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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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**Meeting of the Bureau**

Strasbourg, 13 September 2010

**MEETING REPORT**

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

## 1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr Jón Gunnar Ottósson, Chair of the Standing Committee of the Convention, opened the meeting on 13 September 2010 and welcomed the other Bureau members, Mr Olivier Biber, Mr Silviu Megan, Mr Jan Plesnik and Ms Snezana Prokic, as well as the representatives of the Secretariat.

The Head of the Biological Diversity Unit, Mr Fernández-Galiano, informed the Bureau that Ms Ivana d'Alessandro has been officially nominated Secretary of the Bern Convention as of 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2010; he then introduced to the Bureau two new staff members: Ms Iva Obretenova, recruited on 1<sup>st</sup> September to take over the activities related to Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, including the management of the joint CoE/EU programme aiming at the setting-up of the Emerald Network in seven Central and Eastern European countries; and Ms Daria Cherepanova, appointed as webmaster and communication officer in charge of the preparation of a communication strategy for the Bern Convention.

Before adopting the agenda, the Chair asked the Secretariat to inform the Bureau members on the state of progress of the political reform of the Council of Europe, including the outcomes of a meeting held on 28 April 2010 between the Chair of the Standing Committee of the Convention and Mr. Gérard Stoudmann, Special Representative for Organisational Development and Reform.

Mr Fernández-Galiano recalled that the main objective of the reform is to raise the political profile of the Council of Europe. So far, the reform concentrated on priority needs related to internal governance and operational measures; however, the second stage of the reform will be broader and will particularly concentrate on strategic development and identification of priorities for the Council of Europe Programme of Activities. This will include a review of the more than 200 Council of Europe Conventions with the aim of assessing their added value and effectiveness. With regards to the Bern Convention, the Secretariat confirmed that there will not be major changes in 2011 and that the budget allocation for the Convention's activities will remain substantially the same. However, 2012 will probably pose new, important challenges, which will demand to the Bern Convention more efforts to maintain its activities among the Council of Europe priorities.

Mr Jón Gunnar Ottósson thanked the Secretariat for this information and stressed that the meeting with the Special Representative for Organisational Development and Reform had positive outcomes as it confirmed that the Bern Convention remains the keystone treaty for protection of biodiversity within the Council of Europe framework, while recognising the effectiveness of its monitoring mechanisms and its capacity to identify innovative actions to respond to changing circumstances in the field of nature protection.

After closing this preliminary information item the draft agenda was adopted with no changes, as set out in Appendix 1.

The participants are listed in Appendix 2.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2010 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat gave a general overview of the progress done with regards to the implementation of the work programme, as well as on the meetings and other activities taking place in the second half of 2010, including an on-the-spot visit to assess the situation of the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) in the Var region (France); the meetings of the Groups of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change (June) and on Island Biodiversity (July), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> International workshop on Invasive Plants in the Mediterranean Type Regions (July), among others.

The Secretariat further informed the Bureau members that, at its meeting on 9 September 2010, the Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) decided to refer back to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention the draft resolution concerning the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to Bile Karpaty Protected Landscape Area (Czech Republic) for further discussion. The GR-C transmitted the 17 remaining draft resolutions to the Committee of Ministers for adoption without further debate.

Mr Fernández-Galiano also informed the Bureau that, following the study on the assessment of the status and distribution of the Ruddy Duck, and the review of the implementation of the Ruddy Duck

eradication strategy, a meeting to prepare a European Action Plan on the Ruddy Duck will be organised next November in view of submitting results to the Standing Committee.

Finally, the Secretariat presented to the Bureau the preliminary list of draft texts to be submitted to the Standing Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat and noted with approval the progress made in implementing the Convention's work programme.

## **2.1 Protected Areas and Ecological Networks**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the forthcoming meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, prepared in the light of the provisions of the "Bern Declaration on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe: 2010 and beyond", which sets-up the year 2020 as the deadline for completing the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. The Group of Experts will thus be called to submit to the Standing Committee a number of important proposals regarding the process of implementation of the Emerald Network, namely for what concerns the criteria for the scientific assessment of the proposed Emerald sites; the procedure for the submission of the candidate sites to the Standing Committee for adoption; the calendar detailing the steps forward to the implementation of the Emerald Network in order to complete it by 2020. The Group of Experts will also discuss about the status of implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network, by reviewing examples of good practices as well as of transboundary and transnational cooperation.

In addition, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that, as a follow-up of the coordination meeting held in March 2010 with the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Centre, the EEA confirmed the wish to provide assistance with the scientific assessment of the Emerald sites proposed by the countries for which the Agency has a direct mandate, as soon as the criteria for such an assessment will be set.

Ms Snezana Prokic stressed the need to further explore the issue of the harmonisation of the Natura 2000 and the Emerald networks, as well as to make data formats and status reporting compatible among multiple obligations, and welcomed the Secretariat's effort to focus on this issue.

Mr Megan explained that Romania already faced the situation of making the work done within the framework of the Emerald Network compatible with the requirements of the Natura 2000 and offered his country's support for sharing the used methodology.

Mr Olivier Biber underlined that the goals set under the Bern Declaration are ambitious, although the delay in the completion of the Network calls now for urgent action. He pointed out that the calendar for completing the Emerald Network by 2020 should be used as, or in conjunction with, a strategic plan which would ensure the achievement of the goals set by the Bern Declaration.

Mr. Plesnik stressed that a prompt decision of the Standing Committee on the criteria for the evaluation of the Emerald proposed sites, as well as on a concrete timeframe for the implementation of the related activities by 2020 would be particularly timely on the one hand because this would come just one month after the COP-10 in Nagoya, which will present the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas for 2020; on the other hand because this would allow to present the progress made in the implementation of the Network at the 7th Ministerial Conference "Environment For Europe", scheduled in September 2011. He also suggested that the Bureau, as well as the Standing Committee, express their full support to the European Environment Agency with regards to the work to be done in the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Mr Jón Gunnar Ottósson underlined that the Draft Agenda of the Standing Committee meeting could be eventually reviewed in the light of the outcomes of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

## **2.2 Biodiversity and Climate Change: adoption of the opinion to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1918 (2010) – “Biodiversity and climate change”**

Mr Fernández-Galiano informed the Bureau on the outcomes of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, held in Reykjavik (Iceland) on 21 and 22 June 2010. The Group of Experts examined 3 reports, on “Climate change and mountain biodiversity”, on “Climate change and island biodiversity”, and on “Climate change, wildland fire and biodiversity in Europe”. As a result, the Group of Experts will submit three draft recommendations to the Standing Committee for adoption. The Secretariat highlighted that the Bern Convention was pioneer in the field of climate change and biodiversity, and that the work of this Group of Experts particularly prove the capacity of the Convention to innovate.

