



Strasbourg, 19 September 2007
[tpvs17e_2007.doc]

T-PVS (2007) 17

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL
HABITATS

Standing Committee

Meeting of the Bureau

Strasbourg, 11 September 2007

MEETING REPORT

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

1. Adoption of the agenda

Mr Jón Gunnar Ottosson, Vice-Chair, opened the meeting on 11 September 2007 as the Chair of the Standing Committee had been delayed in her travel to Strasbourg. He welcomed the other Bureau member, Ms Ilona Jepsena, and the representatives of the Secretariat.

The draft agenda was adopted, as set out in appendix 1, after replacing agenda item 11 (Contribution of the Standing Committee to the implementation of the Warsaw Action Plan) with “Draft comments of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Recommendation 215 (2007) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on ‘Climate change: Approaches at local and regional level’) as the request from the Committee of Ministers has not been received yet.

The participants are listed in appendix 2.

2. General information

Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano, Head of the Biological Diversity Unit, mentioned that the Council of Europe is developing a medium-term strategy and that more information will be provided as this process and content gets clarified.

3. Implementation of the 2007 programme of activities

The representative of the Secretariat outlined progress on the work programme, including a brief summary of activities carried out since the last Bureau meeting in March (meeting of the Group of Experts on IAS in Iceland, and the new Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, in Strasbourg). Planned meetings and activities scheduled for the last quarter of 2007 were also outlined, including the meeting of a select committee from the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change to complete and finalise their work programme (London, 12th October 2007), and the meeting of the Group of Experts for the setting up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest, and the Committee of experts for the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (STRA-REP), in Strasbourg, on 18-19 October 2007.

In addition, the Secretariat informed about preparations for the 6th Ministerial Conference “An Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007), where the report “The Pan-European Ecological Network: Taking stock” will be officially presented.

The Secretariat provided information on the implementation of the Emerald Network. It informed the Bureau that a second contract has been signed with the EEA for the finalisation of the programme launched in 2005 and aiming at the complete identification, by the end of 2008, of the potential sites of the Emerald Network and the collection of the scientific data concerning these sites in the six countries participating in this programme (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”).

The report on the legal implementation of the Bern Convention in Morocco has been received from the consultant and forwarded to the Moroccan authorities, for comments.

4. Implementation of the Convention: Files

The Secretariat noted the effects of the departure of Ms Françoise Bauer as her functions overseeing the case file system have been taken on by the existing team. The experience of fixing strict deadlines for the consideration of documents by the Bureau has been largely successful as the number of late arrivals of documents and reports has decreased.

4.1 Specific sites – Files open

a. Proposed navigable waterway in the Bystroe Estuary (Danube delta, Ukraine)

At the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee, in 2006, Ukraine was asked to call for a meeting of the states signatories of the Trilateral Agreement signed under the auspices of the Council of Europe by Moldova, Romania and Ukraine on 5 June 2000, on co-operation in the zone of the Danube Delta and Lower Prut River nature-protected areas. It was also asked to provide to the Committee the EIA finished in April 2006, including the compensatory measures foreseen. The Committee decided to

leave the file open and examine at its next meeting a new draft recommendation prepared by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat contacted the Ukrainian authorities in December 2006, January and April 2007. An information “non-paper” was received in July 2007, concerning the “Renovation of the Deep-Water Navigation Route Danube-Black Sea in the Ukrainian Part of the Danube Delta (Bystroe estuary)”. Furthermore, an official report from the Ukrainian government was received in August 2007 concerning the implementation of Recommendation No. 111 (2004) “on the proposed navigable waterway through the Bystroe estuary (Danube Delta)”. The document addressed the status of implementation of every paragraph of the Recommendation, as requested, including information on works; EIA; compensation and mitigation measures; monitoring; public participation; international co-operation, etc. The Ukrainian authorities also annexed a table listing the activities taken by Ukraine during 2007 in the framework of the Ukrainian Danube-Black Sea Navigation Route Restoration Project.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that parts of the EIA were publicly available and that the Ukrainian authorities had promised to send it in. The Secretariat also informed that no further news had been received from the Romanian authorities about the planning of meeting in Tulcea under the framework of the Trilateral Agreement on the cooperation in the zone of the Danube Delta and the Lower River Prut Nature Protected Area. The meeting had been initially scheduled for May 2007 but the final date has not been announced yet.

