

Strasbourg, 13 April 2010
[tpvs03e_2010.doc]

T-PVS (2010) 3

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

Meeting of the Bureau

Strasbourg, 29 March 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 29 March 2010 and welcomed the other Bureau members, Mr Silviu Megan and Mr. Olivier Biber, as well as the representatives of the Secretariat.

The Head of the Biological Diversity Unit, Mr Fernández-Galiano, informed the Bureau that the Secretary of the Convention, Ms Carolina Lasen Diaz has moved to another Council of Europe job and that her functions had been taken by Ms Ivana d'Alessandro on a provisional basis. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to convey to Ms Lasen the gratitude of the Committee for the excellent and very professional work done by her during the four years she had been Secretary of the 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, outlining those aspects which will have an impact on the Bern Convention's activities.

The Secretariat highlighted that the reform aims to revitalise the Council of Europe as a political body as well as an innovative organisation, and that this would mean to concentrate on few but effective activities built around the three main Council of Europe pillars: Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. The reform will also have an impact on the staff policy as it will develop a flexible organisation, although more visible and relevant for the citizens of Europe.

The Bern Convention still belongs to the pillar of Democracy and is subject, as it is the case for most Council of Europe Conventions, to progressive cuts in the budget. The Secretariat suggested that one of the possible ways for maintaining the Bern Convention operational independently from the Council of Europe budgetary savings' policy would be to ensure its financial sustainability. This could be done either through the opening of a Partial agreement, associating the Bern Convention to other Council of Europe Treaties in the field of fauna protection, or through the creation of a trust fund, to which the Contracting Party should contribute.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for this information and asked to be kept informed on the state of progress of the reform, as well as on possible ways to officially recall the need for a human rights approach to environmental issues. Furthermore, the Bureau decided to discuss the possibility of the direct financial support of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention at next Standing Committee meeting. Finally, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to organise a meeting between its Chair, Mr. Jon Gunnar Ottoson, and the Council of Europe Secretary General, possibly on 28 April, at the occasion of the celebration of the Biodiversity day and further to the Secretary General's presentation to the Committee of Ministers, on 21 April, of the priorities to be set out for 2011.

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 outlined progress on the work programme and the planned meetings for the first half of 2010, detailing two items, the report on the legal implementation of the Bern Convention in one Party, and the national workshop on invasive alien species in Armenia, which have been postponed due to major changes in the composition of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat informed of the success of the Madrid "Conference post 2010 vision and target", attended by nearly 500 people including two ministers and nine secretaries of State. The Conference had seen the presentation of a European Commission communication including options for a European Union biodiversity target for post 2010, had "chair conclusion" (Cibeles declaration) to guide European dialogue for CBD-COP10 and proposed action on conservation and management of European ecological networks.

The Secretariat further informed Bureau members on a number of meetings planned in the first half of the year and foreseen in the framework of the monitoring of species and conservation actions. A meeting on Large Carnivores in the Caucasus was to take place on 18 May 2010 in Tbilissi, in the

framework of the International Bear Association Conference. The Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change was to meet in Iceland from 21 to 23 June 2010 – Icelandic volcanoes permitting. The Group of Experts on European Island Biodiversity was to meet in Svalbard (Norway) from 26 to 29 July 2010. Concerning invasive alien species, a Conference on Invasive Alien Plants is foreseen to be held in Trabzon (Turkey) from 2 to 6 August 2010.

Furthermore, the Secretariat communicated the progress made in the drafting process of the European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity, and informed that a meeting of the ad hoc Working Group on the elaboration of a European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity is planned for 9 April 2010 to discuss a full draft Charter to be presented to the Standing Committee for adoption.

In addition, the Secretariat reported that an on-the-spot visit regarding the Hermann Tortoise in the Var region (France) will take place in June 2010, and that its results will be communicated at next Bureau meeting in September.

Finally, the Secretariat informed that the report of the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee has been published on the Biological Diversity Unit's website, and that a number of publications will be issued in 2010 (six reports related to biodiversity and climate change, three reports and guidance developed under the Bern Convention, the Report on the implementation of the Bern Convention in Slovenia, and the Emerald Network information brochure).

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

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: 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.

The first phase of the project was conducted in 2004.

In 2004, the Standing Committee adopted Recommendation No.111 (2004) on the proposed navigable waterway through the Bystroe estuary (Danube Delta), inviting Ukraine to suspend works, except for the completion of phase 1, and not to proceed with phase 2 of the project until certain conditions were met.

In 2008, an on-the-spot appraisal visit was carried out, including the participation of representatives from the Secretariats of the Espoo and Ramsar Conventions, the European Commission, and UNESCO. The main conclusion of the visit was that there had been no major changes on the ground since 2004 and that the monitoring had not been as performing as required and that there were still important concerns in respect to the possible environmental impacts of phase I of the project. A full EIA was not yet available.

In March 2009, the Ukrainian authorities reported to the Secretariat confirming the repeal of the Final Decision regarding Phase II of the Project, in line with Recommendation 111 (2004) of Bern Convention. The report also confirmed that "the works on the Phase II never started and are not going to start until the appropriate procedures are being implemented".

