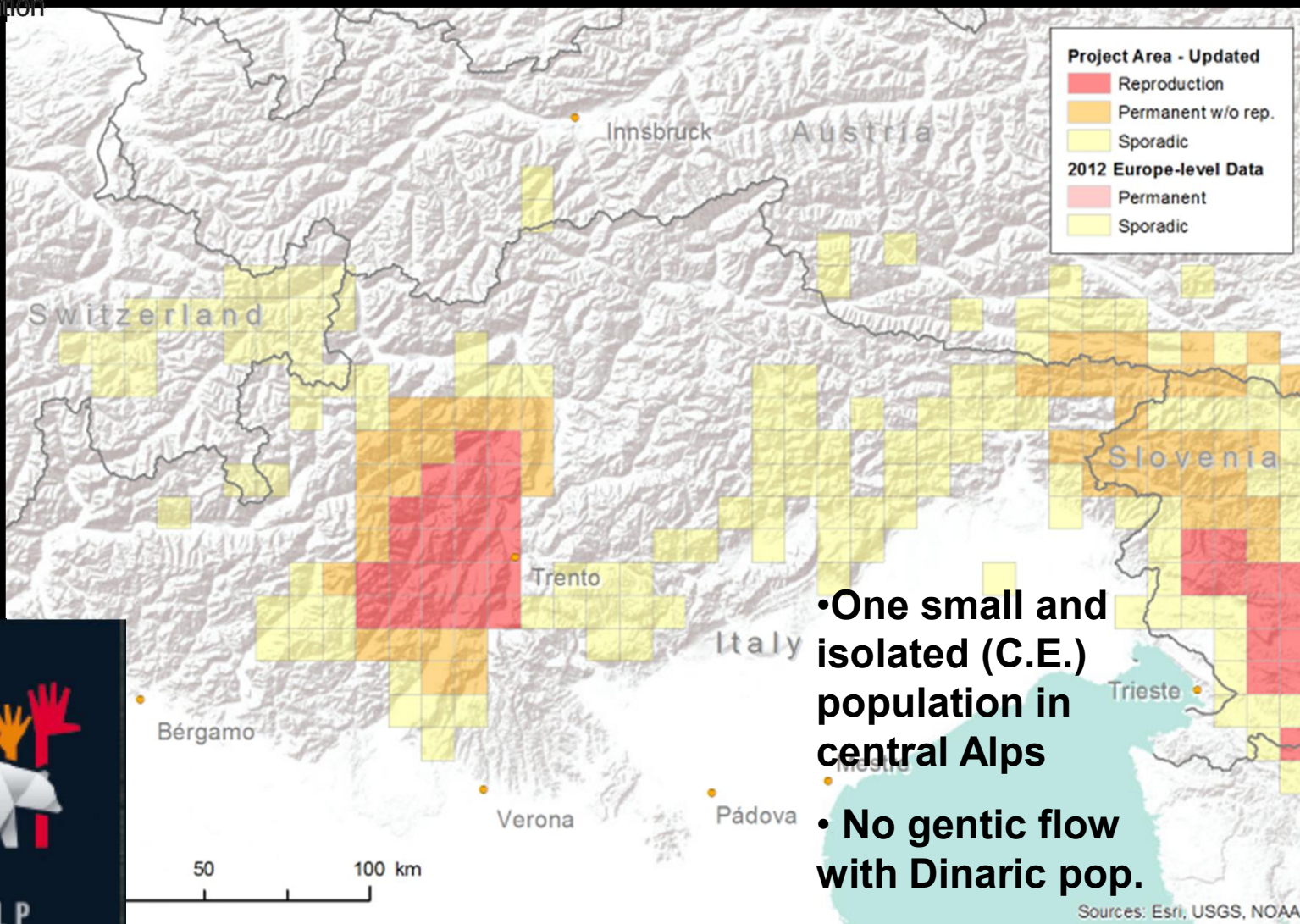




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# An overview on the whole Alps



• One small and isolated (C.E.) population in central Alps

• No gentic flow with Dinaric pop.