The Bureau took note of all these new informations and agreed to invite the Ukrainian government to submit and present this and other updated information at the meeting of the Standing Committee in November 2007.

b. Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)

At its 26th meeting in November 2006, the Standing Committee urged Cyprus to fully implement Recommendation No. 63 (1997) on the conservation of the Akamas peninsula, Cyprus and, in particular, of the nesting beaches of the Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and Green turtle *Chelonia mydas*, and decided to leave the file open.

The Secretariat contacted the Cyprus authorities in January 2007 but no response was received before the Bureau meeting in March 2007. A report from the Republic of Cyprus was received on 31st August 2007, informing the Bureau that the Council of Ministers had approved a Management Plan for the Akamas Peninsula, with nearly 32 million Euros allocated for its implementation in 2007-2014, and including the following measures:

- A large part of the Akamas Peninsula was declared as a national park and it will be proposed for inclusion in the EU Natura 2000 Network.
- The development of the area will remain strictly controlled.
- The sensitive fauna and flora species and habitat types in the Akamas area will be given protected status (under the Birds and Habitats Directives).

Concerning the Limni site, the Government of Cyprus indicated that it is not related to the Akamas Peninsula, as Limni is part of the «Polis – Yialia» area, a proposed Natura 2000 site whose management plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2007, including protection measures for the feeding and nesting grounds of the sea turtles *Chelonia mydas*.

The Bureau took note of these informations but decided to leave this file on the agenda for the meeting of the Standing Committee, asking the Cyprus government to submit updated and more detailed information on the declaration of part of Akamas as a national park and the protection of sensitive fauna and flora species and habitat types in the Akamas area.

c. Project to build a motorway through the Kresna gorge (Bulgaria)

At the 2006 Standing Committee meeting, the Bulgarian Delegate informed the committee that a new EIA had been initiated in 2006 in consultation with all the partners concerned; that all variants would be studied, including the NGOs’ proposal; and that specific requirements had been formulated and information on the potential sites for Natura 2000 had been placed at the investor’s disposal.

A complaint has been lodged with the Commission.

The Standing Committee welcomed the positive advances that had been made on this file, which it decided to keep open.

The Secretariat contacted the Bulgarian authorities in January 2007 and a note was received in March 2007 informing the Bureau that the EIA report is being prepared and will be publicly discussed, including consideration by Bulgaria's High Ecological Expert Council. The situation was the same by the end of August 2007, with no further news about the EIA.

d. Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra – Via Pontica (Bulgaria)

At its 26th meeting in November 2006, the Standing Committee decided to open a new file and proposed that a meeting be organised between the parties involved under the auspices of the convention and other relevant agreements. The Bulgarian authorities agreed to a on-the-spot visit, which was carried out on 20-22 June 2007 (see 3.3.b below).

4.2. Possible files

a. Conservation of the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) in the Massif and Plaine des Maures (France)

Recommendation No. 118 (2005) on the protection of the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) in the Massif des Maures and Plaine des Maures localities asked the French government to apply a global management concept for the landscape areas concerned by the presence of the Hermann tortoise and to reject the new application for extension of the Balançan waste storage centre as it stood.

At the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee in November 2006, the delegate from France stated that a detailed map with the boundaries of the reserve, Natura 2000 and the order for the protection of the biotope showing the real commitment to protection would be sent to the secretariat. The Standing Committee reserved the right to open a new file in the light of the information that would be presented, including the examination of detailed maps.