At the 2009 meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of Ukraine outlined the measures taken by his government, including the initiative to collaborate with the International Commission on the Protection of the Danube River regarding research and monitoring of the transboundary part of the Danube Delta. The Standing Committee welcomed the positive co-operation underway between Ukraine and Romania, but it agreed to keep the case file open and asked Ukraine to continue to report to in 2010.

No new information has been received from the Ukrainian government in 2010. However, 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.

The Bureau took note of this information and asked the Secretariat to contact Ukrainian authorities to request more information on the state of progress of the Bystroe Channel project, as well as on the EIA study and negotiations with the Romanian government. The Bureau will examine the information eventually received at the next Bureau meeting.

- 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.

This case was first discussed at the 16th meeting of the Standing Committee in 1996. Two on-the-spot appraisals were carried out in 1997 and 2002 and a recommendation adopted in 1997 (Recommendation No. 63 (1997) on the conservation of the Akamas peninsula in Cyprus and, in particular, of the nesting beaches of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*).

In 2008, the Standing Committee asked Cyprus to send the management plan as soon as it would be ready, and wished that the area of Limni would also get adequate protection. The Committee asked Cyprus to fully implement Recommendation No. 63 (1997); to create a National Park and ensure the maintenance of the ecological integrity of the area; as well as to apply the ecosystem approach to the Akamas peninsula, including Limni.

At the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of Cyprus informed that there had been no great changes since the previous year.

In March 2010 the European Union confirmed to the Secretariat that the European Commission continues considering that the area of Akamas requires appropriate designation and protection under both the Habitats and Birds Directives. In particular, the area is covered under the infringement case initiated against Cyprus for insufficient designation of Special Protection Areas pursuant to the Birds Directive (the Commission issued on 20.11.2009 a Reasoned Opinion in accordance with Article 226 - currently 258 - of the Treaty). According to latest information sent by the National authorities to the European Union the designation of the site under both directives is imminent. Once the site will be formally designated and related data properly transmitted to the European Union, the European Commission will assess the adequacy of its boundaries, taking fully into account the ornithological value of the site on the basis of the inventory of Important Bird Areas as well as the commitments made by Cyprus following the Mediterranean Biogeographical seminar towards filling identified gaps.

The Bureau took note of this information and asked the Secretariat to request to Cyprus authorities to report on the issue as well as to send the management plan foreseen for the area. The case will be discussed at next Bureau meeting.

- 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.

An on-the-spot visit was carried out in September 2005, on the basis of which the Committee adopted Recommendation No. 117 (2005), asking the Bulgarian government to reconsider its decision to approve the proposed wind farm in Balchik in view of its potential negative impact on wildlife and taking account of Bulgaria's obligations under the Convention.

In 2006, the Bulgarian government informed the Secretariat that it did not intend to review the decision approving the wind farm project. The Secretariat received information from NGOs on a similar case involving plans to build 129 windmills 20 kms away from Balchik, between the town of Kavarna and the Kaliakra Cape.

A new on-the-spot appraisal was carried out on 20-22 June 2007. On the basis of the expert's conclusions the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee adopted Recommendation No. 130 (2007)

“on the windfarms planned near Balchik and Kaliakra, and other wind farm developments on the Via Pontica route (Bulgaria)”.

In June 2008, the European Commission opened an infringement procedure against Bulgaria because of insufficient designation of 6 sites as SPAs under the Bird Directive, one of which is the Kaliakra IBA.

At the 2009 meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of Bulgaria reported that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Bulgaria's Energy Strategy and National Plan for Renewable Energy Sources had been initiated and that they aimed to identify hot spots and provide the necessary recommendations so that future projects for renewable energy take into account existing Recommendations of the Standing Committee. They were also considering the option of a moratorium. The Committee decided to keep the case file open and continue to follow it up in close co-operation with the European Commission.

The delegate of the European Commission informed the Committee about a fact-finding mission carried out in June 2009 in an area designated as an SPA, but where many development projects had been authorised before the designation. The European Commission was assessing the impacts of other windfarm projects in the region, apparently without proper EIAs nor assessment of cumulative impacts. They had reviewed 23 EIA screening decisions concerning 34 wind farm projects (including 21 decisions to install 219 generators).

The Bulgarian government sent in March 2010 the following information:

The Ministry of Environment and Water has given a negative evaluation of the quality of the Environmental Compatibility Assessment Report according to the Article 6(3) of Habitat Directive concerning:

- “Energy Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2020” and has returned it with concrete recommendations for addition and revision back to the investor – the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism.
- the General Development Plan of municipality of Shabla and has returned it back to the investor – with concrete recommendations for addition and revision.

Furthermore Bulgarian authorities have taken measures concerning the preventive protection of NATURA 2000 sites.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the European Commission apart from the initiated infringement procedure is also using other means of monitoring to limit the impact of the large number of permitted projects. It also held several meetings with the Bulgarian authorities to discuss the preparation of national renewable energy action plan.