Source: Life Dinalp Bear project - 2016



# Main remarks (bear)

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- **Good genetic monitoring standards and networking**
- **Minimum Viable Population (MVP) reached in 10-12 years**
- **Active management needed and possible**
- **Genetic viability to keep strictly monitored**
- **Stagnant situation in the eastern Alps; very few females**
- **No gene flow occurred between the two populations**





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# Wolf and lynx





# Wolf distribution in Europe

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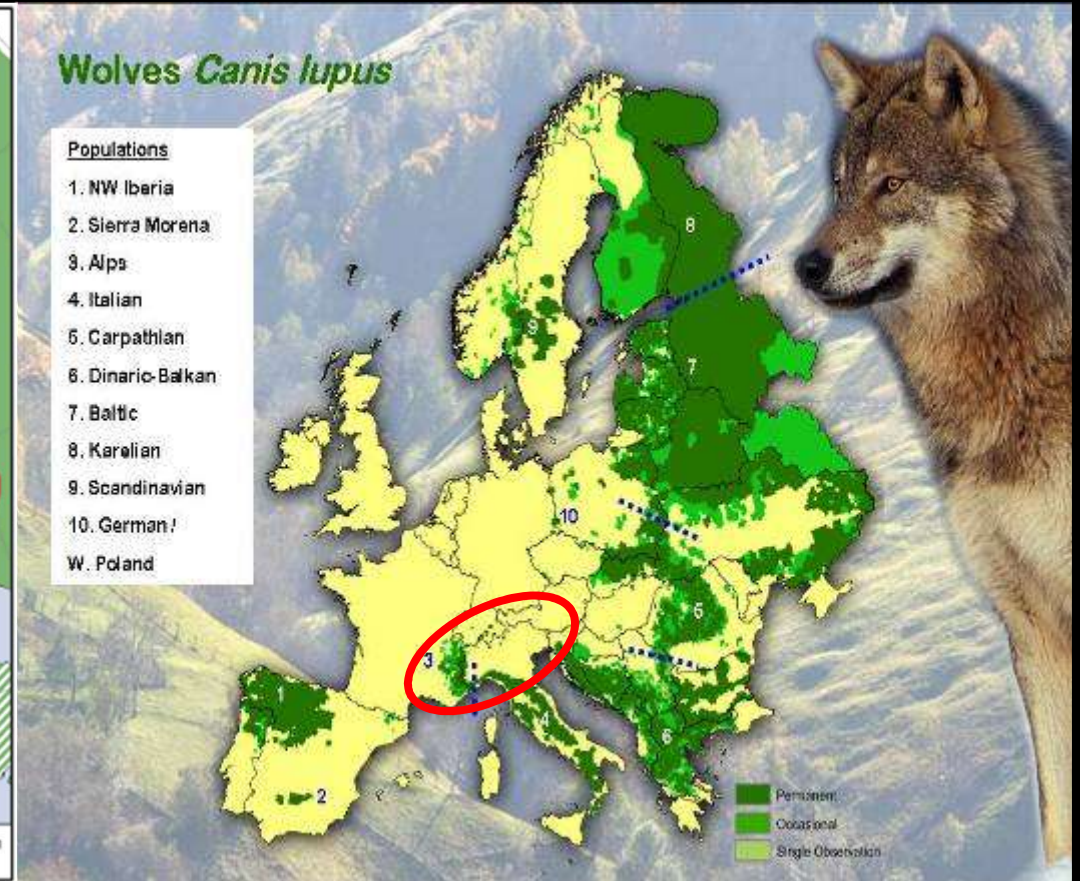
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## Wolves *Canis lupus*

### Populations

1. NW Iberia
  2. Sierra Morena
  3. Alps
  4. Italian
  5. Carpathian
  6. Dinaric-Balkan
  7. Baltic
  8. Karelian
  9. Scandinavian
  10. German!
- W. Poland