No information was received before the Bureau meeting in March 2007. The Secretariat re-contacted the French authorities asking them for all relevant information before the set deadline of 3rd September 2007. Due to the late arrival of the information, this case could not be considered at the meeting. The Bureau recommended that the Standing Committee discusses this issue at its next meeting in November 2007 and decides whether to open a case file.

b. Protection of the Common Hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) in Alsace (France)

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.

The Standing Committee, at its meeting in November 2006, instructed the Bureau to treat this item in relation with the informations that would be provided by France.

The Secretariat contacted the French authorities in January 2007 but the information was received too late for the Bureau to be able to consider it. The Secretariat was instructed to include this issue in the agenda of the Bureau meeting in September and inform the French authorities accordingly, asking them to submit all relevant information, including concrete actions taken, in electronic format by the set deadline of 3rd September 2007. Due to the late arrival of the information, this case could not be considered at the meeting. The Bureau recommended that the Standing Committee discusses this issue at its next meeting in November 2007 and decides whether to open a case file.

c. Protection of the European Green Toad (*Bufo viridis*) in Alsace (France)

Following a complaint from the Association BUFO (*Association pour l'étude et la protection des amphibiens et reptiles d'Alsace*) concerning the insufficiencies of the impact assessment carried out in the framework of the projects for a by-pass around the municipalities of Oberschaeffolsheim and Wolfisheim and for the construction of the Zenith, the Secretariat wrote to the French authorities in 2006 to get their views on these projects.

At the 2006 Standing Committee meeting, the representative of the NGO *Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage* asked for the greatest possible consideration to be given to the situation of the remaining habitats of the green toad in Alsace, drawing attention to urban development projects in the vicinity of Molsheim. The French delegate informed the Standing Committee that they were prepared to send further information.

Information was sent to the Secretariat too late so the Bureau could not consider it. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to include this issue in the agenda of their meeting in September and inform the French authorities accordingly, asking them to submit all relevant and updated information in electronic format by the set deadline of 3rd September 2007. Due to the late arrival of the information, this case could not be considered at the meeting. The Bureau recommended that the Standing Committee discusses this issue at its next meeting in November 2007 and decides whether to open a case file.

d. Wind farm project in Volovja Reber (Slovenia)

In 2006, the Secretariat received a joint complaint from 24 NGOs concerning the construction of a group of 43 wind turbines in southern Slovenia, in the Alpine and Dinaric region. The chosen site was of vital importance for various species protected under the Bern Convention (Eurasian lynx, wildcat, brown bear, etc) and also acted as a corridor.

At the last Standing Committee meeting in November 2006, the Slovenian delegate informed the Committee that he had not been able to respond to the request for information as this project was the subject of a number of judicial proceedings, announcing that they would send a report before the Bureau meeting.

A report was received from the Slovenian authorities informing that the European Commission had sent a formal notice to the authorities on 27th June 2007 on the basis that Volovja reber had been excluded from the proposed list of Natura 2000 sites on the basis of economic and not scientific reasons. As a result, the government will revise during 6 months the scientific data showing oscillations for particular populations of key species and take a decision on the basis of scientific results.

In light of this information, the Bureau decided not to pursue this issue any longer and remove it from the draft agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the Standing Committee.

e. Conservation of marine turtles in Kazanli (Turkey)

This file was provisionally closed at the 24th meeting of the Standing Committee meeting. However, the Committee asked the government to continue to report on the situation.

In November 2006, the Standing Committee took note of the information presented by the NGOs as to the existence of several outstanding problems that remained undealt with (such as marine pollution from the existing stockpile of toxic waste located on the nesting beach very close to the seashore) and instructed the Bureau to consider the possibility of reopening the file and engage the Barcelona convention.