The Bureau took note of the information provided by both the government and the European Commission, and asked the Secretariat to look for the European Union's decision. The case will be examined again at next Bureau meeting.

- 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.

At the Standing Committee in November 2007, the French delegation presented the range of measures taken, including a restoration scheme approved by the *Conseil national de la protection de la nature* (National Nature Conservation Board).

The Standing Committee decided to open a case-file, not calling into question the efforts already made by the authorities, but wanting to highlight the urgent need for action in the field.

In June 2008, the European Commission sent to France a final written warning for failing to implement proper measures to safeguard the great hamster of Alsace.

Considering that the population is still under threat, the European Commission brought the case before the European Court of Justice in June 2009.

In September 2009, the French authorities reported on the measures taken for the great hamster within the framework of the restoration plan for 2007-2011, including the following issues:

- The results of countings in 2009: with cumulative observations in 2008-2009 reaching 670 burrows.
- The reinforcement of the wild populations: three breedings; 150 hamsters released in 2009; agreement with the *CNRS*; a genetic study showing no differences in genetic structure).
- A project to set up a European scientific committee.
- Actions on key factors affecting the species: agriculture; regional town planning; transport

At the 29th Standing Committee meeting, the delegate of France reported on the recent results of the measures taken within the framework of the restoration plan, including the positive attitude of farmers towards the proposals of contracts; the control of infringements, with the launching of a specific plan; and actions undertaken to give statutory value to the whole mechanism.

The delegate of the European Commission reported on the conclusions of the meeting held in June with the French authorities, including that agri-environmental schemes remain insufficient despite the progress made. The representative of the *Association Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage* felt that the situation is still very worrying as 387 burrows were not covered by biotope protection agreements in 2009.

The Committee decided to keep the case file open and continue to follow it up in close co-operation with the European Commission.

No new information has been received from the French government in 2010.

The Bureau requested the Secretariat to write to the French authorities asking them to send a report before the next Bureau meeting. It also instructed the Secretariat to follow the Court case.

- **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 and decided that a new Recommendation was not necessary. Instead it asked the Secretariat to communicate a list of actions to the Italian government.

In September 2009, the Italian government reported on progress to finalise the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the regions concerned, and the preparation of a LIFE+ project on: "Eradication and control of grey squirrel: actions for preservation of biodiversity in forest ecosystems", with the involvement of the three regions (Lombardia, Piemonte and Liguria), and the Ministry of Environment. Regarding the decree to ban the trade and keeping of American grey squirrel which will cover the whole national territory, the final text was agreed in late July 2009, and it will shortly be examined by the legal offices of the three Ministries involved (Agriculture & Forestry; International Trade; and Public Health).

At the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of Italy announced that the Ministry of Environment was fully committed to implementing Recommendation No. 123 and therefore had concluded a MoU in August 2009 with the three regions involved and two research institutions. A number of activities had been planned, including control of the species, monitoring of Grey and Red

squirrels, and awareness campaigns. The Ministry was preparing a decree to prohibit the trading and keeping of the Grey squirrel.

The Committee took note of the information presented and welcomed progress in the conclusion of a MoU among all the actors involved in the control of the species, as well as plans to pass legislation banning trade on the species. However, it considered that there had been no action on the ground nor legislation approved, so it decided to keep the case file open, asking Italy to fully implement Recommendation No. 123 (2007).

No new information has been received from the Italian government in 2010.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to contact Italian authorities for getting a copy of the decree and of the Memorandum of cooperation.

3.2 Possible file and on-the-spot appraisal

- 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.

In March 2009, the French authorities reported that the national restoration plan for the Green toad was under development, and would follow up on the regional restoration plan for the Green toad and the Common spadefoot launched in Lorraine in 2007. A Sub-Committee of national and European experts, and a Validation Committee, were being set up under the national action plan for the Green toad. Once the plan is validated by the *Conseil National de Protection de la Nature*, specific actions will be undertaken from 2010.

At the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee, the delegate of France informed about the National Action Plan (2009 was the year of its preparation, while 2010 will be the year of concertation), which will pay special attention to awareness raising. In addition, further information was provided regarding the revision of the POS of Entzheim, in order to facilitate the installation of economic activities, and the construction of a new road connecting Ostwald/Illkirch-Graffenstaden, which is at a very early stage.

The representative of the Association *Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage* stressed that the situation is highly critical for the Green toad, as out of seven sites of reproduction in the Haut-Rhin only one remains, showing that the viable population has been decimated. He asked for the opening of a file.

The Standing Committee considered the very limited progress achieved and decided to treat this complaint as a "possible case file" at its next meeting in 2010.

No new information has been received from the French government in 2010. It seems that the Action Plan is not yet finalised.

The Secretariat got information from the NGO Bufo which has drawn again attention to the pressure of urbanisation and road projects liable to damage the green toad populations.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to contact the French authorities for an updated report before the next Bureau meeting.

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

In December 2007 the Secretariat received informations 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".

No new information has been received from the Swedish government in 2010.

The Bureau decided to wait for the decision and reconsider the issue at the next meeting.

