



# EU LIFE programme and Wildlife Crime

**“Protecting habitats and endangered species in Europe through tackling  
environmental crime”**

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# Contents



- **What's EU LIFE programme?**
- **LIFE's contribution to prevent and fight wildlife crime in the EU (and outside)**



# What is LIFE programme?



**EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects**

**LIFE aims:**

**To contribute to the implementation, update and development of the EU environmental and climate policy and legislation**



# What is LIFE programme?



- Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed more than 4600 projects
- For the 2014-2020 funding period, LIFE will contribute approximately €3.4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

# LIFE investing in EU's Nature



- Over 5 300 Natura 2000 sites benefited from LIFE funding
- More than 5 million ha of land had been restored or had its conservation status improved - over 6% of the terrestrial Natura 2000 network
- Almost 750 species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives have been targeted for conservation, some several times over
- LIFE projects have implemented almost 50 000 actions targeting nature and biodiversity across the EU
- Acquisition of 194 000 ha of land, and running over 95 000 training sessions
- Communication activities aimed at over 6 million people, including some 1.2 million pupils and students, raised awareness of Natura 2000.





# LIFE and environmental crime



## LIFE MWAP priorities (2018-2020)

### Environmental compliance and access to justice

Project actions that include:

- By development and/or implement existing cross-border, national or regional risk-based strategies to promote, check and enforce compliance through use of a mix of administrative law, criminal law and environmental liability regarding one or more of the following:
  - waste crime and offending,
  - wildlife trafficking,
  - wildlife and nature crime and offending, including illegal logging,
  - diffuse and/or point-source water pollution and/or illegal water abstraction,
  - point and mobile sources of air pollution.

# LIFE and environmental crime



Environmental compliance and access to justice

Project actions that include:

- establishing new or, where in place, enhancing existing cross-border, national or regional **networks of environmental compliance** assurance practitioners or experts and/or establishing or, where in place, improving professional qualifications and training
- **development and use of innovative tools and actions to promote, monitor and enforce compliance**
- Improving the handling by public authorities of environmental complaints and submissions from the public
- **promoting access to justice in environmental matters and/or mediation**

# Wildlife crime in the EU



## Species:

- Illegal trapping and poaching for food
- Illegal predator/pest control
- Illegal killing for sport of protected species
- Illegal egg collection and taxidermy
- Illegal poisoning
- Illegal trade of protected species

## Habitats:

- Illegal destruction of protected habitats





# Wildlife crime EU Law



- Habitats Directive
- Birds Directive
- CITES
- Environmental Crime Directive

**Wildlife crime (under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive or CITES Regulations) is notoriously difficult to prosecute because the law in this area is complex and because criminal circles are small, highly organised, closed and hard to get in.**

# EU Roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds



The identifies five main domains where the European Commission can act to support Member States:

- **Raising awareness of the competent authorities and civil society**
- **Funding projects**
- **Co-ordinating efforts at EU level**
- **Processing data provided by Member States in the context of their reporting obligations or Commission enquiries**
- **Initiating legal procedure**