The Secretariat wrote to the Turkish authorities in January 2007 asking them for full and updated information addressing the status of implementation of each of the 14 points included in Recommendation No. 95 (2002) on the conservation of marine turtles in Kazanli beach (Turkey). Information was received too late for the Bureau to be able to consider it at its meeting in March 2007 and so the Bureau agreed to include this issue in the agenda of its September meeting as a "possible file". The Secretariat contacted the Turkish authorities in April 2007 asking for the status of implementation of Recommendation No.95 (2002) but no information was received. The Secretariat contacted the Barcelona Convention in May 2007 about this issue but no information was received either.

The Bureau agreed to keep this issue in the agenda and ask the Turkish authorities to report at the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

f. Windfarms in Smøla Archipelago (Norway)

At its 21st meeting, the Standing Committee decided not to open a file on this case, but asked Norway not to authorise the second phase of the wind farm before assessing the results of the first one.

This case was raised again during discussions on wind energy and nature conservation at the 26th Standing Committee meeting in November 2006.

The Secretariat received update reports from Birdlife International in March and August 2007. Concerns relate to the threat to the important White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) population in the immediate vicinity of the proposed windfarm. The Norwegian government licensed Stage 1 (20 turbines) of the wind farm in December 2000. According to Birdlife International, Stage 2 (reduced from 52 to 48 turbines) was constructed in 2005 following a “very limited study of Stage 1 (20 turbines)” completed in 2002, while assessment of collision mortality appears to have been undertaken “only since February 2006”.

The Secretariat contacted the Norwegian authorities in January and April 2007, informing them of the Bureau’s decision to treat this case as a “possible case file” at its next meeting in September 2007.

A table report was received from the Norwegian government with relevant information on actions undertaken after giving the licence to build the windmills in the Smøla Archipelago, on 20th December 2000. A review by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) has shown that 13 White-tailed eagles were found killed by windmills from autumn 2005 until 11th April 2007. In addition, 31 individuals of 11 other bird species have been registered as killed by the windmills during the same period: six Willow grouse; four Common snipe; four gulls sp.; three Gray heron; three Whooper swan; and three Graylag goose. One Northern Bat (*Eptesicus nilssonii*) was also found dead in 2006. The report includes the following long-term effects of the windmills on the White-tailed eagle: reduced breeding population; increased adult mortality; reduced breeding success; and increased juvenile mortality.

The Bureau agreed to keep this issue in the agenda and ask the Norwegian authorities to report at the next meeting of the Standing Committee, including on whether the results of the reviews undertaken will have consequences on the operation of the windfarms.

4.3 On-the-spot appraisals

a. Croatia: Planned motorway across the Drava marshlands and hydro-electric power station in Lesce, across the Dobra river

In 2006, the Standing Committee agreed to carry out an on-the-spot appraisal for both projects during 2007. The visit was conducted on 5-6 June 2007, when meetings were held with relevant government officials, NGOs and other interested parties, as well as site visits.

Two independent expert (Mr Len Wyatt and Mr Pierre Hunkeler) took part in the visit to gather information about the projects and assess their likely impacts in-situ. They met with all interested parties to complete the information the needed to draft their reports, which will be presented to the Standing Committee in November 2007. The Bureau was informed of the preliminary conclusions of the experts. The two reports will be sent to the Croatian authorities as soon as they are finalised.

b. Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica

The on-the-spot visit was carried out on 20-22 June 2007. The Executive Secretary of the UN Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) joined this visit in accordance with the invitation issued by the Standing Committee. The independent expert (Mr Eckhart Kuijken), the AEWA Executive Secretary and the representative of the Secretariat met with government officials from the Ministry of Environment as well as with the NGO who initiated the complaint, private investors from the wind farm companies, scientists and local authorities from the municipalities affected by the projects. A report is being finalised by the independent expert brought by the Bern Convention, including conclusions and recommendations on the projects. The Bureau was informed of preliminary conclusions and recommendations from the expert. The report will be sent to the Bulgarian authorities as soon as it is finalised.