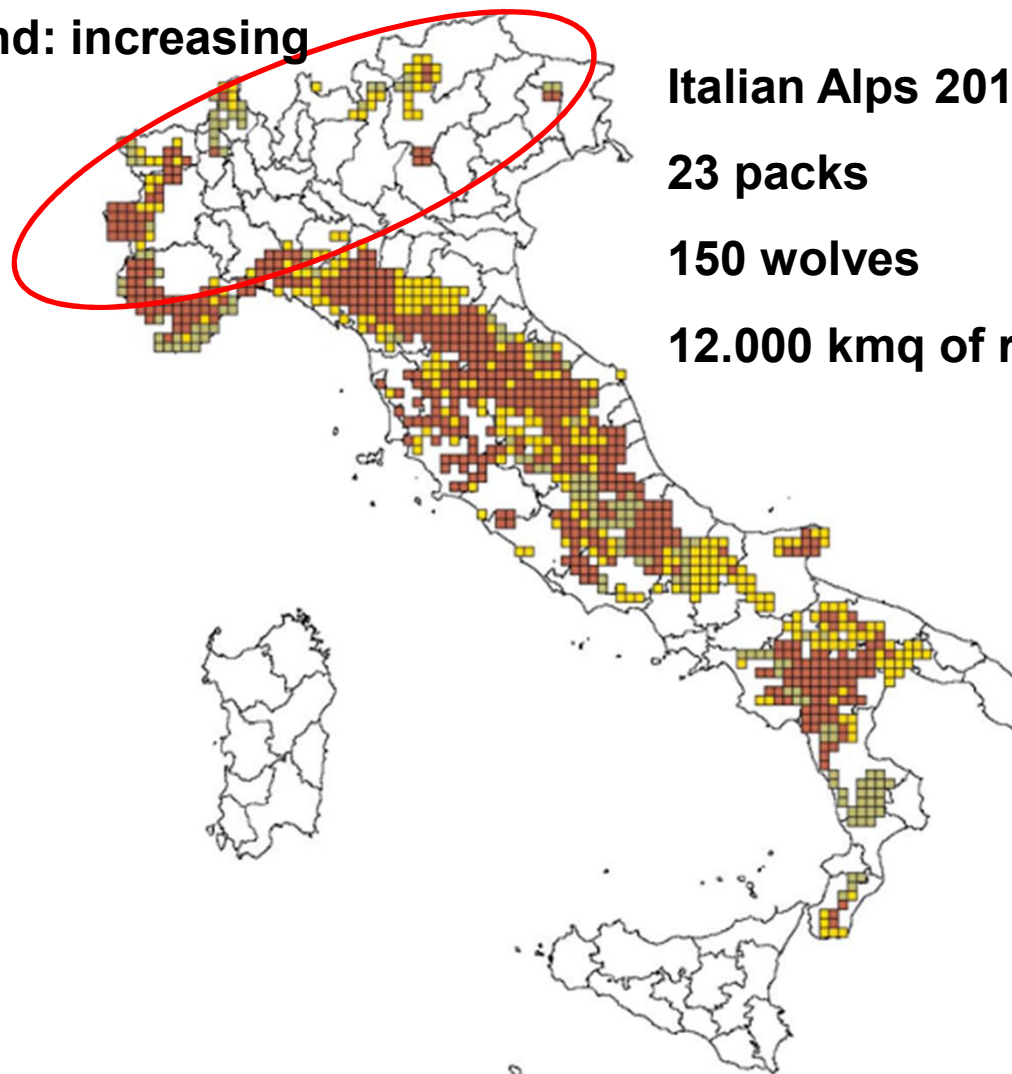
LCIE, Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (Linnell et al 2008).