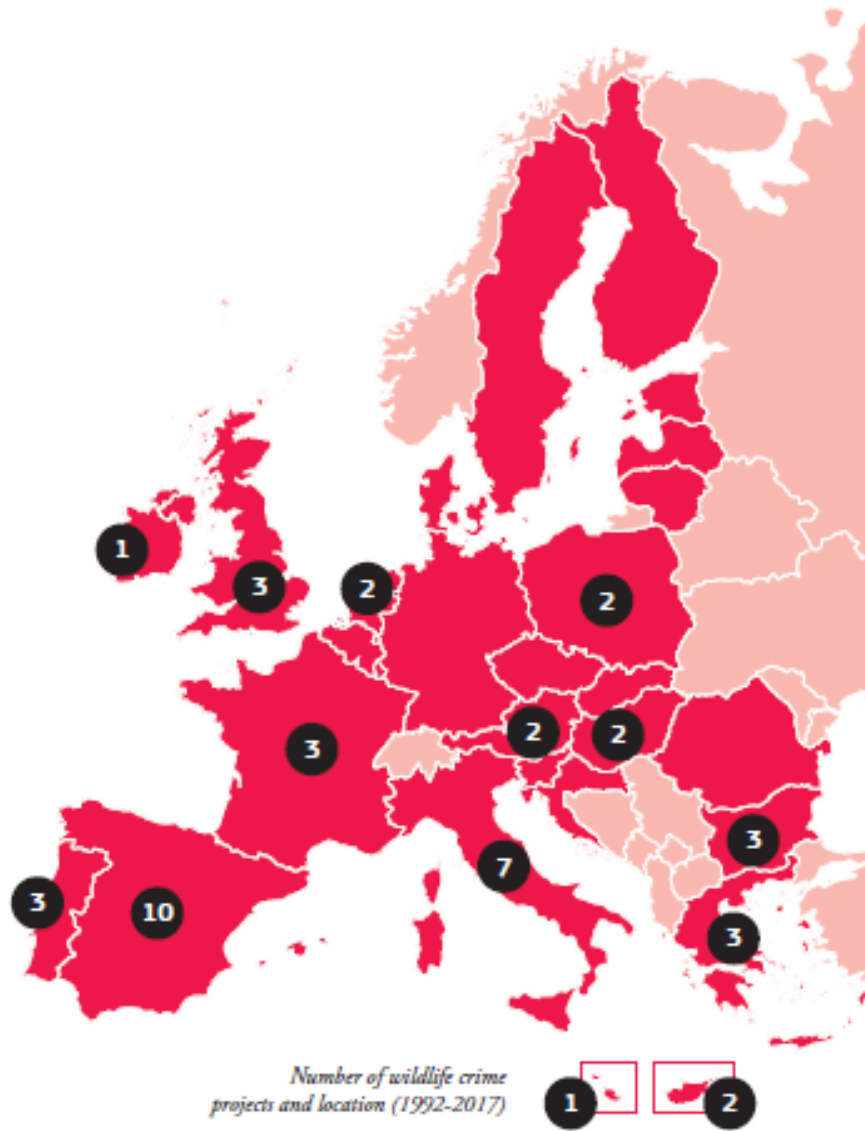
Possible actions for the Commission and other concerned parties under four categories:

- **Monitoring and data collection**
- **Information exchange, training and awareness-raising**
- **Enforcement and legal aspects**
- **Prevention**

# LIFE's role in tackling wildlife crime in the EU

LIFE has played a pivotal role in piloting actions that can help prevent and reduce wildlife crime across the EU.

The programme has invested more than **70 million euros** in over **40 LIFE projects** that have targeted illegal activities connected to wildlife.



# LIFE projects actions



## Monitoring and data collection:

- Collection of cases (database) and reporting of wildlife crimes
- Identifying which species are targeted and types of illegal activities and location

## Information exchange, training and awareness raising:

- Training of enforcement officers
- Training dogs to detect poison baits – some cross-border
- Training in evidence collection (poison kits)
- Public information campaigns against the illegal use of poison



# LIFE projects actions

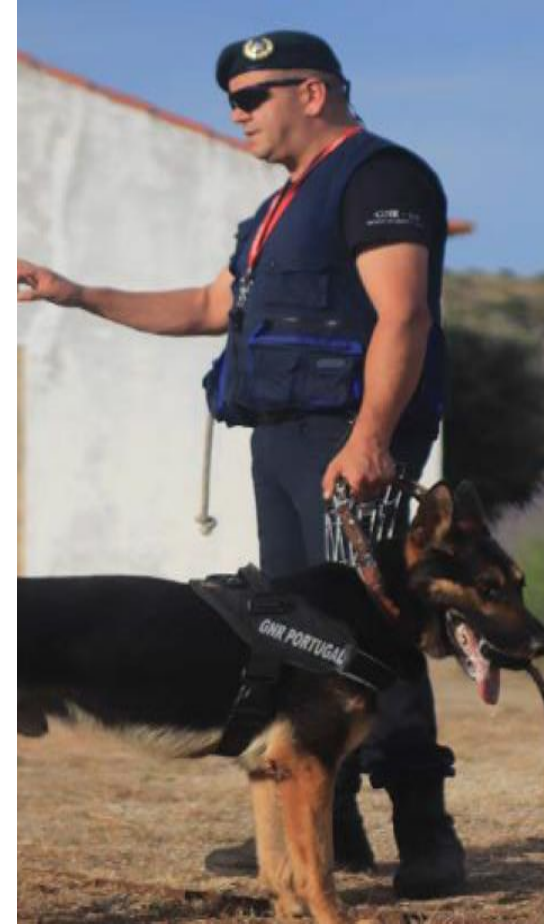


## Enforcement and legal aspects:

- Updating/implementation of legislation, fines and sanctions
- Training specialised prosecutors in judicial processes
- Helping to establish or resource specialised wildlife crime units within police forces

## Prevention:

- Setting up surveillance zones in collaboration with local hunters' associations