4.4 Complaints in stand-by

a. Planned capture of Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) (Turkey)

At the 26th Standing Committee meeting, the delegate of Monaco informed the Committee of a complaint received by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), in its capacity of depositary of the ACCOBAMS Agreement. WDCS had approached the Secretariat of the ACCOBAMS Agreement to denounce a project envisaged by Turkey whereby 30 bottlenose dolphins would be captured in the Black and Mediterranean Sea. 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) and the Habitats Directive and the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

The Standing Committee took note of the information at its meeting in November 2006 and considered that such captures were not justified, asking the Secretariat to contact the Turkish authorities accordingly.

The Secretariat contacted the Turkish authorities in January 2007 and it received a brief note on the general situation about the bottlenose dolphin in Turkey in March 2007, prepared by Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, according to which:

- The catching of dolphins in Turkey has been “totally prohibited” since 1983, and from that time there have been no dolphin catching.
- However, they indicate that “in the last years there have been major investments in our country for using dolphins in the therapy of mentally or physically handicapped or in marina parks”.
- Such dolphins have been “imported temporarily from Ukraine and Russia in accordance with the rules of CITES” for both purposes: rehabilitation and shows.
- The Turkish authorities admit that “difficulties have been encountered” in the transport of the “imported living organisms”. Those transportation difficulties led six companies to apply to the Turkish authorities for permission to capture dolphins.
- The Turkish authorities have allowed the six private firms to catch 30 dolphins under certain conditions. The authorities have based their decision on *Article 9* of the Bern Convention and *paragraph 39* of the “Explanatory Report”, as they consider that “the use of dolphins for the rehabilitation of the physically and mentally handicapped and for show purposes can be regarded as a general exception”.

The conditions required for the captures were:

- ✓ the exclusive use of the animals for show or therapy purposes and only in centers belonging to the licensed firms,
- ✓ the captures had to be done under the control of the Ministry's Provincial Directorate,
- ✓ the animals need a certificate of origin and may only be transferred with this certificate and with the consent of the Ministry, and
- ✓ necessary precautions must be taken for the comfort of the animal at the facilities where they are kept.

The Bureau expressed their concern about the status of the population in the Mediterranean and the impact of the authorised captures, which are conditions established in Article 9.1 of the Convention.

The Secretariat contacted the Turkish authorities after the Bureau meeting in March 2007, expressing concerns about the status of the population of bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea, and the impact of the authorised captures. The Secretariat requested information from the Turkish authorities on the status of the populations of bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, including scientific studies on the impacts of the captures on those populations that may justify the application of exceptions under Article 9.1 of the Bern Conventions.

The Secretariat also contacted ACCOBAMS asking for the same information on the status of the populations of bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

No further information was received on this issue.

The Bureau expressed its concern for the lack of responses to the secretariat's communications and agreed to treat this issue as a “possible case file” at the next Standing Committee meeting in November 2007.

5. Follow-up to the recommendations – Evolution of the situation

a. Recommendation No. 79 (1999) on protection of the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) in Europe

The Secretariat received a report from the Walloon region of Belgium about their implementation of this Recommendation, including the preparation of an action plan and the proposal to designate the site of the last population of great hamster in this region as a Site of Great Biological Interest.

After the March Bureau meeting, the Secretariat contacted the other countries to which this recommendation was addressed (France, Germany and The Netherlands) asking them for information on their implementation. No information was received.

In light of the increasing number of complaints raised and the conservation status of the species, the Bureau decided to recommend to the Standing Committee that an European Action Plan for the hamster is developed under the Bern Convention in 2008.

b. Recommendation No. 96 (2002) on conservation of birds in afforestation of lowland in Iceland

The Secretariat received a report from BirdLife International on the implementation of Recommendation 96 (2002) on the conservation of birds in afforestation of lowland in Iceland, asking the Bureau to include it in the agenda of this year's Standing Committee as a possible case file as they claim that the Government of Iceland has failed to ensure the satisfactory implementation of any of the seven points of Recommendation 96 (2002) in the past five years.