In addition, the Secretariat reported that the Committee of Ministers requested by 15 September 2010, the Standing Committee’s opinion on Recommendation 1918 (2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly on “Biodiversity and Climate Change”. The Group of Experts examined the draft opinion and submitted it to the Bureau for adoption on behalf of the Standing Committee.

The Bureau adopted the document T-PVS (2010) 6 “Draft comments of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on Recommendation 1918 (2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on “Biodiversity and climate change””, and asked the Secretariat to forward them to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

## **2.3 Large Carnivores**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the “Workshop on Large Conservation in the Caucasus”, organised by the Bern Convention and held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in June 2010. The workshop aimed at reviewing the status of all large carnivores in the region, as well as to discuss priority actions for the future. Lack of proper data was pointed out as a main problem for all the species and also lack of an adopted common methodology that may make the existing and future data comparable and verifiable. A draft recommendation was prepared for possible adoption by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in the sense of endorsing the existing IUCN Strategy for the conservation of Large Carnivores in the Caucasus region, and asking governments to prepare or implement national action plans for the concerned species.

## **2.4 Invasive Alien Species**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the on-going work on Invasive Alien Species, a topic on which the Council of Europe has been very active the last 20 years.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Bern Convention co-organised, together with the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation and the European Environment Agency, the “2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Invasive Alien Plants in Mediterranean-type Regions”, held in Trabzon, Turkey, last August. The Conference has permitted to present on-going conservation work on Invasive Alien Plants, better understand research needs and present and publicise intergovernmental work in this field; in particular, the Secretariat presented the 2003 European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, as well as the Code of Conduct on Horticulture and IAS. The Conference highlighted the need of early warning and rapid response systems, as well as of institutional strengthening to improve prevention and control spread of Invasive Alien Plants. The results of the conference, the so-called “Trabzon message” will be presented for information to the Standing Committee.

## **2.5 Island Biodiversity**

The Secretariat presented the results of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Island Biodiversity, a group which held its second meeting and thus still needs some “consolidation”. The Group analysed the value of species in islands, their vulnerability to a number of environmental changes that severely affect islands, and the need to receive special conservation attention. The issue of invasive alien species in islands was also discussed, as well as the need of a specific precautionary approach, including the need to identify priorities for eradication of species, particularly mammals.

## **2.6 European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity**

The Secretariat informed that, following the meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group for the Elaboration of a European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity (April), a revised Draft Charter will be received shortly and prepared for submission to the Standing Committee for adoption.

## **2.7 The application of Article 9 of the Convention: legal report on conditions for exceptions**

The Secretariat presented the findings of the Draft report on the legal opinion on the interpretation of Article 9 of the Bern Convention, prepared by an independent consultant at the request of the Bureau. The legal opinion is based on a short compilation of the bi-annual reports where Article 9 has been applied, to determine whether the restrictions on derogations foreseen under the Convention are broad and clear enough to be considered sufficient. The report provides a detailed analysis as well as a suggested interpretation of/for each paragraph of Article 9, seen in conjunction with Resolution No. 2 (1993) of the Standing Committee on the scope of Articles 8 and 9 of the Bern Convention

In the case of derogations, the report suggests to analyse their consistency with the overall aim of the Convention, the compliance with the conditions set for the derogations, and the procedural conditions; it also provide a comparative analysis with EU legislation and case law.

In addition, the legal opinion highlights that the reporting system set under both the Bern Convention and Resolution No. 2 does not require Parties to report on three key issues, such as the reason for the derogation; the alternative solutions considered and the scientific data used to compare them; or the results obtained. According to the consultant, a more detailed reporting system would allow for a better monitoring of compliance with obligations, and for easier detection of any risk for a species arising unintentionally through derogations.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the Draft legal opinion; it decided to hold a discussion on possible guidelines for the reporting system set under article 9.2 of the Bern Convention at the next Standing Committee meeting; it asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft template for Bi-annual reports, to be examined at the next Standing Committee meeting.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: FILES**

*(Note: a detailed description of each case-file is included in document T-PVS (2010) 2 revised – Summary of Case files)*

### **3.1 Specific sites – Files open**

#### **- Ukraine: Proposed navigable waterway in the Bystroe Estuary (Danube delta)**

This case concerns the excavation of a shipping canal in Bystroe estuary of the Danube delta in Ukraine, which is likely to affect adversely both the Ukrainian Danube Biosphere Reserve – the most important of Ukraine's wetlands – and the whole Danube delta dynamics.

In March 2010, the European Union informed the Council of Europe that Ukraine has adopted a final decision on the project at the end of January 2010, agreeing to start works related to the full-scale implementation of the Danube-Black Sea Navigation Route, thus initiating the implementation of Phase II of the Bistroe Channel project. The case will be therefore monitored by the European Union. No new information has been received from the Ukrainian government in 2010.

Mr Silviu Megan informed the Bureau that the excavation's works foreseen under Phase II of the project aimed at opening a navigable waterway through the Bystroe estuary are well advanced and that these are already beyond what was initially foreseen in the plan submitted by Ukrainian authorities to Romanian ones for information. He asks the Bureau to maintain the file open and to urge a reply by Ukrainian authorities.

The Bureau took note of this information and asked the Secretariat to write to Ukrainian authorities to get an updated report as well as to highlight the need to confirm their participation at the meeting. The

Bureau also asked the Secretariat to liaise with the European Union for more updated information on the case.

- **Cyprus: Akamas Peninsula**

This case concerns plans for the tourist development in the Peninsula of Akamas (Cyprus), with detrimental effect on an ecologically valuable area with many rare plant and animal species protected under the Bern Convention.

In June 2010, Cyprus authorities have informed the Secretariat that a part of the Akamas Peninsula has been officially proposed, by the Government of Cyprus and after decision of its Council of Ministers, to integrate the Natura 2000 Network, as both a Site of Community Importance (SCI) and as a Special Protection Area (SPA), pursuant to the Habitats Directive. The final boundaries of the area, as well as the management plan in Greek, have been forwarded to the Secretariat. Moreover, Cyprus authorities informed that the proper conservation of the area to be included in the Natura 2000 network will ensure the long-term protection of the species and habitats concerned. In addition, the Secretariat has been informed that the Council of Ministers is implementing a Plan for the management of the entire area of Akamas Peninsula (thus not limited to the Natura 2000 area), combining both the needs of nature and those of local Communities. This plan includes provisions for the improvement of the infrastructure, the restriction of certain human activities taking place in the area (i.e., safari, rally, etc.), the promotion of ecotourism. A Project Manager will be soon recruited for ensuring the smooth implementation of the Management Plan.