# The wolf in Italy and on the Alps

**Alps: 250-300 wolves**

**Trend: increasing**



**Italian Alps 2015:**

**23 packs**

**150 wolves**

**12.000 kmq of range**

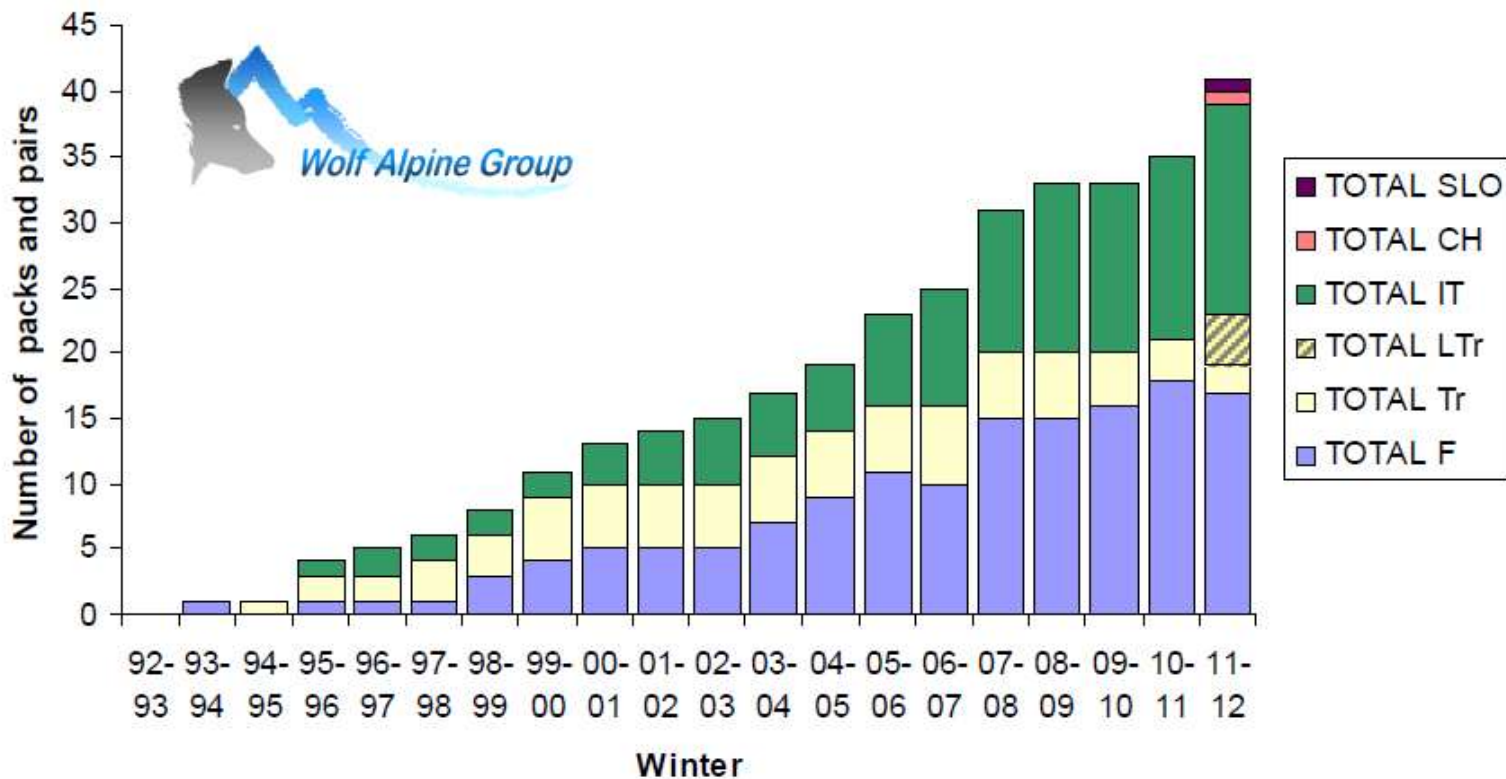
**Source:  
Piano di  
conservazione  
e gestione del  
lupo in Italia  
(2016)**

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# Wolf packs trend across the Alpine range