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)**

The Secretariat recalled the decision of the Standing Committee to organise an on-the-spot appraisal, which was agreed by France.

The purpose is to study the 2 projects and analyse the impacts on the Hermann tortoise

The visit will take place in June; the dates still need to be confirmed. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the national actions plan for this species has been published and is available on the Ministry website.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to report at next Bureau meeting, as well as to check if the Action Plan is a legally binding document or just a compilation of guidelines.

3.4 Complaints in stand-by

- **Croatia: Lošinj Dolphin Reserve (*Tursiops truncatus*)**

In June 2008, Croatian NGOs wrote to the Secretariat expressing their concern about the announcement by the Ministry of Culture about the possibility of downgrading the protection for the Lošinj Dolphin Reserve, from special reserve to regional park, which they believed would violate Croatia's international obligations as well as allow projects impacting on the habitat of the bottlenose dolphin, in particular the proposed construction of a marina inside the reserve.

In 2008, the Croatian authorities reported that the situation with the marine reserve was very complex, as the site was "preliminary protected in the category of marine reserve" for a period of three years.

In 2009 they informed the Secretariat that the area will be protected as a regional park.

In February 2010, the Croatian authorities have informed that the category of Regional Park under the Croatian Nature Protection Act is equivalent to IUCN category V of protected areas, which allows for limited economic use of natural resources. However, all natural values, including the species and habitats for which the regional park was set up originally, have to remain preserved. The proposed conservation measures considered are based on the recommendations and data received from relevant scientific bodies and organisations (eg. the Blue World Institute and ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee).

Both the Ministry of Culture and the State Institute for Nature Protection are of the opinion that if all of the precautionary measures that the Study for permanent proclamation predicts for are met, the adequate conservation of both the bottlenose dolphin and its habitat in the Cres – Lošinj area will be achieved. The conservation measures proposed will be included in the Management Plan of the Cres-Lošinj Archipelago Regional Park, which will be prepared after the formal proclamation.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and considered that there is no violation of the Bern Convention as there is no legal provision condemning the downgrading of the status of protection, if the long term survival of the species is granted.

The Bureau decided to take this case off from the list of the complaints in stand-by.

- UK: Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

In July 2008, the association Aberdeen Greenbelt Alliance wrote to the Secretariat regarding a planned trunk road project of 40 kms around the city of Aberdeen, which had not been subject to a proper Environmental Impact Assessment and which would affect several strictly protected species. The plans for this road included a crossing of the River Dee, a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. The River Dee is considered one of the best areas in the UK for the following species: the freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*).

In August 2009, the UK government reported that Transport Scotland, the competent authority, had informed that “no decision on this project has yet been taken”. Transport Scotland referred to the advice given to them by Scottish Natural Heritage in August 2008, according to which: “provided the proposals are undertaken in accordance with the proposed conditions/legal modifications, the proposed road would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Dee SAC”.

The Secretariat of EUROBATS reported that “from a bat conservation perspective the complaint is furthermore not substantiated”.

In February 2010, the UK authorities reported that the Scottish Ministers have decided to proceed with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), subject to a number of detailed modifications to the published draft Schemes and Orders, which are now in the Scottish Parliament. Work on the AWPR will not start until the Parliamentary process and the statutory procedures are completed. The Scottish Ministers are satisfied that the remit of the inquiry was appropriate, and that the biodiversity issues were addressed through an appropriate assessment, endorsed by Scottish Natural Heritage.

The NGO has responded that the Scottish authorities have “ignored the consideration of alternative routes” that might cause less damage, limiting their consideration of environmental issues to mitigation measures. The different solutions that were considered lied all within a narrow corridor of between 100 to 400 metres, which does not alter the impact of the project on the environment and on protected species. Regarding protected species, the Scottish Ministers have stated that “the promoters will have to ensure, prior to commencing any operations, that they have in place the necessary statutory consents or licences that are required under domestic legislation”. According to the NGO, this means “the issuing of licenses to disturb or kill strictly protected species by the licensing authority Scottish National Heritage”.

The Bureau considered that this complaint is not substantiated and the area concerned is not of real European interest. It noted that no objections coming from the main environmental NGOs were received. Therefore it decided not to pursue the complaint.

- 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 Trasubbie 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.

- **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 sent a complaint to the European Commission.

A letter was sent to the French government but no reply had been received.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to contact again the French government asking for further information to be sent before the next Bureau meeting.

- **UK: Planned culling of Badgers (*Meles meles*) in Wales**

In November 2009, a complaint was received from the NGO ‘Badger Trust UK’ concerning a possible breach of the Bern Convention related to the planned culling of Badgers (*Meles meles*) in Wales. The NGO was concerned about the “Tuberculosis Eradication Plan submitted by Great Britain to the European Commission, which includes the culling of *Meles meles* in Wales, in contravention of Articles 7, 8 and 9 of the Bern Convention”.