For what concerns the town planning, the competent Department has initiated the selection procedure for development zones that will ensure the protection of the environment in parallel with the promotion of the sustainable development of the area.

With regards to the Natura 2000 area of Limni (“Polis-Gialia”), Cyprus authorities informed the Secretariat that part of the area is considered as national forest, thus the Forestry Department is in charge of daily monitoring of the entire site. The coastal zone is protected by several national laws, which prohibit any disturbance of the turtle nests, as well as any development on the beach. Furthermore, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, as the competent authority on the protection of turtles, carry out a yearly monitoring plan, aiming at the protection of the species. The Draft Management Plan for the Natura 2000 site has been presented to local communities in March 2010, but negotiations are still on-going.

In a report sent to the Secretariat in July 2010 the NGO Terra Cypria states that the site boundaries proposed by the Cyprus Government are particularly insufficient for the protection of species and habitats, and in breach of the agreements made with the European Commission at the Biogeographical Seminar for Cyprus in December 2006. The report lists a series of habitats, mammals and birds species which are insufficiently covered by the current SCI. Concerning the turtles nesting on Akamas beaches, the NGO considers that despite repeated recommendations by the Bern Convention’s Standing Committee neither the state nor the local authority have taken adequate measures to protect the turtle nesting beach in front of the Anassa hotel.

In July 2010 the European Union informed that the Commission recently received a complaint claiming insufficient designation and protection of the Akamas Peninsula. In that context the Commission will assess the sufficiency of the designated site as well as the measures implemented to safeguard its conservation values, with a view to ensuring compliance with relevant provisions under EU nature legislation.

In the light of the information received, the Bureau decided to keep the file open and requested the Secretariat to liaise with the European Union on the follow-up of their review.

- **Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra – Via Pontica**

This case concerns the building of the first windfarms in Bulgaria, at Balchik and Kaliakra, on the Black Sea coast. The NGO is challenging the chosen sites located on the Via Pontica which is one of the main migratory routes in Europe especially for soaring birds.

In July 2010 the European Union informed that the Commission continues to closely follow-up windfarm developments in the region of Kaliakra and Balchik, and is currently working on its future steps regarding the three relevant infringement procedures against Bulgaria, namely:

- For insufficient designation of Kaliakra Important Bird Area (IBA) as Special Protection Areas (SPA); a letter of formal notice was sent by the Commission on 6 June 2008;
- For windfarm developments and other urbanization projects breaching the Birds Directive's provisions in Kaliakra Important Bird Area (IBA); a letter of formal notice was sent on 27 November 2008;
- For systematic failure to provide adequate protection for its bird sites, by authorizing a number of urbanization, tourist and windfarm projects in 16 SPA under the Birds Directive and 17 IBAs before they were designated as SPAs. The letter of formal notice, sent on 29 October 2009, covers the sites on the Black Sea Coast in Northeast Bulgaria.

In addition, the Bulgarian authorities informed the European Union that no new authorisations for development in SPA Kaliakra and IBA Kaliakra have been issued since the beginning of the year 2010. Currently there are no constructions on the undesignated areas as a general ban has been issued until the end of the year 2010.

The adoption of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, originally planned for June 2010, will be delayed for a few months as currently a SEA and appropriate assessment pursuant to Art. 6(3) of the Habitats Directive are under development. The plan will indicate "red spots" where the cumulative effects should be taken into account.

In August 2010 BirdLife Bulgaria sent a report stating that although there have been some positive steps taken by the Bulgarian authorities since late 2009, it seems that the Black Sea coast sites are still in danger. Birdlife thus requests the Bern Convention to continue following-up the developments concerning this case file.

The Bureau decided to keep the file open and asked the Secretariat to write to the Bulgarian authorities for further information and for reporting at next Standing Committee meeting. The Bureau also asked the Secretariat to liaise with EU on the issue.

**- France: Habitats for the survival of the Common Hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) in Alsace**

In 2006, the Secretariat of the Bern Convention received a complaint from the Association "*Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage*" expressing its concern over the insufficient measures aimed at ensuring the maintenance of the habitats needed for the survival of the Common Hamster.

In July 2010 the French authorities submitted a report on measures taken:

- Monitoring of populations: following the 2010 survey, the presence of the hamster was confirmed in 25 municipalities, 24 of which are in the Bas-Rhin and 1 in the Haut-Rhin (in 2000, the species was present in 85 municipalities). Despite the shrinkage of the range observed from 2000 to 2010, after a significant fall in numbers in the core areas between 2001 and 2004, the surviving populations have shown an upward trend in the last few years.
- 2010 is a better year for the species. The overall increase in the size of the hamster population in Alsace in the past year could be explained by increased planting of crops favourable to the species and the greater burrow density observed.
- Reinforcement of wild populations: in early 2010 the ONCFS (*Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage*) launched an applied research programme with the aim of monitoring more specifically the fate of released hamsters. An interim report will be produced at the end of 2010. The ONCFS and *Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage* are continuing to work in partnership to improve the 3 breeding programmes. Exchanges with German and Dutch partners will be intensified.
- Farming: mobilisation of farmers and their leaders is continuing, as reflected in particular in the increased area covered by contracts (eg in the northern and Piémont priority action areas, the

increase is significant, both within the zones (+40 hectares) and outside them, in the vicinity of known burrows (+110 hectares).

- Urban development: 3 zones have been designated: historical area (301 municipalities), reclaimed area (155 municipalities), and priority action areas (20 municipalities). All the urban planning documents concerned included a hamster survey in 2009 and 2010.

As regards development projects, information has already been provided to a large number of developers. A procedure is currently being introduced to ensure that when applications for planning permission are considered, projects impacting on hamsters, their rest areas or their breeding sites are identified and include a hamster impact study.

- Road infrastructure: as regards road projects within the national network which have been declared of public interest and are located in the areas where the hamster is present (Strasbourg western bypass and southern ring road, *Piémont des Vosges* expressway), allowance has been made for significant compensation measures in the impact studies and public interest procedures. In the case of the project at the most advanced stage, the *Piémont des Vosges* expressway, the state, which is the main contractor, began the development of crops favourable to the hamster under agreements with farmers in 2006. As regards the Strasbourg southern ring road, in order to encourage the migration of hamsters away from the projected construction site, and in anticipation of compensation measures, 57 hectares of favourable crops were contractualised in 2009 and 2010
- Prevention of infringements: a plan for the prevention of infringements was signed in May 2010.

The Bureau decided to keep the file open and asked the Secretariat to contact the NGO for an updated report.