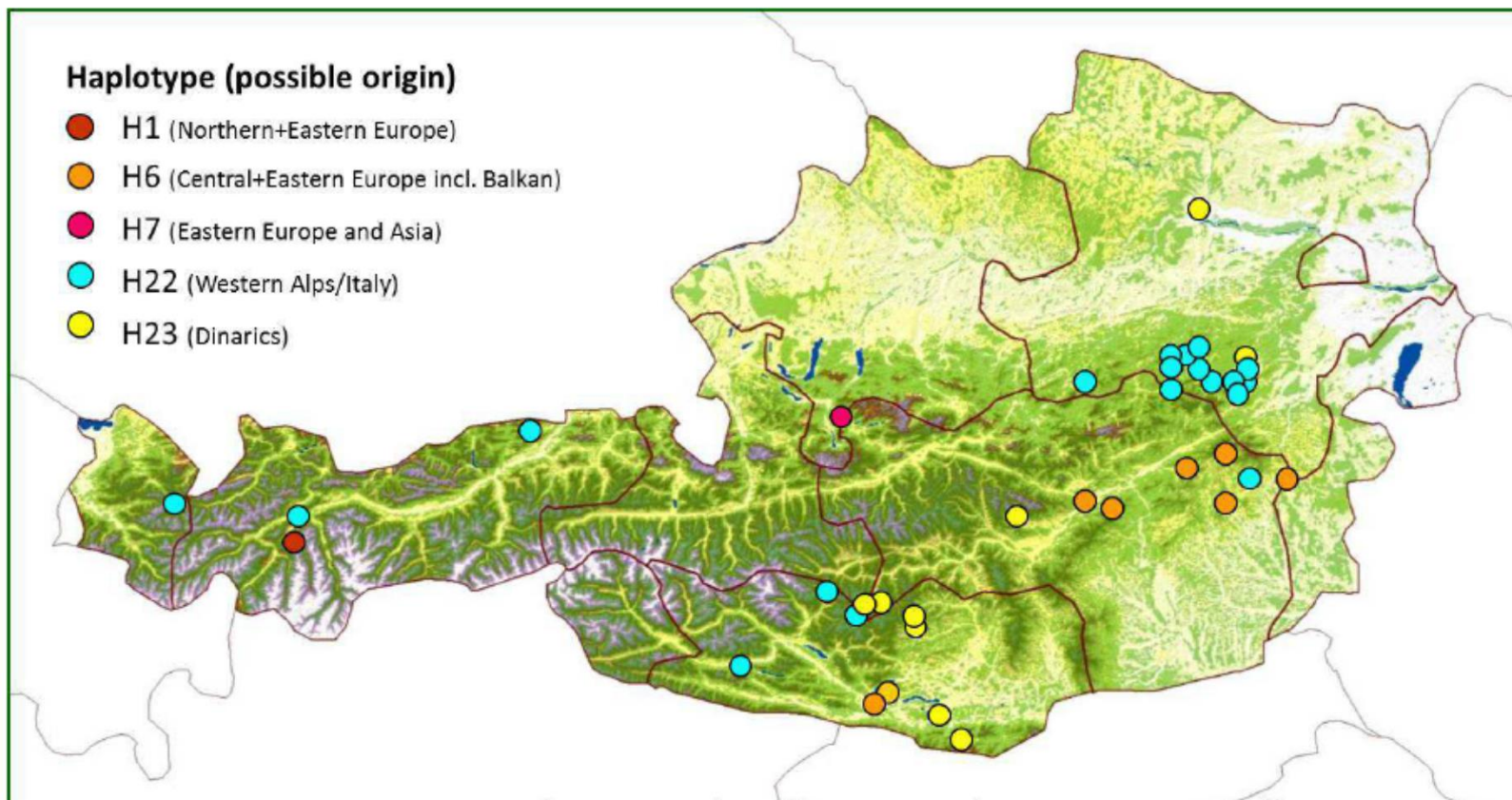
NB/ packs and pairs = at least 1M + 1 F for two consecutive winter or breeding evidence next summer



Source: Wolf Alpine Group (WAG – 2014)