The Secretariat contacted Iceland's authorities in April 2007 asking them to report on the status of implementation of each of the seven paragraphs of Recommendation 96 (2002).

The report from the government was received too late to be considered by the Bureau, which agreed to keep it in the agenda for the Standing Committee and asked Iceland's government to report on the implementation of this Recommendation at the November meeting of the Standing Committee.

c. Recommendation No. 104 (2003) on the conservation of the Spur-thighed tortoise *Testudo graeca graeca* in Spain

The Secretariat contacted the Spanish authorities in April 2007 asking them for a full report on the implementation of this Recommendation so that the Bureau could be fully informed of actions undertaken by Spain at its September meeting. No reply was received.

The Bureau decided to ask the Spanish government to report on this issue at the next meeting of the Standing Committee, which could discuss the possibility of considering this species for a new European Action Plan.

d. Recommendation No. 107 (2003) on the Odeoluca Dam (Portugal)

The Secretariat received an annual report on the implementation of Recommendation 107 (2003) concerning activities carried out in 2006 by the Portuguese authorities. After the decision to reactivate the Odeluca Dam project in February 2005, Portugal and the European Commission had several contacts with respect to the infringement procedure related to the case. It was requested to guarantee the implementation of an *ex-situ* breeding centre for the species, implying the existence of a breeding stock made available by the Spanish Authorities. Based on this information, the European Commission decided to file the infringement procedure in December 2006.

Other conservation actions for the Iberian Lynx were taken in the framework of the EU-co-funded project "Management of Habitats and Species of Serra da Malcata" (2003-2008) which included land acquisition, the recovery of natural vegetation areas, paths and dirt roads, as well as habitat recovery and restocking of rabbit populations and the monitoring of Iberian Lynx habitats.

A Lynx conservation programme has been started in the South of Portugal by LPN, a national NGO (*Liga para a Protecção da Natureza*) in partnership with FFI (Fauna and Flora International). The programme is a Life Nature Project starting at the end of 2006 and running until September 2009, aimed at identifying priority areas for the management of Iberian Linx habitats, developing agreements with associations and land owners, enhancing rabbit populations in identified areas,

contributing to the preservation of Lynx habitats in identified areas; and increasing awareness at the local and national level on Lynx preservation.

No new information was received from the Portuguese authorities.

The Bureau decided to invite the Portuguese governments to report to the next meeting of the Standing Committee on any new information on activities carried out in 2007.

e. Recommendation No. 108 (2003) on the proposed construction of the “Via Baltica” (Poland)

The 'Via Baltica' - part of the EU-funded TINA ('Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment') transport network in Central and Eastern Europe - will be an expressway running from Warsaw to Helsinki. It will pass through Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. The “Via Baltica” project raised several problems regarding the protection of natural areas, according to the report of the independent expert prepared after the “on-the-spot” visit in 2003 (T-PVS (2003)26), which included consideration of the Knyszynska Forest and the Raspuda Valley.

At the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Polish delegate informed the Committee that the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was due to be finalised by the end of 2006. NGOs had been involved in the competitive tendering process and the report itself. The results would make it possible to take a decision on the ultimate route. The Committee took note of this information and asked the Polish Government to provide the decision on the choice of route, the relevant SEA and all other relevant information regarding this case.

In December 2006 the European Commission officially opened legal infringements procedures against the Polish Government based on the Augustow and Wasilkow bypasses. The Commission is treating this matter with urgency and it has referred this matter to the European Court of Justice in March 2007. As work has started on these two construction projects, the Commission is also asking the Court of Justice for interim measures to ask Poland to suspend the works immediately.

