



Strasbourg, 4 November 2002  
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**T-PVS (2002) 6**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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**Bureau Meeting**

Strasbourg, 12 September 2002

**REPORT OF THE MEETING**

*Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by  
the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

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## **1. Adoption of the agenda**

Mr Patrick van Klaveren (Monaco), Chair of the Standing Committee, opened the meeting, which was held on 12 September 2002. He welcomed the other two members of the Bureau, Mrs Ilona Jepsen (Latvia, Vice-Chair) and Mrs Ana Isabel Queiroz (Portugal) as well as the representatives of the Secretariat.

The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix 1.

The participants are listed in Appendix 2.

## **2. General information**

### **World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August – 4 September 2002)**

The Secretariat representative informed the Bureau of the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit, held 10 years after the Rio Summit.

The Council of Europe Secretariat was represented by the Director General of Social Cohesion, the Parliamentary Assembly, the North-South Centre and the Division dealing with natural heritage and biodiversity.

A political message from the Committee of Ministers was presented.

The Summit had focused on water, energy, combating poverty, north-south dialogue and the development of partnerships with private enterprise and NGOs. The term "environment" had been used relatively little and always in connection with other considerations (sustainable development, combating poverty, health etc). A Political declaration and Action plan had been adopted at the end of the Summit.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau members of progress on the European Charter of Principles on Environment Protection and Sustainable Development, which aimed to cast the environment and sustainable development in a new light that more strongly reflected the values upheld by the Organisation.

The Charter, once finalised in 2003 and presented at a seminar, would lend greater coherence and visibility to the activities pursued in the different directorates of the Council of Europe.

## **3. Implementation of the 2002 Programme of activities and decisions**

### **3.1 Development of activities**

#### **a. Accession to the Convention**

The Secretariat notified the Bureau that Georgia was preparing its accession. Three other Council of Europe member states – Armenia, San Marino and Russia – had not yet ratified the Convention.

#### **b. Monitoring of the legal application of the Convention**

A report on the implementation of the Bern Convention in Ireland had been prepared by Mrs Clare Shine. It would be submitted to the Standing Committee for information.

#### **c. Conservation of natural habitats**

The Emerald Network continued to grow. Five workshops had been organised in 2002, in Albania, Croatia, Georgia and "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" with the next to be held in Senegal at the beginning of November.

A conference on maritime and coastal corridors had been organised in Llandudno (Wales) on 20 and 21 June 2002 within the STRA-REP framework.

A meeting of the ecological networks of the Council of Europe (STRA-REP and Emerald Network Group of Experts) and the 3rd International Symposium of the Pan-European Ecological Network would take place in Riga (Latvia) from 2 to 4 October 2002.

**d. Monitoring of species**

The Workshop on Invasive Alien Species on European Islands and Isolated ecosystems and the meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species would be held concurrently in Horta (Azores, Portugal) from 10 to 12 October 2002.

The first draft of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, prepared by Mr Piero Genovesi and Mrs Clare Shine, would be presented; the revised version was scheduled for April 2003.

The Strategy would develop in regional terms the Guiding Principles adopted by the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

**e. Bird Conservation**

The Group of Experts on Bird Conservation held its 3rd meeting in Wageningen (Netherlands) on 11 and 12 June 2002. The meeting had been organised in conjunction with BirdLife International.

Sixteen new Action plans covering some of the most threatened species in Europe had been adopted, and reports on the implementation of Standing Committee recommendations on birds had been presented.

Other key questions touching on bird conservation had been debated:

- the report prepared by BirdLife International on the impact of windfarms, which had proved particularly relevant in the light of the call by the Johannesburg Summit for greater use of renewable energies;
- power cables and bird collisions;
- the capture, killing and trading of protected birds in Cyprus;
- the situation of the Cantabrian capercaillie.

The Bureau stressed that the integration of biological and landscape diversity in energy policies was an important theme and that guidelines or codes of conduct had to be prepared in this sphere.

The Chairman suggested taking account of the work carried out in the CMS framework and presenting a joint proposal.

**f. Conservation of Large Carnivores**

The Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE) select group had met in Innsbruck on 29 and 30 April 2002. Discussion points included the future of the LCIE, since regular WWF funding had been cut off.

The Secretariat proposed holding the next meeting in Strasbourg; it would take place from 23 to 25 January 2003.

A Workshop on Iberian lynx would be held in Andujar (Spain) from 29 to 31 October 2002. It was being organised in conjunction with the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group.

The Bureau members stressed the importance of raising awareness of large carnivore conservation issues among politicians.

**g. Plant Conservation**

The European Strategy on Plant Conservation, resulting from partnership between the Council of Europe and Planta Europa, had been published. It was a major contribution to the World strategy.

**h. Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity**

(see item 3.2 below)

**i. Monitoring of specific sites**

The Secretariat told the Bureau that it had not found a consultant to prepare the study on the effects of climatic change and remedial measures on Europe's biological diversity.