#### - **Italy: Eradication and trade of the American Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)**

In 2007, the Standing Committee asked the Bureau to examine the possibility of opening a file for a possible breach of the Convention by Italy on this case. An on-the-spot appraisal was carried out in May 2008.

The main conclusions of the expert's visit were that the presence of the American grey squirrel in Italy was a serious threat for the survival of the protected native Red squirrel, and that this expansive trend had the full potential to turn the invasion into a continental problem, where France and Switzerland would become the next countries to be invaded.

In 2008, the Standing Committee agreed to open a case file.

At its meeting in March 2010, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to contact Italian authorities for getting a copy of the decree and of the Memorandum of cooperation.

In July 2010, Italian authorities informed the Secretariat that the Memorandum of cooperation, signed in August 2009 by the three concerned Regions is still awaiting the signatures of the competent Provinces for entering into force. The draft decree for banning the trading and keeping of the Grey squirrel is currently under discussion of the competent legal offices. However, the Italian authorities also informed that the LIFE+ Committee approved in May 2010 the project proposal "LIFE09 NAT/IT/000095 "EC-SQUARE. Eradication and control of grey squirrel: actions for preservation of biodiversity in forest ecosystems". The project implementation should start in September 2010, and the National authorities are confident that it will give a crucial contribution to solve the problems generated by the Grey Squirrel in Italy.

In the light of the above the Bureau decided to keep the file open and asked to the Secretariat to invite Italian authorities to report at the next Standing Committee meeting.

## 3.2 Possible file

#### - **France: Conservation of the European Green Toad (*Bufo viridis*) in Alsace**

A complaint was lodged in 2006 by the Association BUFO (*Association pour l'étude et la protection des amphibiens et reptiles d'Alsace*) focusing on threats to the Green toad's few remaining habitats in



Alsace. It specifically targeted shortcomings in the impact studies carried out for a major bypass and urban development projects, and a project for the construction of a leisure complex.

The French authorities submitted a report to the Secretariat in July 2010. The procedure for drawing-up the national action plan is ongoing. Several meetings of the committee of national and European experts and of the monitoring committee were held in 2009 and 2010. Among other things, these meetings highlighted the need for the plan to take account of the green toad populations in Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg and Switzerland, and developments in those populations. They also made it possible to move ahead with the ranking of sites and the prioritisation of actions, to establish a link with the protected areas strategy and the “green and blue network” and to specify awareness-raising and educational measures.

Following these meetings, a fourth plan is currently being drafted. It will be forwarded to the Environment Ministry in the course of summer 2010.

Seven road projects liable to have an impact on the green toad populations in Lorraine and Alsace are currently under scrutiny.

Generally, one may note a concerted effort with the different stakeholders and greater attention to amphibian issues in development projects and urban planning documents.

The Bureau decided to keep the file as a possible case-file and to wait for the final version of the action plan. It asked the Secretariat to contact French authorities and invite them to report at next Standing Committee meeting.

- **Sweden: Natterjack (*Bufo calamita*) population on the coastal island of Smögen**

In December 2007 the Secretariat received information from the Chair of the Bern Convention’s Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles concerning the threat presented by a residential housing project in Hasselösund Väster, Smögen, to the northernmost population of the worldwide distribution of the Natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), a species listed in Appendix II of the Bern Convention.

At the 2008 meeting of the Standing Committee, the Swedish delegation informed that the decision regarding the plan for the residential housing project had been appealed to the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland and that, in the meantime, the plan had come to a halt pending the outcome of the decision by the County Administrative Board.

In September 2009, the Swedish government reported that the County Administrative Board rejected the appeals of the Municipality’s decision, as it considered that the habitats for the Natterjack toad had been taken into account in a satisfactory manner. The County Administrative Board's decision has now been appealed to the Swedish Government and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency awaits the decision of the Swedish Government on this issue.

At the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of Sweden confirmed that the decision of the government on the appeal was pending and the project had been stopped in the meantime (the decision was expected in early 2010). The Standing Committee took note of the information presented by the delegation of Sweden and asked them to inform the Secretariat when the decision on the appeal will be available. It agreed to review this case in 2010 as a “possible case file”.

At its meeting in March 2010, the Bureau decided to wait for the decision and reconsider the issue at the next meeting. Swedish authorities have recently ensured that they will inform the Secretariat as soon as a final decision on the issue is reached.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and decided to keep the file as a possible case-file while waiting for the notification on the final decision.

### **3.3 On-the-spot appraisal**

- **France: Impacts on the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) of: (1) a waste management plant in the commune of Cabasse; and (2) a housing project in the commune de Ramatuelle (Var)**

Following an invitation from the French authorities, an expert, Mr Guy Berthoud (Switzerland), accompanied by a member of the Secretariat, undertook an on-the-spot visit whose aims were to:

- Analyse the measures taken for the protection of the Hermann tortoise in the Plaine des Maures, in particular following the establishment of the national nature reserve;
- Study the projects for the siting of a waste management plant in Cabasse (CET) and the construction of housing in Ramatuelle and the threats they pose to the species;

The visit highlighted the decisive role played by the Bern Convention in the establishment of the reserve and the launching of the action plan.

With regard to the two complaints, the various discussions held brought out not only the existence of major ecological issues but also a desire on the part of the promoters of the projects to minimise their impact.

The CET project is no longer on the agenda for the time being, as the local authority has not amended its urban development plan; it might, however, represent an alternative to the Balançan waste disposal site.

As for the housing project, the Mayor of Ramatuelle, faced with increasing demographic pressure and the local population's housing needs, has provided extensive justification for the project, which, in his view, meets an overriding public interest. The project has received a favourable opinion from the fauna and flora committees of the *Conseil National de la Protection de la Nature*. It was deemed acceptable subject to the taking of significant avoidance, reduction and compensation measures. If the project is carried out in accordance with the specifications, it should not have a major impact on the species.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and asked the Secretariat to present the expert's report as well as the draft recommendations at next Standing Committee meeting.

### **3.4 Complaints in stand-by**

#### **- Wind turbines in Alta Maremma (Italy)**

In September 2008, the Secretariat received a complaint from the *Comitato Nazionale Paesaggistico*, based in the Alta Maremma region, concerning plans for a wind-farm of 6 mega turbines at Bellaria (Roccalbegna), less than 3km away from an existing 10 turbine plant in the town of Scansano (built without EIA and therefore declared illegal but still operating). The location of the turbines at Roccalbegna would worsen the damage already caused by the turbines at Scansano, and would interrupt an important ecological corridor between the sites of the Albegna valley and those of the Trasubie and Trasubbino.

The Bureau discussed the complaint in March 2009 and asked for more information about the status of the project and on the affected populations.

