



29-30 May 2013: Second Conference on the Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Wild Birds, Tunis

Two years after the first European Conference on the illegal killing of birds, which **pledged a zero tolerance approach to the illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds**, the Contracting Parties and Observer Organisations to the Bern Convention will meet in Tunis to assess the progress made towards the eradication of these phenomena.

Strasbourg, 23 May 2013 – The preamble to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979), recognises that “wild flora and fauna constitute a natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value that needs to be preserved and handed on to future generations”.

Despite major conservation efforts and the elaboration of global conservation priorities and targets, the extinction of threatened species, including birds, continues to progress. Illegal killing, capture and trade of wild birds are examples of human-induced extinction, which can and shall be prevented.

To this end the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted, in 2011, the Larnaca Declaration with a recommendation¹, outlining a multi-annual programme of follow-up actions including awareness raising, enforcement, biological and institutional aspects.

Two years later, a report assessing the compliance by Parties with the standards set under the Convention, reveals that – although the zero tolerance approach is evident in most States, the implementation of the concrete measures suggested in the recommendation needs to be reinforced. National communication strategies have only been identified in a few parties, even though knowledge and information on best practice in awareness-raising is regularly exchanged and partnerships and cooperation between government agencies and stakeholders are on-going.

As to progress, the report shows that illegal activities are systematically monitored and reported in several Contracting Parties, and that the links between demands for wild birds and supply through illegal activities have been identified. Cooperation at the international level has also increased thanks to the implementation and monitoring process launched under the Convention.

At their second gathering, in Tunis, the Contracting Parties to the Convention will work on identifying specific action to effectively address those issues which may still require to be urgently enforced.

The Conference is organised by the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment and Equipment and the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia. The event is foreseen within the framework of the Council of Europe/CMS Week on the Conservation of Birds (Tunis, 27-31 May).

The results of the meeting will be presented during a Press Conference, chaired by Tunisian authorities, on 30th May, 4.30 p.m., at the Hotel Golden Tulip El Mechtel (Avenue Ouled Haffouz El Omrane, 1005 Tunis, Tunisia).

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¹ Recommendation No. 155 (2011) of the Standing Committee on the illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds: www.coe.int/bernconvention