# Alps, Carpathians and Dinaric wolves joining

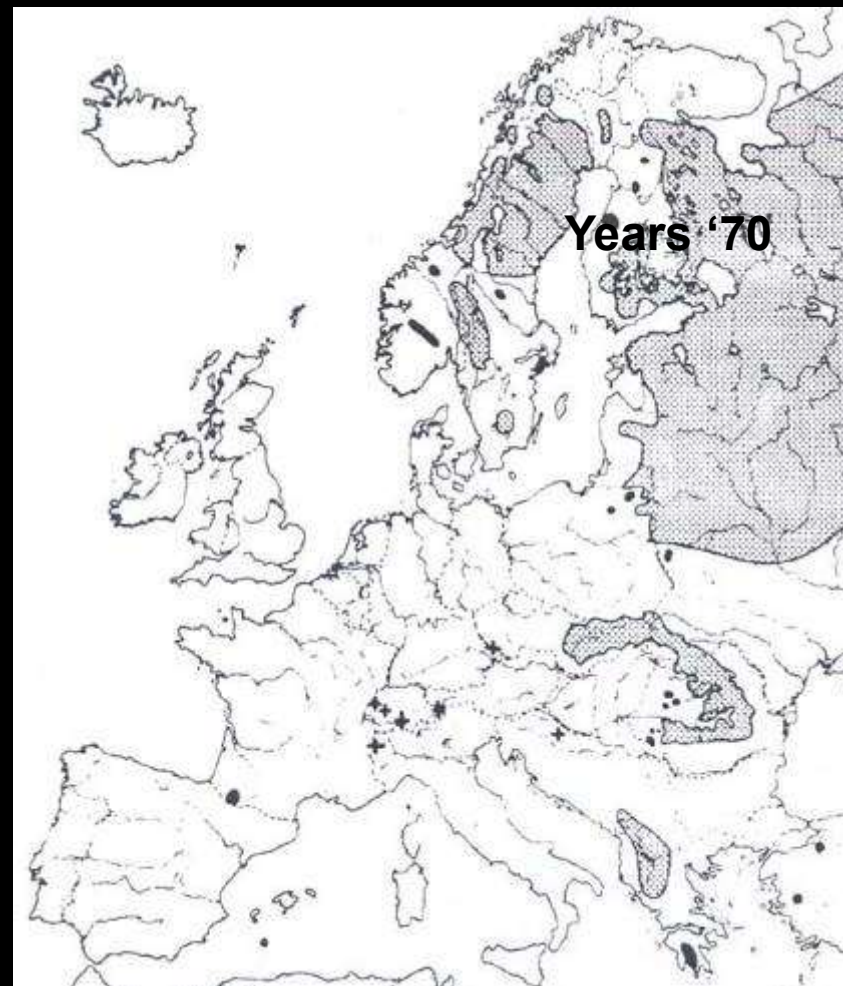


**Figure 2 : Identification of haplotypes diversity in Austria based on DNA<sub>mt</sub> sequencing**

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# The lynx: eradicated from the Alps

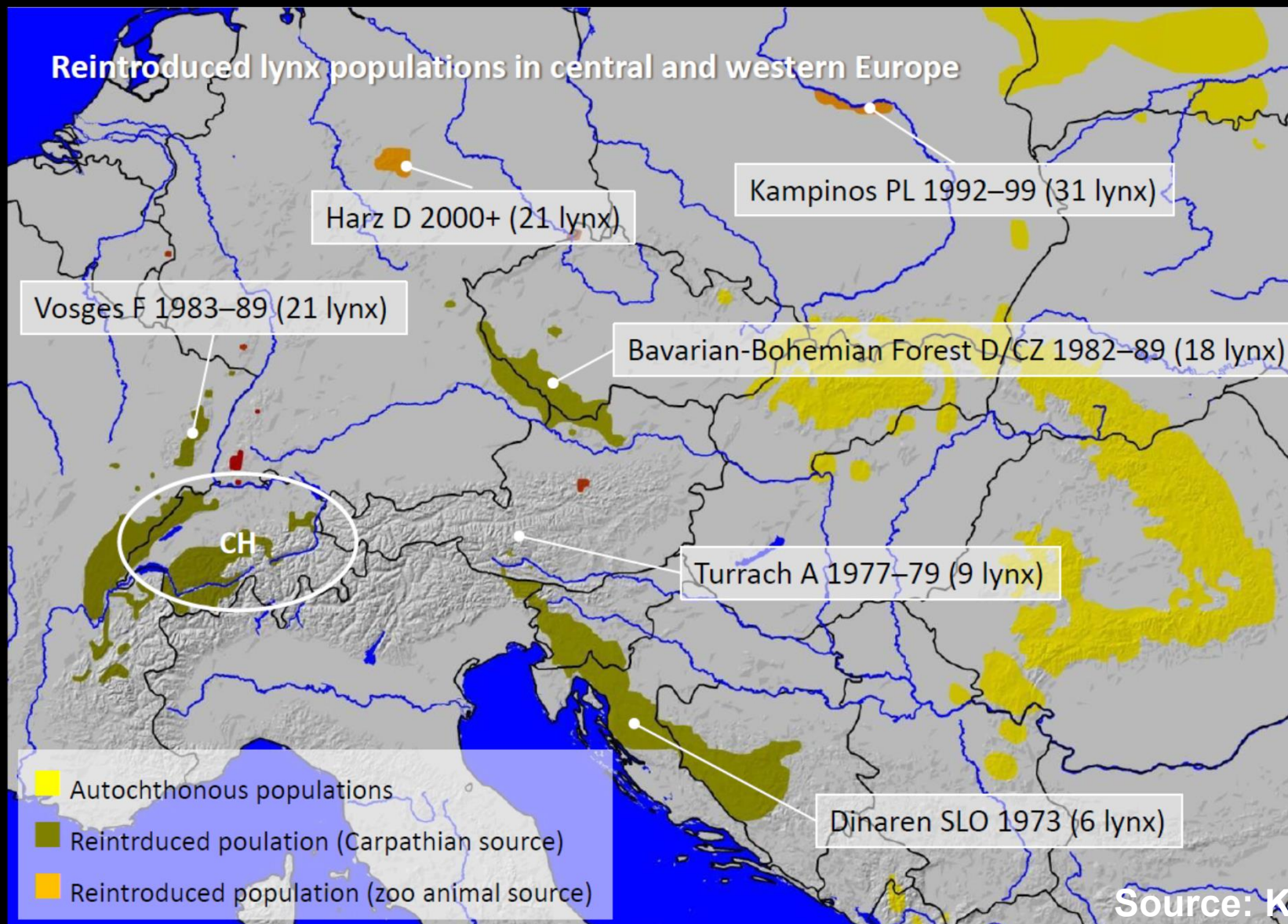
Eastern Alps first half XIX c.; western Alps 1920 - 1930