On 31st July 2007, the European Commission asked the ECJ to take interim measures to ensure that Poland does not go proceed with the construction of the road. According to a press release from the European Commission, the application for urgent action by the Court follows the Polish government's failure to give an undertaking that it will not start construction work on the Augustow bypass through the valley on 1 August 2007. The interim measures requested aim at preventing the works until the Court has had time to rule on the case brought in March.

The Secretariat contacted the Polish authorities in January, March and April 2007 but no reply was received.

The Bureau decided to invite the Polish government to report on the case at the next meeting of the Standing Committee in November 2007.

f. Recommendation No. 112 (2004) on hydro-electric dams in Kárahnjúkar and Nordlingalda (Iceland)

The Secretariat contacted Iceland's authorities in April 2007 asking for a full report on the implementation of this Recommendation.

BirdLife International has written to the Secretariat urging the Standing Committee to consider opening a case file regarding Iceland's failure to implement this recommendation and, at least to call for a progress report from the Icelandic Government at the next Standing Committee meeting in November 2007.

The report from the government was received too late to be considered by the Bureau, which agreed to keep it in the agenda for the Standing Committee and asked Iceland's government to report on the implementation of this recommendation at the November meeting of the Standing Committee

g. Recommendation No. 113 (2004) on the installation of a new antenna (Pluto II) in the Sovereign Base Areas (Akrotiri, Cyprus)

A written report was received from the UK authorities, covering the following issues:

- Pluto Health Study

- Pluto Bird Flight Diverters
- Pluto Bird Studies
- Hydrology Study
- Environmental Management Systems
- Akrotiri Peninsula Environmental Management Plan
- On-island Environmental Support

BirdLife Cyprus reported on progress regarding preliminary monitoring of bird strike at the Antenna site, an encouraging policy on the management of the area, and regular, open and constructive dialogue with the Sovereign Base Area Administration (SBAA) and its conservation team. However, the government has yet to designate the Akrotiri peninsula – Episkopi cliffs IBA as the equivalent of an SPA.

The Bureau welcomed these informations and invited the UK government to submit an update report before the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

6. Draft agenda of the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee

The Bureau examined the draft agenda of the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee as tabled by the Secretariat, and made a number of amendments before approving it.

7. Proposals for the programme of activities in 2008

The Bureau examined the draft programme of activities for 2007 as tabled by the Secretariat, and made a number of amendments before approving it.

In view of the request made by the Standing Committee at its meeting in 2006, staff costs have been added to the annual budget of the Bern Convention, as well as office costs and overheads, in order to better reflect the real overall costs of the administration of the Convention.

8. PEBLDS and European Diploma activities under the Bern Convention

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Committee of Ministers will decide shortly on the proposal to replace the CODBP with the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention as it is the only biodiversity committee left in the Council of Europe. The Standing Committee would therefore discuss the awards and renewals of the European Diploma of Protected Areas, on the basis of the recommendations made by the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma. This issue has been included in the draft agenda of the Standing Committee meeting in November 2007.

9. Preparations for the Belgrade Conference “Environment for Europe”

The Council of Europe, as Joint Secretariat of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) - together with UNEP- , is involved in the organisation of the "biodiversity segment" of the UNECE Conference “An environment for Europe” to be held in Belgrade on 10-12 October 2007. Preparations are under way for a side-event on the Pan-European Ecological Network at the Conference, where the new publication “The Pan-European Ecological Network: Taking stock” will be presented.

The final outcome of this important political event in the environment field will be submitted to the Standing Committee as an information document.

10. Planning for the signature of the enhanced MoC with the CBD Executive Secretary

The Bureau was informed that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is expected to agree to the signature of the Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) at its next meeting. The signature has been provisionally scheduled for Monday 26th November 2007 at 1pm.