In February 2010, the NGO (*CNP/Comitato Civico per Roccalbegna*) reported on the status of the project:

- A proposal to site 6 x 2MW mega wind turbines on the crest of a hill in the town of Roccalbegna was presented to the Office of Evaluation of Environmental Impact in Florence, and interested parties were invited to submit their comments by 23rd January 2010 (the NGO "*Comitato Civico per Roccalbegna*" presented a substantial dossier on 21st January including reports of wildlife experts).
- The existing wind farms in the area are located in an IBA. The planned turbines, with masts 80 metres height and blades span of 90 metres, are to be sited less than 3 km away from the existing 10 turbines of Poggi Altì.
- The project presented by ENEL Green Power is largely based on data that the NGO considers distorted and misleading, as it ignores the cumulative impacts, and does not indicate the bird species present in the area, such as the Lanner.

- WWF stated that the project would impact the following species: Short-toed Eagle, Stone Curlew, Lanner, *Elaphae Quatorlineata* (“Cervone” – black rat snake), Hermann Tortoise
- The decision-making process for renewable energy in Italy: All decisions have been delegated to local government. Regional authorities decide how many MWs they want to install but they leave it to companies and local councils to negotiate.
- ISPRA, the Italian environmental research institute “proposes an unfavourable verdict to the realisation of this installation”.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and instructed the Secretariat to write to the Italian authorities to ask to produce an updated report, clarifying the question of the cumulative impacts of the windfarms. If no new information is provided before next Bureau meeting, the Standing Committee could eventually consider the possibility to open a case file.

In July 2010, the Secretariat has been informed that Italian authorities would provide a reply on the complaint as soon as possible.

The Bureau took note of the lack of new information available on the case and decided to consider the case as a possible case-file. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to send a notification of this decision to Italian authorities and to invite them to report at next Standing Committee meeting.

#### - **France: Black Grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) in Drôme and Isère**

In April 2009, the association ASPAS (*Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages*) sent a complaint to the Secretariat for the possible breach of Articles 7 and 9 of the Bern Convention by France concerning the Black Grouse (in Appendix III species) in the departments of Drôme and Isère. In particular, the complaint stated that human activities such as tourism and sport developments in mountain areas are destroying the winter and reproduction sites of this species, causing also disturbances in these areas and in their calling sites, while hunting compounds the problems for the species.

The ASPAS association reports that current population levels in France are estimated at 16000-20000 individuals, with an “unfavourable conservation status” at the national level and a strong decrease in numbers, especially in the Drôme region where estimates are at about 100 individuals. ASPAS contests the French hunting regulations, which do not favour the repopulation of Black grouse nor prevents their destruction, given the unfavourable conservation status of the species, and therefore are not in line with the Bern Convention. The NGO has also lodged a complaint to the European Commission in June 2010. The information provided by French authorities at the European Commission’s request is being currently analysed.

In July 2010, the French authorities submitted a report to the Secretariat, which described:

- The monitoring of the distribution area, which is carried out through national surveys and systems for supervising the population. The distribution area of this species in the French Alps has shrunk by about 9% since the last decade. The average population is estimated at 8 400 adult males, which represents an 8% decrease compared to 1990-1999;
- The breeding situation: it is clear that the decrease in numbers in the northern Alps is not the result of a chronic decline in breeding;
- The hunting situation: Since the introduction of the compulsory personal hunting record, hunting statistics have been better known and are centralised by the mountain galliform observatory (OGM).

Hunting of male black grouse is authorised throughout France from the third Sunday of September to 11 November but completely banned in the Var. The shooting plan introduced in Haute-Savoie in 1995 has gradually been extended to most of the *départements* of the French Alps.

Only the *départements* of Drôme and Isère are yet to introduce such a plan. In Isère, however, the length of the hunting season may be altered by the Prefect according to the success of the breeding season and the size of young birds.

In Drôme there are no special regulations on the length of the hunting season. Hunting may be prohibited, however, in years when breeding was poor. Exemplary management of hunting seems essential.

Other causes for concern are the reduction and breaking up of habitats owing to growth and changes in human activity, particularly the development of ski resorts.

Available objective data show that the situation of the black grouse in the French Alps is not yet desperate but the time has almost certainly come to take action, particularly in the northern Alps. In 2009, the regional environment, planning and housing directorate (DREAL) worked with Rhône-Alpes Region to devise and implement a regional action plan, which the OGM was asked to run. It is planned to extend it to the Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur as soon as possible.

The main aims of this plan are to enhance, add to and co-ordinate the conservation measures introduced in the French Alps since the beginning of the 1990s. Most of these measures were based on hunters' ideas. Their support on the ground is essential to promote and/or facilitate the implementation of the action plan at local level, particularly outside protected areas.

In spite of people's sensitivities and provided that hunting is subject to an appropriate regulated shooting plan (with no impact on the population), banning hunting, and hence losing the support of hunters, would probably be more of a counter-productive step than a beneficial one for the conservation of the black grouse.

In national nature reserves where hunting is still authorised, the Rhone-Alpes environment directorate (DREAL) followed the advice of the Regional Scientific Council on the Natural Heritage and decided not to introduce a general ban but to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the European Union is also examining the situation in the area. The Bureau took note of the information provided and decided to keep the case as a complaint in stand-by. It asked the Secretariat to liaise with the European Union for further information on their analysis.

- **Morocco: Tourism development project in Saïdia affecting the Moulouya wetland site**

A complaint was received in 2009 from the "*Espace de Solidarité et de Coopération de l'Oriental*" (ESCO), based in Oujda, Morocco. It concerns the Moulouya site, a "zone of biological and ecological interest" (SIBE, in the French acronym), as well as a Ramsar site, since 2005.

In June 2010, ESCO sent in videos and a press release calling for a halt to the following activities:

- The diversion of the water which supplied the Chararba marshes and the oxbow lake formed by the Moulouya river, in which dozens of species of birds including flamingos used to take refuge.
- The discharge of raw sewage from the Méditerranéa Saïdia tourist complex into the wetland.

The visit to the site scheduled by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat for April has been put back until 12-16 October 2010. The Bureau decided to wait for the findings of Ramsar Secretariat's field visit and to reconsider the complaint at next Bureau meeting.

- **The Vjetrenica cave (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**

In 2008 the Secretariat received a complaint from the NGO (Speleologic Society "Vjetrenica – Popovo Polje") of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The complaint concerns the Vjetrenica cave, a complex cave, 6700 m long, which belongs to the Trebišnjica River system.