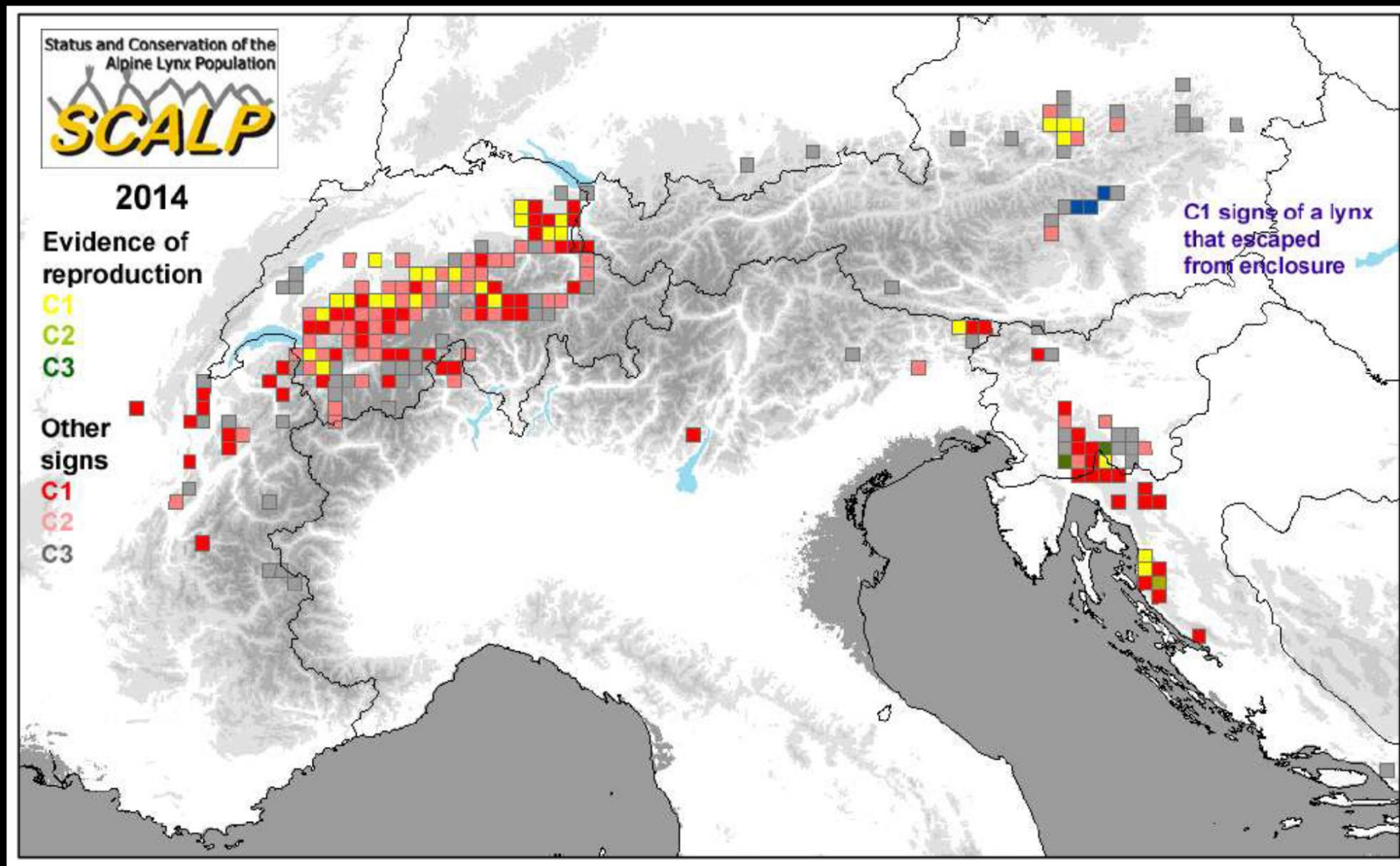
Cart: Elois - KORA



# The reintroduction of the lynx in the Alps



# Status of the lynx in the Alps (130-180 in 2014 - stable)





# Challenges

## Challenges: Slow expansion, controversies, and inbreeding

### Biological:

- Relative (compared to other large carnivore species) low population expansion potential;
- Inbreeding as a result of very small founder groups and isolation.