The NGO further reported that “A tender for 6000 traps and 100 handling/shooting cages was submitted on 15th October 2009, open till 1st December 2009 (with details on the Welsh Assembly website), which represents a sufficient number of traps to kill all badgers in Wales over a period of

five years, if the Welsh Assembly so wished". They added that the EC approved the UK Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Plan on 30th September 2009 and that they wished to challenge its legality, as well as the EC's approval, as it includes the destruction of the European protected mammal *Meles meles*, which in their opinion contravenes the Bern Convention. They further informed us that a complaint was being lodged in the EC.

The complainant clarified that England and Northern Ireland have rejected a badger cull, and that this is not an issue in Scotland - as they are TB free- while the Republic of Ireland has now put in place a withdrawal badger culling procedure, leaving Wales alone in its submission of a TB Eradication Plan that contains a badger cull.

Following information was provided in March 2010 by the Government:

- A copy of the Eradication Plan which was submitted to the European Commission in September 2009 was sent to the Secretariat. The Eradication Plan outlines the measures the UK is taking to control the spread of, and progressively eradicate, bovine TB. The Plan has subsequently been approved by the European Commission, although it has not been formally published as yet.
- Welsh Ministers decided that a wildlife strategy is necessary to address the significant reservoir of disease that exists in the badger population. The Tuberculosis Eradication (Wales) Order 2009 provides the legislative powers for a (Wales) government managed wildlife strategy, which includes both culling and vaccination. WAG is satisfied that there is compelling evidence to demonstrate that a cull of badgers can, if managed effectively, provide significant benefits in reduced cattle herd breakdowns and is therefore an appropriate and proportionate response.
- On 13 January 2010 the Welsh Minister for Rural Affairs announced the establishment of a pilot area in a TB endemic area of Wales where a government-managed badger cull will be undertaken.
- In addition, WAG is actively looking at how they could use badger vaccination in Wales to best effect.
- WAG is of the view that the provisions of the Bern Convention have been fully respected in considering the proposed badger cull.

According to the government, Recommendation No. 69 was specific to the circumstances at that particular time (i.e. the culling of badgers in the UK in 1998) and does not apply directly to the current situation.

The Bureau decides to take the case off from the list of the complaints in stand-by, referring to the decision taken some years ago by the Standing Committee in a similar context (UK).

- 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. The organisation denounced the mega-project "New tourist site in Saïdia", part of the country's 'Blue plan' for the strategic development of the tourism industry. They claimed that this project was developed without prior environmental impact studies and that the infrastructures planned (roads, canals, water treatment plants) will damage the Ramsar site of Moulouya, very important for migratory bird species and hosting two thirds of the total bird species known in Morocco. The organisation had submitted a complaint to the public prosecutor at the Court of first instance of Berkane in 2006, without follow-up so far. They also organised a petition to safeguard the Moulouya site, which was signed by 680 people.

The authorities from Morocco have informed the Secretariat that their project, which is a part of the strategic priorities of the region's development, has been initiated, encouraged and accepted by the Government. An agreement was signed for the first setting-up of the project between the Government of Morocco and the developer ("Fadesa Group"). It covers an area of 7 naces and a waterfront of 6 km of beach and is located outside the boundaries of the Ramsar site. The touristic development of this area is not inconsistent with the aims of conservation and the bio ecological and fragility of the site are

taken into account. The authorities have underlined that the studies carried out within the project MedWet Coast are of unquestionable reference.

The Secretariat has shared information with Ramsar Convention, which is organising a field visit, scheduled on 5-9 April 2010 and has proposed to the Secretariat to take part in the visit.

The Bureau welcomed this good example of synergies between the conventions concerned, asked the Secretariat to continue co-ordinating with Ramsar Convention and to inform about the findings of the field visit 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 cave has almost 100 cave animal species; and more than half are very endemic ones. Vjetrenica cave is protected as a nature monument (1950), and 1981 the country’s spatial plan placed it as a nature reserve. The NGO reported a number of threats to this area.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and as Bosnia and Herzegovina has just become a Contracting Party to the Convention, it agreed to discuss this issue in 2010, once the authorities had had the time to get acquainted with the Convention’s systems and procedures.

In August 2009, the NGO reported that because of its value, Vjetrenica had entered the process to be considered as a National Monument. They further reported that the IUCN Working Group on cave and karst protection had recommended that the Vjetrenica cave be declared as a national park.

No new information is available since then.

The Bureau asked the secretariat to write to both the NGO and the Bosnian government for further information, and to report at next Bureau meeting.

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 afforestation 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.

- 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 neighbour 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 7th 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.

No information has been received from the Norwegian government so far.

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

4. THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 9.1 OF THE CONVENTION

- Turkey: Capture of Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*)

At the 26th Standing Committee meeting, the delegate of Monaco informed of a complaint received from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) about a project envisaged by Turkey whereby 30 bottlenose dolphins would be captured in the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Bottlenose dolphins are protected not only by the Bern Convention, but also by the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention), the Habitats Directive and the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

In 2007, the Turkish authorities confirmed that the catching of dolphins in Turkey has been “totally prohibited” since 1983 but “in the last years there have been major investments in the country for using dolphins in the therapy of mentally or physically handicapped or in marina parks”. They informed that 23 dolphins had been captured out of a population estimated in many thousands; that no more dolphins would be captured, and that none of them were intended for export but to therapy with children.