The Secretariat received no new information from the NGO in 2010. However, in July 2010 the Bosnian authorities informed the Secretariat that Vjetrenica cave is now protected under the category of Natural Monument, in accordance with article 28 of the Law on nature protection of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The law aims at protecting and preserving the specific outstanding natural features of Natural monuments, and prevents any exploitation or use of the area which is not in line

with the law's protection and preservation purposes. The cave is also officially proposed for integrating the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In addition, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina inform that the cave has been the object of several projects aimed at its restructuration after having been damaged during the war. A road has been built to facilitate the access to the cave, the area has been demined, illumination has been put in place, and the interior of the cave has been secured. All the mentioned projects have been implemented further approval by the competent authorities and in accordance with law requirements.

The Bureau took note of the information received and considered the reply from the national authorities as satisfactory. It thus decided to file the case and asked the Secretariat to notify its decision to both the authorities and the complainant.

### **3.5 Other complaints**

#### **- Ukraine: Afforestation of steppic habitats**

In 2009, the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine sent the Secretariat a complaint regarding plans to expand the area of forest lands in Ukraine by creating and reestablishing forests, mostly in Ukraine's steppic regions (South, centre and East, covering 40% of the country). This was an initiative of the President of Ukraine, as reflected in Decree No. 995/2008, of November 2008. The NGO considered that these plans would threaten numerous animal and plant steppic species, including endemics. The complaint indicated that forests planted in steppes "have to be replanted every year", while "it is hardly possible to revive lost steppic biological diversity even if repeated forestation is ceased".

In September 2009, the Bureau agreed to request the complainant to provide the information referred to in the on-line complaint form.

In February 2010, the complaint form was sent indicating that steppe biotopes provide unique habitats for species which can live only in them. Their presence is considerably smaller than it is necessary for their sustainable functioning as biodiversity reserves, as they are scattered over the territory and heavily exposed to man-caused negative effects. If these territories are turned to afforestation, the ploughing of the land preceding afforestation would completely destroy the existing plant communities and fauna habitat; while the creation of man-made forests in the steppe natural complex would prevent its restoration and further existence of typical species in this territory. The NGO also complained of the lack of a State monitoring system for endangered animal and plant species in Ukraine which results in limited information available.

However, the Secretariat considers that the complaint is presented in a too general way.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to request more detailed information to the Ukrainian authorities, and to possibly link this issue to the results of the Emerald project in Ukraine and the eventual designation of the area as a candidate Emerald site.

No new information has been received in 2010.

After re-examining the complaint, the Bureau still considers that the information provided is too general. It also suggests to tackle the issue in the framework of the on-going work for the setting-up of the Emerald Network in Ukraine. It thus decided to file the case and asked the Secretariat to notify its decision to the applicant.

#### **- Norway: Conservation of wolves, brown bears, wolverines and lynxes**

In October 2009, the NGO "NOAH – for animal rights" sent a complaint form concerning Norway's treatment of wolves, brown bears, wolverines and lynxes, claiming that from 1 January 2009 Norway had allowed "the shooting of 75 bears, 46 lynxes, 40 wolverines and 21 wolves", although not all these permissions had led to killings. However, they indicated that "in the period since autumn 2008 and until today, Norway has shot and killed 136 lynxes, 90 wolverines, 20 bears and 3 wolves. Most of the wolverines were hunted during their period of breeding, using helicopters, killing the infants together with their mother in the den. The number of lynxes and wolverines killed last year in Norway is the highest number killed since 1850". The NGO further stated that these

species occur in very small populations and that previous and current exploitation is affecting their ability to survive in Norway, where they are listed as critically endangered species. The extensive killing of wolves, brown bears, wolverines and lynxes in Norway, according to the NGO, is the result of a deliberate policy to keep these species in very small populations, in order to avoid conflicts with agricultural interests.

Furthermore, the NGO stated that the country has been divided Norway into sectors/zones and while in some of them the endangered predators are allowed in small numbers, in others they are not tolerated at all. The complaint states that despite the fact that these animals wander across large areas, they are easily killed when moving outside the strictly protected zones, and so this system does not allow the species to reach levels which are ecologically sustainable and may secure their future survival. Finally, the NGO considers that Norway has chosen to partially transfer the responsibility for the conservation of wolves and brown bears to its neighbor country, Sweden, where these species occur in more sustainable numbers than in Norway, in contravention of their obligations under the Convention.

The NGO reported that the Norwegian declaration, “Soria Moria”, of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009, announced that the government will develop a new model for estimating the population of wolves and brown bears and according to which the number of breedings necessary to secure survival will be seen in a context of several years, instead of annual goals. In addition, the wolves with their habitat both in Sweden and Norway will be counted among the Norwegian wolves, in order to meet the targets and allow more killings of wolves. There will be a lower tolerance to the threats of predators in areas with livestock, and it will be made easier to kill both male bears and wolves outside the zones where they are permitted to stay.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to write to the government to get a reply before the next meeting of the Bureau.

In its report delivered in August 2010, the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management explains that the issue of the management of large carnivores has been debated in the Parliament on a regular basis in the last decades, thus generating a series of white papers (among which a new one planned to be issued by late 2010). The aim of the adopted regulations is “to ensure a sustainable management of lynx, wolverine, brown bear, wolf and golden eagle”. The management shall also take into account consideration of livelihood and other community interests. A national monitoring programme has been established to follow the population development, and this clearly shows that the state of the carnivore population development is in a state of growth.

Mr Olivier Biber stressed that, following the information received by the Norwegian authorities, the situation seems to concern more precisely the use of derogations under article 9; the Bureau should thus analyse if the Convention is violated, bearing in mind both the provisions of article 9 and 4.

Mr Plesnik pointed out that a key issue is the proportion of the population concerned by the killings. The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the figures provided by the Norwegian authorities, which show an increase in populations of large carnivores.

The Bureau took note of the information received; it considered the reply from the Norwegian authorities as satisfactory; it considered that the case concerns the use of derogations as foreseen by article 9 of the Bern Convention; it decided to file the case and asked the Secretariat to notify its decision to both the national authorities and the complainant.

### **3.6 Complaints received by the Secretariat (since the last Bureau meeting)**

#### **- Ukraine: threat to natural habitats and species in Dniester River Delta**

In April 2010, the International Non Governmental Organization “Environment – People – Law” sent a complaint to the Secretariat for the possible breach of Articles 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention by Ukraine concerning development plans (commercial ports and touristic infrastructures) in Dniester River Delta, which would affect several protected species and habitats under the Bern Convention. In particular, the NGO expresses concerns over the significant threats to the natural habitats of severely threatened species (although it only mentions several bird species in the complaint), as well as over the quality of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and the lack of adequate planning and

development policies. The NGO highlights that the area is also a Ramsar site; that seven different development projects are being implemented in the area; and that some of these new infrastructures are being built within 100 meter of a so called “coastal protection stripe” of the Dniester River, foreseen by the Water Code of Ukraine (article 89), within the protected area called “The Dniester water meadows”.

