



## **First ever mediation visit under the Bern Convention to find a compromise between energy developments and biodiversity conservation**

*Strasbourg, 30 September 2015 – The first-ever mediation visit organised under the Bern Convention will take place on 6-9 October 2015 to Vilnius and Rudamina (Lazdijai district), Lithuania, following a complaint submitted by a local NGO to the Convention's governing body.*

In 2013 the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention received a complaint denouncing the construction of an Overhead Power Line (OHL) in Lithuania, in an environmentally sensitive area near a Unesco Biosphere Reserve and an EU Natura 2000 site. According to the complainant the project, considered of strategic importance by the country, would have a direct impact on several species and habitats protected under both the Bern Convention and EU nature legislation.

In December last year the Standing Committee decided to address the matter through the mediation, a new tool adopted as a way forward to facilitate dialogue between conservation authorities and interest groups in the frame of the Convention's case-file system. In the case of Lithuania, the mediation will seek to identify and clarify the conservation issues related to the complaint, help reach a consensus and record the agreements of possible solutions that would satisfy both sides, in the respect of the spirit and letter of the Convention.

The visit will be conducted by an independent mediator accompanied by a Council of Europe's delegation. The programme of the visit includes bilateral in-camera meetings with each party, on-the-spot visits of the areas affected by the project, meetings with the local authorities and communities, and a full two-day mediation process with key decision-makers.

More information: [www.coe.int/bernconvention](http://www.coe.int/bernconvention)



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