The Standing Committee regretted the exception and requested Turkey to produce population data very fast so the Bureau could re-examine the case.

In 2008, the Turkish authorities informed WDCS that a project would be initiated later in the year to “monitor the effects of catching 23 individuals of the main population”,

In March 2009, the Turkish authorities informed the Secretariat that a “pre-evaluation study was carried out by Istanbul University – Dpt. of Fisheries, under the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs”.

The delegate of Turkey provided information on the sightings of the species in 2008 (12) and in the summer of 2009 (11) but recognised that there is a lack of complete information. Additional information was gathered in the population survey conducted in 2006 by Istanbul University.

At the 29th the Standing Committee meeting the delegate of Monaco expressed his strong disappointment at this capture, in contravention of several international conventions, as cetaceans are one of the most protected groups in the Mediterranean and for which no deliberate captures are carried out. He questioned the merits of the therapy using dolphins and considered that it has little credibility. He further underlined the conditions to use the exceptions of Article 9.1 of the Convention, which requires a lack of alternatives, and asked the Turkish authorities for the basis on which they estimate population numbers. He proposed the opening of a case file or a on-the-spot appraisal to verify the motivation behind this capture, and raised the moral and ecological arguments on this issue.

The delegate of Switzerland supported Monaco on the need to review the interpretation of Article 9 and asked the Bureau to take this issue up at its next meeting, including the consideration of the interpretation of the condition that there is “no other satisfactory solution”. He further asked Turkey to report at next year’s meeting on the conditions for applying Article 9.1 and the use given to the capture dolphins.

The Committee asked Turkey to report in 2010 on the specific use given to the captured animals. It further asked the Bureau to discuss at its first meeting in 2010 the application of Article 9.1 of the Convention.

After analysing the available information, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare a short compilation of the past 6 years case files (or bi-annual reports?) where article 9 has been applied, in view of determining if the restrictions foreseen are broad and clear enough to be considered sufficient. If the results of this analysis will leave some questions opened, the Bureau could consider to create an ad hoc working group to elaborate interpretation guidelines for both article 8 and 9.

In this context the Secretariat recalled the Resolution n°2 (1993) on the scope of Articles 8 and 9 of the Bern Convention. The Bureau decided to discuss interpretation of the conditions for exception of article 9 at its next meeting.

5. CONSERVATION OF HABITATS: SETTING UP OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS

5.1 Progress on the Emerald Network

The Secretariat gave a brief progress report on the implementation of the Emerald Network and informed that the meeting of the Group of Experts is scheduled to take place on 14-15 September 2010. The meeting will run over two days, with an afternoon devoted to a forum of discussion on the Pan-European Ecological Network.

In addition, the Secretariat communicated that the Environment Committee of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly is preparing a report entitled “Need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention”, and that in this framework it requested a meeting between the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Lotman, and the Secretariat, as well as the International consultant for the Emerald projects, Mr. Roekaerts. The meeting is scheduled on 27 April 2010 and will focus on the effective implementation of the Emerald Network.

The Secretariat also presented the first results of the Council of Europe / European Union programme aiming at the identification of the building elements of the “Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest” under the Bern Convention in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (ENPI countries).

The Secretariat informed that the data resulted from the previous Emerald pilot projects have been revised and quality checked, and that as a result of the first implementation year, all countries have produced data on a fair number of potential Emerald sites. The national teams have also identified and gathered distribution data on a satisfactory proportion of birds, species and habitats, among those listed in Annex I and II of the Bern Convention, in the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and in Resolutions 4 and 6 of the Bern Convention. Furthermore, the Secretariat highlighted that the targets set for the second implementation phase are higher than those fixed for 2009, and will certainly require additional efforts, more concretely on population data for species and habitats at national level, on GIS distribution data for species and habitats and for enhancing the tools to support data-flows and their registration in an automatic system like the Common Data Repository (CDR).

The Secretariat further outlined two major outcomes of this project:

- The Emerald software has been adapted to include all the Species and Habitats listed in the EU Directives following their amendments, in order to harmonise as much as possible the systems of networks;
- The countries targeted by the ENPI joint project have already registered about 2000 records concerning around 750 species and habitats which they consider of high conservation interest, although these are not mentioned in the Bern Convention's Resolutions. This may raise in future the question of updating the Bern Convention's lists.

Finally, the Secretariat informed the Bureau on the work-plan foreseen for this project in 2010.