In May 2010 the Secretariat contacted Ukrainian authorities on this topic. However, no information has been received so far. In addition, the Secretariat informed the Ramsar Convention on the presumed massive commercial prawn fishing taking place in the Black Sea Biosphere Reserve, which includes Ramsar sites “Tendrivska Bay” and “Yagorlytska Bay”. The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention expressed concerns on the compatibility of these activities with the maintenance of the ecological character of the sites and asked to the State Agency for Protected Areas of Ukraine to report on these activities as well as on potential threats and possible sustainable solutions. Both Secretariats will continue to liaise on this issue.

Noting the lack of additional information the Bureau decided to re-consider the case as a complaint in stand-by at next Bureau meeting. It asked the Secretariat to contact Ukrainian authorities for further information.

**- Greece: threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias**

On 22nd August 2010 the Secretariat received a complaint from MEDASSET (The Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles) regarding development plans in a NATURA 2000 site (THINES KYPARISSIAS - GR2550005) which would affect *Caretta caretta*, a threatened species protected under the Bern Convention. The NGO reports about uncontrolled development on the site (summer houses building, construction of coastal roads, occupation of the beach by, among others, bars, umbrellas and deck chairs) and expresses concerns over the intensive pressure on the nesting activity of turtles, which can lead to reducing the unique population of *Caretta caretta*.

The complainant refers to the obligations for the Contracting Parties mentioned in articles 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and highlights that *Caretta caretta* is also protected by other international agreements, among which CMS, CITES and the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution, and the EU Habitats Directive.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a letter requesting further information has been addressed to Greek authorities on 7 September 2010.

The Bureau took note of the information provided; due to the very short notice given to the Greek authorities to provide a reply, the Bureau decided to re-consider the complaint at its next Bureau meeting, as a complaint received by the Secretariat since last Bureau meeting.

**- United Kingdom: increase in turtle mortality in Episkopi and Akrotiri areas**

On 16th August 2010 the Secretariat of the Bern Convention has received a complaint from MEDASSET (The Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles) and Terra Cypria reporting an important increase in sea turtle mortality rates (particularly significant for *Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta*) in Episkopi area, which is an area under the control of the British Sovereign Base Area Administration (SBAA) and nearby Akrotiri. *Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta* are both threatened species protected under the Bern Convention.

MEDASSET submitted the complaint to react to a warning they received from Episkopi Turtlewatch (ETW), an NGO working closely with (ATW) Akrotiri Turtlewatch. The complaint reports that the increase in sea turtle mortality is observed since the change in the net fishing regulation operated by SBAA at the end of 2007. Available evidence indicates that nearly 100% of the deaths recorded by Episkopi Turtlewatch were a result of interaction with fishing activities and specifically net fishing. MEDASSET fears a localised extinction of the nesting population and in a longer term an impact on nesting levels elsewhere.

The complainant refers to the obligations for the Contracting Parties mentioned in articles 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention, and highlights that *Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta* are also protected by

other international agreements, among which CMS, CITES and the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a letter requesting further information has been addressed to the authorities of the United Kingdom, with copy to Cyprus authorities, on 7 September 2010.

The Bureau took note of the information provided; due to the very short notice given to the UK authorities to provide a reply, the Bureau decided to re-consider the complaint at its next Bureau meeting, as a complaint received by the Secretariat since last Bureau meeting.

### **3.7 Follow-up of Previous Recommendations:**

*(Note: a detailed description of each recommendation is included in document T-PVS (2010) 2 revised – Summary of Case files)*

#### **- Recommendation No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey**

In Recommendation No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey, the Standing Committee asked the Turkish government to “secure the remaining unbuilt beach plots against development” in Fethiye.

In June 2010 the Environmental Protection Agency for Special Areas (EPASA) has submitted a report on this subject, informing on several progress made to protect the area as well as to devise and implement appropriate management measures to cushion the impact of various economic activities such as tourism, fish farming, transport, mining and agriculture.

However, early September 2010 MEDASSET reported on the impact of several construction and development projects to accommodate tourism, which could provoke the destruction of Fethiye nesting beaches. MEDASSET informs that Turkish Authorities have recently decided to relocate a shipyard/drydock currently located within Fethiye town, to Akgöl. This relocation would permanently and irrevocably destroy the key nesting area of Akgöl beach. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, two-thirds of all nests in Akgöl were laid in the planned project area, i.e. on the sandy section at the end of the beach. In 2010, there were 36 nests at Akgöl, equivalent to almost half of all nests (73) laid at the entire specific beach stretch (i.e Yanıklar + Akgöl).

In addition, according to MEDASSET there are reports that the Turkish Authorities have approved the bulldozing and destruction of the remaining part of the wetland in Çalis (on the right of the "Sunset Beach Apartments" complex built on the other part of the wetland in 2004) for the construction of a new hotel. The beach section directly in front of this area consists entirely of cobbles and is not a nesting area. The section to the left of the "Sunset Beach Apartments" complex will also be the site of the construction of another hotel. The beach section in front of this area is one of the last untouched parts of the Çalis beach and nesting does occur on this beach section.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and asked the Secretariat to contact Turkish authorities for a report at the next Standing Committee meeting. The Recommendation could eventually be discussed again in 2011.

#### **- Recommendation No. 98 (2002) on the project to build a motorway through the Kresna Gorge (Bulgaria)**

A planned motorway crossing an area of high biological diversity was examined by the Standing Committee in 2002, leading to the adoption of Recommendation 98 (2002) “on the project to build a motorway through the Kresna Gorge (Bulgaria)”. The Standing Committee invited the Bulgarian government to abandon the plans to enlarge the current road and look for more suitable alternatives, compatible with Bern Convention obligations.

At its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting the Standing Committee welcomed the positive news on the announced decision to avoid the Kresna Gorge. It agreed to close this case file but asked the Government of Bulgaria to inform the Standing Committee at its next meeting.



- **Recommendation No.113 (2004) on military antenna in the Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri (Cyprus)**

In July 2010, the UK government sent a new updated report including information on each of the recommendations. The government informs that bird collision studies will be completed with the last flight path survey which will be undertaken between September 2010 and November 2010. Once all reports have been obtained, it is intended to proceed with a joint (SBAA, RoC, Birdlife Cyprus) appraisal of the data obtained.

With regards to paragraph 2 of the recommendation, the UK government suggests to close the item as the Pluto EIA concluded that there was no evidence from which one could predict significant effects of EM radiation on bird.