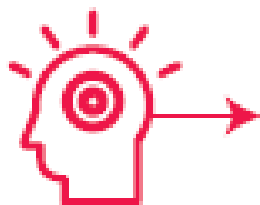




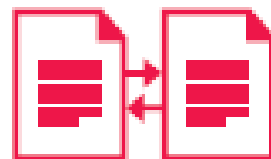
## LIFE project actions framework



1  
Monitoring and  
data collection



2  
Awareness-  
raising

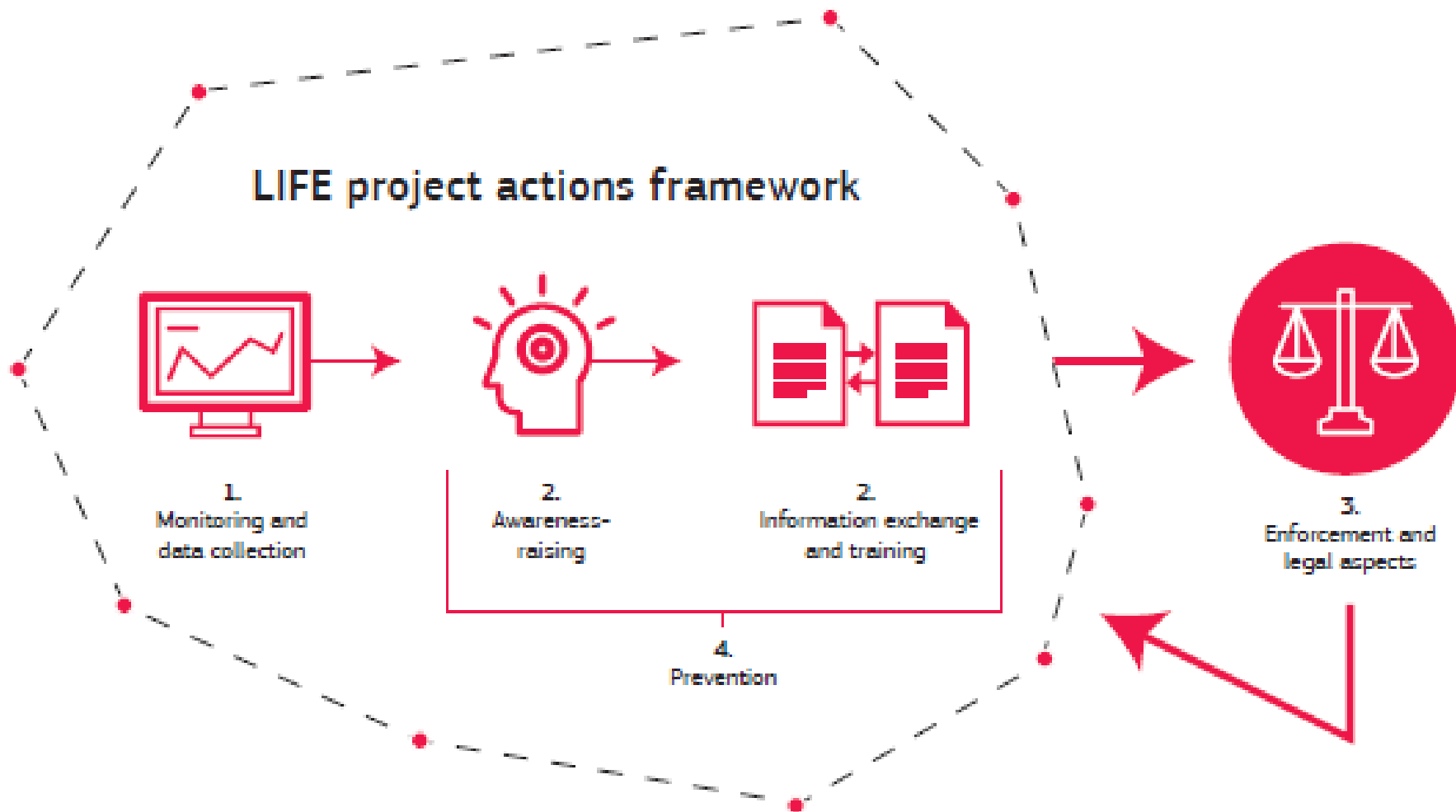


2  
Information exchange  
and training

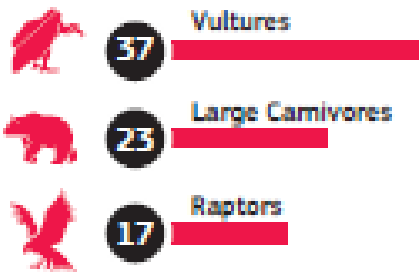
4  
Prevention



3  
Enforcement and  
legal aspects



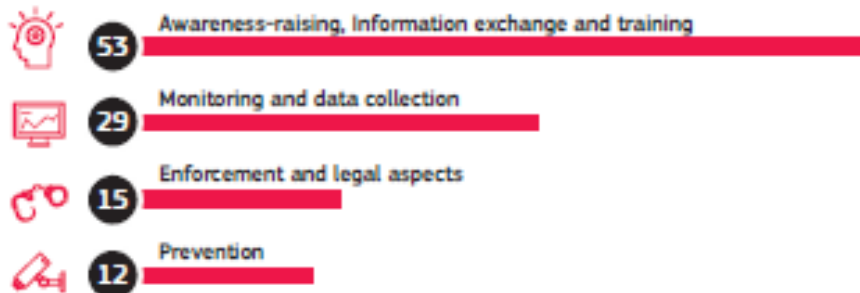
*Number of projects per annex species (Habitats and Birds Directives)*



*Wildlife crimes addressed by LIFE projects*



*Number of LIFE project actions carried out in line with the Roadmap towards eliminating illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds:*



# Key achievements

## LIFE wildlife crime projects



- Crime **monitoring and data collection** with new satellite tagging technologies
- **Database of incidents** (potential to become pan-European)
- **Anti-poison detection and prevention patrols (50 K-9 units)** in almost all EU Mediterranean countries