The Bureau welcomed these information and asked the Secretariat to keep it informed of future developments. It also stressed the interest of fostering the synergies initiated in Madrid, thanks to the conference "Post-2010 Biodiversity Vision and Target: the role of protected areas and ecological networks in Europe", and asked the Secretariat to invite other Conventions, as well as any other main stakeholder to attend the meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

5.2 Co-operation with the EEA

The Secretariat informed that a co-ordination meeting between the Council of Europe and the European Environment Agency (EEA) was held at the ETC-BD's premises in Paris, on 18 March 2010. The meeting aimed at implementing the Memorandum of Co-operation between the two institutions following a three-year planning. Three main topics were discussed:

- Update of the Interpretation Manual (dated 2001) for Resolution n° 4 Habitats: subject to the Bureau approval, the Council of Europe will request and collect, by 30 November 2010, comments to/from all non-EU Contracting Parties, so as to insert them in the existing version of the Manual by 30 June 2011. The EEA, through the ETC-BD, will assess the scientific value of the comments received and publish a joint final updated version.
- ETC assistance in carrying out the scientific assessment of the Emerald proposed sites: three sets of countries were identified:
 - a. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland: for these countries the EEA has a direct mandate and could do the assessment upon simple request from the National Governments. The Council of Europe will alert its focal point and encourage them to address this request;
 - b. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (CARDS project's data): the Council of Europe and the EEA will jointly organise two biogeographical seminars. The first one is scheduled to take place on 23-24 November 2010 in Strasbourg and will aim at completing the existing database as well as to set-up the guidelines for future work; and the second one will be held in 2011 to conduct the proper assessment.
 - c. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (ENPI East Emerald Project): the assessment of the scientific data collected through the current joint programme should be discussed at a later stage.

The Secretariat further informed that a new biogeographical regions' map, including the 47 CoE member States should be produced by December 2011, and that measures have been already taken to keep the species coding system compatible with EUNIS and Natura 2000.

Among the major outcomes of the meeting, it should be primarily stressed that there is a need to raise the political commitment of Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Emerald Network, in order to meet the 2020 deadline for completing the network and giving it the supranational character which is now missing; secondly it is important to align the Council of Europe (Emerald) and the EU (Natura 2000) methodologies, and ensure that the assessment of the Emerald proposed sites is done in compliance with Natura 2000 criteria. This will avoid duplication of work in case of new accessions to the EU.

The Bureau took note of the information provided and asked the Secretariat to write letters inviting non-EU Contracting Parties to provide comments for the update of the Interpretation Manual for Resolution n° 4 Habitats. It further stressed that no official document has been adopted by the Standing Committee on the criteria for the scientific assessment of the proposed Emerald sites. This issue should be raised at next meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

6. EUROPEAN DIPLOMA OF PROTECTED AREAS

6.1 Report from the meeting of the Group of Specialists

The Secretariat informed of the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma held in Strasbourg on 4-5 March 2010. The main outcome of the meeting was the agreement on 18 draft resolutions for renewals of European Diplomas to the following areas: Réserve nationale de la biosphère d'Oka, Réserve nationale de la biosphère de Teberda, Parc régional de Migliarino, San Rossore et Massaciuccoli, Paysage naturel protégé des Bilé Karpaty, Réserve naturelle nationale de Karlštejn, Parc national de Podyjí, Réserve nationale de la biosphère de Berezinsky, Parc national de Berchtesgaden, Réserve naturelle de Weerribben, Réserve naturelle du Boschplaat, Zone panoramique de Fair Isle, Réserve naturelle de Scandola, Réserve naturelle intégrale de Sasso Fratino, Parc national des Ecrins, Parc national de Doñana, Zone de protection de la nature d'Ipolytarnóc, Zone de protection des collines de Szénás, Réserve de la biosphère du delta du Danube, . The Secretariat further informed that the Group of Specialists has examined the application file presented by the Czech Government for the Sumava National Park and recommended that an on-the-spot appraisal is organised.

Concerning the application presented by the Dutch authorities for the De Wieden Nature Reserve which has been included in the Weerribben Nature Reserve (a site which is already a European Diploma site) the Group felt that there is no ground for awarding two separate diplomas.

The Group of Specialists also re-examined the non-renewals for Belarus and Poland; the management plan of the Bialowieza national park should be finalised by the end of 2010; concerning the Belovezhskaya Pushcha the Group was informed of the findings of the peer-review of the management plan. It acknowledged the importance of concerted action with the other Conventions/programmes concerned and was in favour of a joint visit with Unesco representatives in 2011, with a view of analysing the content of the management plan of the Polish Park and the implementation of those of the Belarussian Park.

In addition, the Group decided to carry out six appraisal visits in 2010.

6.2 Draft renewals in 2010 (to be presented to the Committee of Ministers)

The Bureau took note of the information provided by the Secretariat. Due to the short delay between the European Diploma and Bureau meetings it requested 4 weeks to analyse the draft Resolutions and send possible comments.

It suggested that the first Bureau meeting should be organised in April every year to give its members enough time to analyse the draft Resolutions before they are sent to the Committee of Ministers for final adoption.

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) of the Standing Committee, on the wind park in Smøla (Norway) and other wind farm developments in Norway

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that no new information has been received on this item. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to contact the concerned governments and to ask for updated reports to be discussed at the next Bureau meeting.

8. ILLEGAL KILLINGS OF BIRDS

At its last meeting the Standing Committee expressed its concerns for the continuation of illegal killing and more widely illegal capture of birds in Mediterranean countries. It **requested** the Bureau to organise a discussion on this issue and make proposals.