The Bureau members offered suggestions for the choice of expert.

### **3.2. Preparation of the SBSTTA-8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The theme of marine and coastal biological diversity considered at the Johannesburg Summit would be one of the themes of the next meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would take place in Montreal (Canada) in March 2003. One of the results anticipated was the creation of more marine protected areas.

The following achievements of the Bern Convention might be presented at that meeting:

- results of the 1st Mediterranean Conference on marine turtles;
- results of the workshop held in Wales and of the workshop scheduled for 2003.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that consultants had been commissioned to prepare two reports:

- a report on the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea;
- a report on the Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic Sea.

## **4. Application of the Convention - Case files**

### **4.1. Specific sites**

#### **a. Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus) [document T-PVS/Files (2002) 1]**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that on 30<sup>th</sup> August a decision from the government was taken. It provides for the establishment of a communal development Centre at the South of Lara Bay. A new road will be built and new “mild and sensible development” is planned for other areas. Such decision falls far from meeting the protection request of Recommendation No. 63.

The Bureau thought that the file should be kept open.

#### **b. Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in Turkey**

The Secretariat said that an on-the-spot appraisal had been carried out from 12 to 15 May 2002 with the main purpose of studying the question of chemical pollution by the soda-chromium factory.

The appraisal pointed to significant progress in the implementation of protection measures, resulting from cooperation between central and local authorities, particularly the Municipality of Kazanlı. It also noted that a link between turtle deaths and the toxic waste spills from the chromium factory in March and August 2001 could not be formally demonstrated but could not be ruled out either.

Despite the efforts made, the situation of the beach was not yet judged fully satisfactory and, in the expert's view, required further short-term, medium-term or long-term action.

The necessary measures were listed in the draft recommendation appended to the expert's report.

The Bureau thought it useful to monitor the environmental impact of the soda-chromium factory, which was a potential threat to marine biodiversity.

It proposed that the file be kept open until the measures set out in the draft recommendations had been implemented.

### **4.2. Possible new files**

#### **a. Illegal capture and offering for sale of protected birds in Cyprus**

The Secretariat gave the Bureau the latest information forwarded by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on this case. Progress had been made in clamping down on these illegal practices, thanks to stronger cooperation between the Cypriot authorities and those of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs).

Caution was necessary though, as the migration period, when the birds were at most risk, was not yet over.

BirdLife International would forward a report on autumn trapping levels prior to the Standing Committee meeting.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat consult the British Government to ensure that the Convention applied to the SBAs.

The Bureau welcomed the efforts made by the Cypriot and British authorities to implement Recommendation No. 90 (2001).

Nevertheless, it decided to maintain the file as a possible file on the agenda of the next Standing Committee meeting.

**b. Plan to build a motorway in Struma (Bulgaria)**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal carried out from 30 May to 1 June 2002, which had focused on:

- following up the last environmental impact assessment report in more detail, particularly as regards fauna, flora and habitat;
- studying alternatives to the strategy of widening the existing road that would be routed outside the gorge;
- the legal status of the site as a whole and its selection for the Emerald Network;
- placing dialogue with the different partners, particularly NGOs, on a formal footing. All the expert's proposals were set out in the draft recommendation appended to his report.

The Secretariat said that it was speaking to the European Commission concerning questions of project funding.

For the time being the procedure was blocked, pending approval of the environmental impact assessment by the Bulgarian Ministry of the Environment and Water.

The Bureau said that on-the-spot appraisals were extremely useful, with experts acting as mediators.

The Chairman suggested putting the NGOs in touch with the CIPRA.

The Bureau decided to submit the file to the Standing Committee as a possible file.

**c. Exotic tree plantations in low-altitude areas of biological importance (Iceland)**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the findings of the on-the-spot appraisal carried out on 30 and 31 May 2002. Its aim had been to study afforestation schemes in lowland areas, essentially using non-native species, and to analyse their possible impact on bird populations and their habitats.

The expert had made recommendations aimed at ensuring that the schemes implemented in order to combat erosion, ecologically restore sites and develop rural areas were strictly in line with the needs of species and planned in collaboration with all the authorities and NGOs concerned. It was also recommended that the Icelandic Government draft a national strategy for biological diversity and designate areas for inclusion in the Emerald Network.

The Bureau stressed the importance of having an inventory of biological components.

It decided to submit the file to the Standing Committee together with its opinion that a file should not be opened.

**d. Tourist development in the Souss Massa National Park (Morocco)**

The on-the-spot appraisal had been carried out from 20 to 22 June 2002. An expert appointed by the French Government, which was involved in the funding of the project, also took part. The visit demonstrated the urgency of saving the Bald ibis and, consequently, opposing the plan to build a

holiday centre inside the park as envisaged by the *Club Méditerranée* and indeed any other similar plan likely to damage areas vital to the survival of the species.