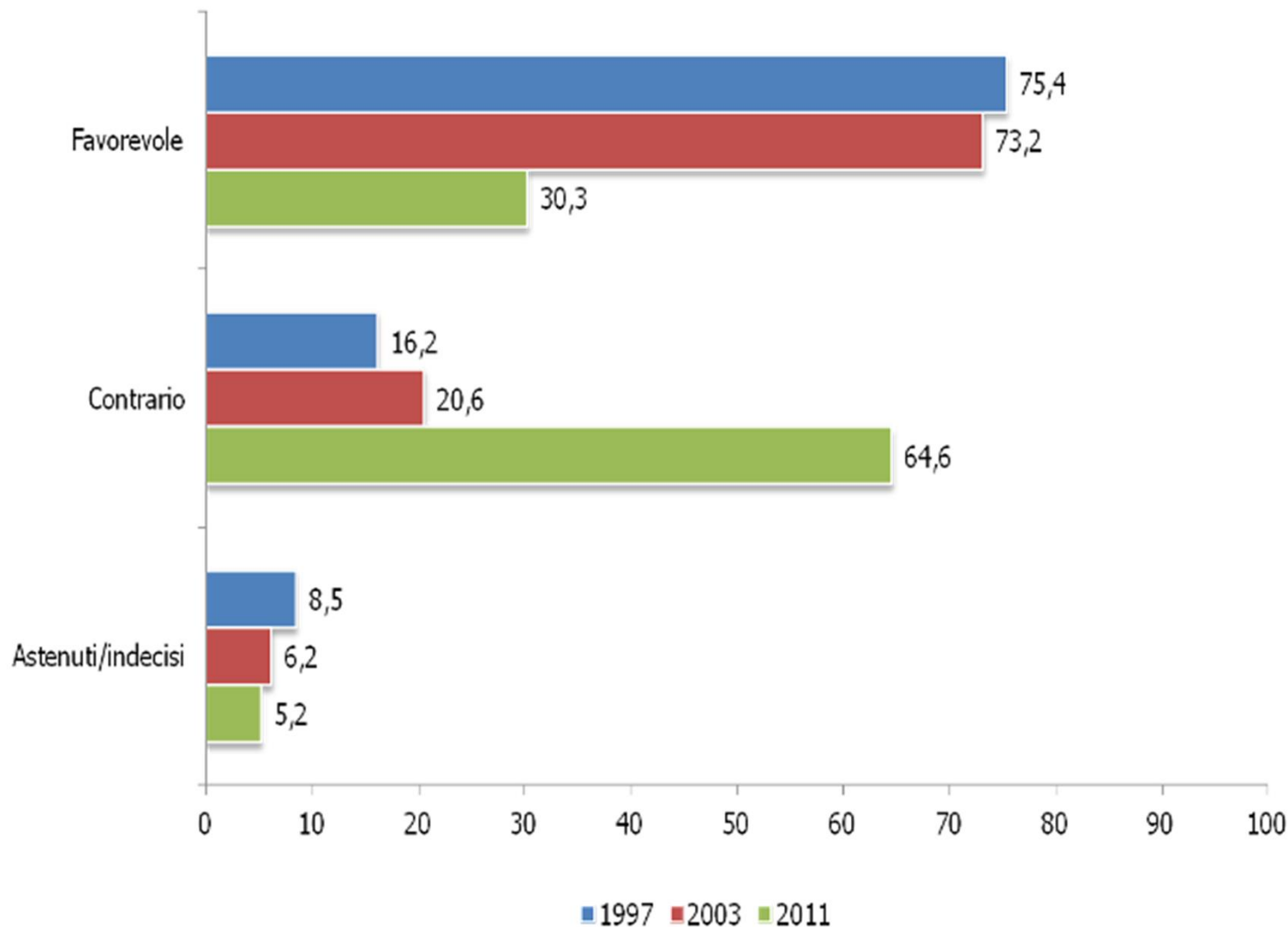
### Human dimension and politics:

- Conflicts with hunters → call for “regulation”;
- Weak political will for further reintroduction.



# The social context

**dramatic decrease in public support in the central Alps (bear)**





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**Thank you for your attention**

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