- **Anti-poison networks** involving hunters and shepherds etc.
- Working with technology and people
- Getting the **media involved** – making people **aware wildlife crime is a crime**
- Awareness-raising campaigns across Member States
- **Specialised awareness raising and training for statutory authorities, police, customs, public prosecutors, environmental lawyers and judges**
- Strong and clear penalties, more routinely enforced

# LIFE Project examples



## VENENO NO (Spain)

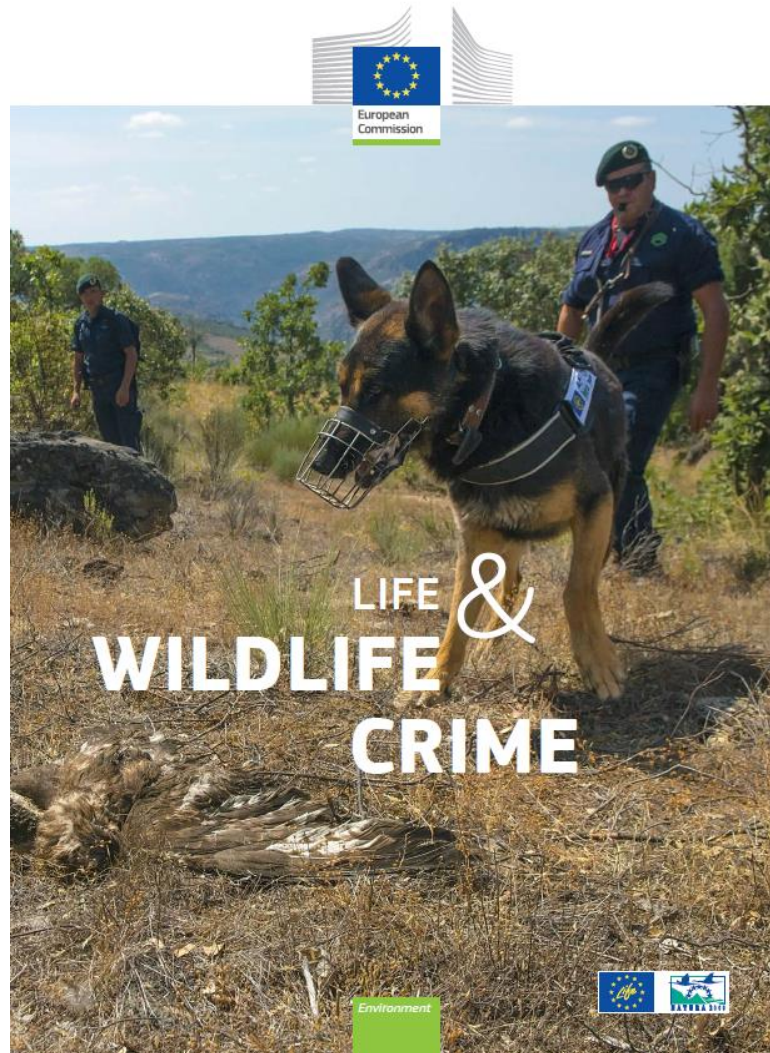
- VENENO NO has helped authorities bring 24 cases involving illegal bird poisoning to court.
- These have resulted in 13 convictions.
- The project's work also informed an action plan to tackle illegal poisoning throughout the EU.
- All Spain regional autonomies have poison legal action plans in force



[www.venenono.org](http://www.venenono.org)



# New LIFE publication out







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