The Souss Massa National Park, which contained four nesting sites, with a fifth outside, should be equipped with sufficient managerial and monitoring capacity to fully carry out its role both of protecting species and habitats and of receiving the public.

The expert had made recommendations along these lines in the report.

The Secretariat had recently been informed that the *Club Méditerranée* management had dropped the project.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to write to the Moroccan authorities, asking them whether the project was still on the agenda and decided, pending a reply, to maintain the file as a possible file.

**e. Odeluca Dam project (Portugal)**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the latest developments on this file. It had received a map produced under the WWF Greenbelt project from Mr Palmeirim on behalf of the LPN (Portuguese League for Nature Protection), showing the sites where Iberian lynx had been observed along the river Odeluca, in the area at risk of being flooded.

The Bureau maintained its position: regardless of where the lynx actually was at present, it was important to maintain its habitat in good condition so that the species could re-establish itself there.

It thought that the Workshop on Iberian lynx could provide additional information on the subject.

Mrs Queiroz (Portugal) thought that the project provided an opportunity for encouraging the Portuguese authorities to adopt an action plan and compensation measures.

The Bureau thought that an on-the-spot appraisal should be proposed to the Standing Committee.

**f. Wolf control (Switzerland)**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Swiss authorities were unable to forward the management plan since it was only at draft stage at present and was likely to undergo substantial amendment by the cantons.

The finalised draft would depend on the decision to be taken by the Federal Chamber of the Swiss Parliament in autumn 2002 on a motion calling for the wolf to be removed from the protected species list.

If the motion was approved, a management plan at national level would be superfluous, as the wolf would no longer be protected under national legislation.

Any management plan would fall within the competence of the cantons.

The Bureau thought that there was sufficient information to submit this as a possible file. An on-the-spot appraisal could be proposed.

The Secretariat pointed out that Switzerland had made no reservations in respect of the wolf when ratifying the convention.

The Bureau felt that it would be expedient to analyse the notion of "population" mentioned in Article 9.

The return of the wolf should be a central issue for the large carnivores seminar to be held in Romania.

The Bureau congratulated the experts who had carried on-the-spot appraisals for the quality of their reports. The Bureau thanked in particular Mr Berthoud for having analysed in his report the alternative routes for the Motorway E79 : Sofia-Kulata (Struma, Bulgaria) to a detail which goes beyond the usual requirements of this type of report. It also thanked the authorities concerned for arranging to receive the experts and facilitate their task.

#### **4.3 Pending complaints**

The Secretariat said that it had received several letters of complaint; either there had been no grounds for following them up or the files were not yet complete.

### **5. Draft agenda of the 22nd meeting of the Standing Committee and proposals for the programme of activities for 2003**

The Bureau approved the draft agenda as submitted by the Secretariat.

It also approved the draft programme of activities for 2003.

It stressed that it would be useful to step up contact with the Alpine Convention as regards large carnivores and instructed the Secretariat to write to its president, drawing attention to the recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee.

It would also be useful to prepare a document listing the files which had been satisfactorily resolved and showed that efforts to implement the Bern Convention also contributed to the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the decisions taken at the Rio and Johannesburg summits.

Furthermore activities reflecting the needs and concerns of the African States Parties to the Convention should be proposed.

### **6. Other business**

As no other business was raised, the Chairman thanked the participants and the meeting was closed.



## APPENDIX 1

Strasbourg, 14 March 2002



### CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Strasbourg, 2 July 2002

#### Standing Committee **Bureau meeting**

Strasbourg, 12 September 2002  
(Room 2, opening : 9.30 am)

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#### DRAFT AGENDA

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

#### 2. General information

2.1. Johannesburg: sustainable development summit: Council of Europe position

#### 3. Implementation of the 2002 Programme of activities

3.1. Implementation of activities

3.2. Preparation of SBSTTA-8 on marine and coastal biological diversity

#### 4. Implementation of the Convention : Files

##### 4.1. Files open

- Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)
- *Chelonia mydas* (Turkey)

##### 4.2. Possible new files

- Cyprus : illegal capture and offering for sale of protected birds
- Bulgaria : construction of motorway in Struma
- Iceland : exotic forest plantation in areas of biological importance
- Morocco : tourist development in the Souss Massa National Park
- Portugal: dam in Odelouca
- Switzerland: wolf control

##### 4.3. New cases

#### 5. – Draft Agenda for the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee and Programme of activities in 2003

#### 6. Other business





## APPENDIX 2

Strasbourg, le 6 septembre 2002  
[listpartBureau-Sept2002.doc]

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS  
CONVENTION RELATIVE A LA CONSERVATION DE LA VIE SAUVAGE  
ET DU MILIEU NATUREL

Standing Committee / Comité permanent

### Meeting of the Bureau / Réunion du Bureau

Strasbourg, le 12 septembre 2002  
Palais de l'Europe, Salle 2

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