The Secretariat proposed to organise in 2011 a Conference in Cyprus on this topic in cooperation with Birdlife (NABU) and FACE with the aim of preparing specific recommendations to the states.

The Bureau agreed with this proposal.

9. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVENTION

9.1 Cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions

9.2 Signature of the MoC agreed with IUCN in 2009

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that no new information is available on the implementation of the MoC with the CBD Secretariat.

9.3 International Year of Biodiversity

The Secretariat informed of a request from the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe to support the Draft Declaration “Working together for Biodiversity”, to be adopted by the Conference of INGO at the occasion of the European Biodiversity Day, on 28 April 2010. The key messages of the Draft Declaration were reminded.

The Bureau decided to support the document although it asked the Secretariat to stress the need to further develop the links between the loss of biodiversity and desertification and climate change, as well as to support the interpretation of the concept of biodiversity conservation in the broader sense of ecological functions of ecosystems which are essential to the survival of human kind, sustainable development and maintenance of peace.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None were raised

The next meeting will be held in Strasbourg on 13 September 2010.

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, 29 March 2010
(Room 17, opening: 9:30 am)

DRAFT AGENDA

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2010 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

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 plant and a housing project in the Var region

3.4 Complaints in stand-by

- Croatia: Lošinj Dolphin Reserve (*Tursiops truncatus*)
- UK: Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- Italy: Wind farm threat to wildlife in Alta Maremma, Grosseto
- France: Black Grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) in Drôme and Isère
- UK: Planned culling of badgers (*Meles meles*) in Wales
- Morocco: Ecological impacts of a tourism centre in Saïdia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Threats to Vjetrenica cave

4. THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 9.1 OF THE CONVENTION

4.1 Turkey: Capture of Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*)

4.2 Consideration by the Bureau

5. CONSERVATION OF HABITATS: SETTING UP OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS

5.1 Progress on the Emerald Network

5.2 Co-operation with the EEA

6. EUROPEAN DIPLOMA OF PROTECTED AREAS

6.1 Report from the meeting of the Group of Specialists

6.2 Draft renewals in 2010 (to be presented to the Committee of Ministers)

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. 112 (2004) on hydro-electric dams at Kárahnjúkar and Nordlingaalda (Iceland)
- 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) of the Standing Committee, on the wind park in Smøla (Norway) and other wind farm developments in Norway

8. ILLEGAL KILLING OF BIRDS

9. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVENTION

9.1 Co-operation with other biodiversity-related conventions

9.2 Signature of the MoC agreed with IUCN in 2009

9.3 International Year of Biodiversity

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

APPENDIX 2**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE**

Mr Jan PLESNIK, Advisor in international co-operation, Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic, Nuselska 39, 14 000 PRAGUE 4
Tel +420 241 082 114. Fax +420 241 082 999. E-mail: jan.plesnik@nature.cz

[Apologised for absence / Excusé]

ICELAND / ISLANDE

Dr Jón Gunnar OTTÓSSON, Director General, Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Hlemmur 3, 125 REYKJAVIK
Tel: +354 590 0500. Fax: +354 590 0595. E-mail: jgo@ni.is

ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

Mr Silviu MEGAN, Director, Directorate of Nature Protection, Ministry of Environment, 12, Libertatii Blvd., district 5, BUCHAREST.
Tel: +40 745 592 881. Fax: +40 213163382. E-mail: silviu.megan@mmediu.ro or roxana.ionescu@mmediu.ro

SERBIA / SERBIE

Ms Snezana PROKIC, Focal point for Bern Convention, Adviser, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia, Omladinskih brigada 1. Str, SIV III, NEW BELGRADE, 11070
Tel: +381 11 31 31 569. Fax : +381 11 313 2459. E-mail: snezana.prokic@ekoplan.gov.rs

[Apologised for absence / Excusé]

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

Mr Olivier BIBER, Chef Biodiversité internationale, Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage (OFEV), CH-3003 BERNE
Tel : +41 31 323 06 63. Fax : +41 31 324 75 79. E-mail : olivier.biber@bafu.admin.ch

SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT

Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe, Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage / Direction de la Culture et du Patrimoine culturel et naturel, F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX, France

Tel : +33 3 88 41 20 00. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51

Mr Eladio FERNÁNDEZ-GALIANO, Head of the Biological Diversity Unit / Chef de l'Unité de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 22 59. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int

Ms Ivana d'ALESSANDRO, Administrator / Administrateur, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 90 2151 51. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : ivana.dalessandro@coe.int

Ms Françoise BAUER, Principal administrative assistant / Assistante administrative principale, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 22 64. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : francoise.bauer@coe.int

Ms Véronique de CUSSAC, Administrative assistant / Assistante administrative, Biological Diversity Unit / Unité de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 34 76 Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : veronique.decusac@coe.int

Ms Katarzyna KARWACKA, Administrative assistant / Assistante administrative, Biological Diversity Unit / Unité de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 43 34 Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : katarzyna.karwacka@coe.int

Ms Valentina MAURIELLO, Trainee / Stagiaire, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 20 00 Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : maria.blaziogannaki@coe.int