In addition, the government informs that Akrotiri Wetlands candidate SPA has been formally designated in April 2010, as well as Akrotiri Cliffs and Episkopi cliffs candidate SPAs; the SBA Administration intends to designate SACs in the near future. The report highlights the continuing trend of water reduction in all Akrotiri wetlands. It also provides additional information on the activities carried out by the Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre.

For what concerns marine turtle conservation, the UK government informs that the Administration launched, in May 2010, a survey to address the issue of the high number of dead turtles washing up on SBA beaches. The survey will end in November 2010 and will be repeated for three years.

- **Recommendation No. 110 (2004) on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds**

In 2009, the Standing Committee recognised that this is an important issue which requires further follow-up and agreed to include this issue in its 2010 meeting agenda, with a view to discussing a draft recommendation on the basis of the information and assessments received.

A compilation of national reports has been prepared in 2010 (document TPVS/Files (2010) 11) following the reports received by 12 Contracting Parties. The NGO report from 2009 (document T-PVS/Files (2009) 15) has been updated in 2010 including recommendations to expedite the work in Western and Central Europe, avoid new legacy of dangerous power poles in Eastern Europe and raise awareness for avoiding electrocution in Northern Europe. The NGO report also suggests to temporarily introduce a bi-annual reporting system to collect regular update on progress made in the implementation of the recommendation. A decision on the issue could be eventually taken by the Standing Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr Olivier Biber noticed that electrocution of birds is equally an issue of concern for the Bonn Convention, and stressed that it would be fruitful for the Bern Convention to establish synergies with the Bonn Convention as well as possibly with the wind energy management sector.

Mr Plesnik highlighted that it is essential to urge the Parties to share good practices in this field.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the information provided and decided to have a discussion on the possibility of introducing a bi-annual reporting system as well as of adopting a decision at next Standing Committee meeting. It also asked the Secretariat to contact the Bonn Convention Secretariat for updated information on their own initiatives.

- **Recommendation No. 137 (2008) on population level management of large carnivore populations**

A compilation of national reports has been prepared in 2010 following the reports received by 10 Contracting Parties (document TPVS/Files (2010) 12).

- **Recommendation No. 144 (2009) of the Standing Committee, on the wind park in Smøla (Norway) and other wind farm developments in Norway**

At its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting the Standing Committee decided not to open a case file following a complaint lodged in 2001, concerning the establishment of two wind farm complexes in the Archipelago of

Smøla, in an area of importance for the nesting of White-tailed Eagles and other species. The Standing Committee adopted Recommendation No. 144 (2009) on the wind park in Smøla (Norway) and asked the government of Norway to report on its implementation at the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

#### **4. DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE 30<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE – DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2011**

The Bureau examined the draft agenda and draft Programme of Activities of the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee as tabled by the Secretariat, and made a number of amendments before approving them. The Bureau welcomed the narrative description of the goals to be pursued through the Programme of Activities and asked the Secretariat to always provide tentative dates for the activities foreseen.

#### **5. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVENTION**

##### **5.1 Biodiversity day at the Council of Europe**

The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the outcomes of the “Biodiversity day”, jointly organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional authorities, and the Conference of International NGOs. The meeting produced the Declaration “Working together for Biodiversity”. By signing this Declaration the three bodies have committed themselves to pursuing their action at pan-European level to improve biodiversity, protect natural areas and fight against climate change. They particularly called on governments to recognise the right to a healthy environment as an integral part of human rights. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the main Conventions and Agreement in the field of biodiversity protection, including the Chair of the Bern Convention’s Standing Committee, Mr Jón Gunnar Ottósson, who presented the main characteristics and activities of the Bern Convention.

##### **5.2 Reform process at the Council of Europe**

The Secretariat recalled that this item was discussed prior to the adoption of the agenda, under item 1.

#### **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None were raised

The next meeting will be held in Strasbourg. The tentative date is 11 April 2011.

The Chair thanked the participants and declared the meeting closed.



## APPENDIX 1

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

#### Standing Committee

#### **Bureau meeting**

Strasbourg, 13 September 2010  
(Room 16, opening: 9:30 am)

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#### AGENDA

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
2. **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2010 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES**
  - 2.1 **Protected areas and Ecological networks**
  - 2.2 **Biodiversity and Climate Change: adoption of the opinion to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1918 (2010) - "Biodiversity and climate change"**
  - 2.3 **Large Carnivores**
  - 2.4 **Invasive Alien Species**
  - 2.5 **Island Biodiversity**
  - 2.6 **European Charter on Angling & Biodiversity**
  - 2.7 **The application of Article 9 of the Convention: legal report on conditions for exceptions**
3. **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION : FILES**
  - 3.1 **Specific Sites - Files open**
    - Ukraine: Proposed navigable waterway in the Bystroe Estuary (Danube delta)
    - Cyprus: Akamas peninsula
    - Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica
    - France: Habitats for the survival of the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) in Alsace
    - Italy: Eradication and trade of the American Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
  - 3.2 **Possible files**
    - France: Protection of the European Green Toad (*Bufo viridis*) in Alsace
    - Sweden: Natterjack (*Bufo calamita*) population on the coastal island of Smögen
  - 3.3 **On-the-spot appraisal**
    - France: Impacts on the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) of a waste management plan and a housing project in the Var region

### **3.4 Complaints in stand-by**

- Italy: Wind farm threat to wildlife in Alta Maremma, Grosseto
- France: Black Grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) in Drôme and Isère
- Morocco: Ecological impacts of a tourism centre in Saïdia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Threats to Vjetrenica cave

### **3.5 Other complaints**

- Ukraine: Afforestation of steppic habitats
- Norway: Conservation of wolves, brown bears, wolverines and lynxes

### **3.6 Complaint received by the Secretariat (since the last Bureau meeting)**

- Ukraine: threat to natural habitats and species in Dniester River Delta

### **3.7 Follow-up of previous Recommendations**

- Recommendation No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey
- Recommendation No. 98 (2002) on the project to build a motorway through the Kresna Gorge (Bulgaria)
- Recommendation No.113 (2004) on military antenna in the Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri (Cyprus)
- Recommendation No. 110 (2004) on minimising adverse effects of above-ground electricity transmission facilities (power lines) on birds
- Recommendation No. 137 (2008) on population level management of large carnivore populations
- Recommendation No. 144 (2009) on the wind park in Smøla (Norway) and other wind farm developments in Norway

## **4. DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE 30<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE – DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2011**

## **5. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVENTION**

### **5.1 Biodiversity day at Council of Europe**

### **5.2 Reform process at Council of Europe**

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

## APPENDIX 2

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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