11. Draft comments of the Bureau of the Standing committee of the Bern Convention concerning Recommendation 215 (2007) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on “Climate change: approaches at local and regional level”

The Secretariat presented the background of this issue, included in document T-PVS (2007) 15. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted its Recommendation 215 (2007) on Climate Change: Approaches at the local and regional level, which recommends that the Committee of Ministers considers mainstreaming climate change issues in all the work of the Council of Europe, including environmental issues, and invites steering committees to investigate ways in which they can address climate change in their work programmes.

The Bureau examined the draft comments prepared by the Secretariat and adopted them after adding a new paragraph 10 (Appendix III).

12. Report on the case-file system (by stagiaire Maribel Rodriguez)

The Bureau welcomed the report prepared by Ms. Rodriguez-Valero and agreed to present its main proposals to the Standing Committee, with the proposal that a draft recommendation is submitted to the Standing Committee in 2008 to implement the suggestions included in the report that get the support of the Standing Committee.

13. Any other business

✓ Third Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Contracting Parties: Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 22-25 October 2007

The Bureau agreed to send a representative of the Bern Convention to the forthcoming 3rd Meeting of the Parties to The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), to be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 22-25 October 2007.

* * *

The Chair thanked the participants, and in particular Ms Ilona Jepsena for her long-term involvement and commitment to the Bern Convention, as this was her last Bureau meeting. The Chair also thanked the interpreter and declared the meeting closed.



APPENDIX 1

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Strasbourg, 15 May 2007

Standing Committee

Bureau meeting

Strasbourg, 11 September 2007
(Room ..., opening: 9.30 am)

DRAFT AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. General information**
- 3. Implementation of the 2007 Programme of activities**
- 4. Implementation of the Convention: Files**
 - 4.1 Specific Sites - Files open**
 - a. Ukraine: Proposed navigable waterway in the Bystroe Estuary (Danube delta)
 - b. Cyprus: Akamas peninsula
 - c. Bulgaria: Project to build a motorway through the Kresna Gorge
 - d. Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica
 - 4.2 Possible files**
 - a. France: Conservation of the Hermann tortoise (*Testudo hermanni hermanni*) in the plaine des Maures
 - b. France: Habitats for the survival of the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*)
 - c. France: Conservation of the Green Toad (*Bufo viridis*)
 - d. Slovenia: Wind farm project in Volovja Reber
 - e. Turkey: Conservation of marine turtles in Kazanlı
 - f. Norway: Windfarms in Smøla Archipelago
 - 4.3 On-the-spot appraisals**
 - a. Croatia: Planned motorway across the Drava marshlands and hydro-electric power station in Lesce, across the Dobra river
 - b. Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica
 - 4.4 Complaints in stand-by**
 - a. Turkey: Planned capture of Bottlenose dolphins
- 5. Follow-up of the Recommendations - Evolution of the situation in:**
 - a. Recommendation No. 79 (1999) on protection of the common hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) in Europe
 - b. Recommendation No. 96 (2002) on conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, specially birds, in afforestation of lowland (Iceland)

- c. Recommendation No. 104 (2003) on the conservation of the Spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca graeca*) in Spain
- d. Recommendation No. 107 (2003) on the Odelouca Dam (Portugal)
- e. Recommendation No. 108 (2003) on the proposed construction of the “Via Baltica” (Poland)
- f. Recommendation No. 112 (2004) on hydro-electric dams (Iceland)
- g. Recommendation No.113 (2004) on military antenna in the Sovereign Base Area of Akrotiri (Cyprus)

- 6. Draft agenda of the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee**
- 7. Proposals for the programme of activities in 2008**
- 8. Incorporation of PEBLDS and European Diploma activities under the Bern Convention**
- 9. Preparations for the Belgrade Conference “Environment for Europe”**
- 10. Planning for signature of enhanced MoC with the CBD Executive Secretary**
- 11. Draft comments of the Bureau of the Standing committee of the Bern Convention concerning Recommendation 215 (2007) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on “Climate change: approaches at local and regional level”**
- 12. Report on the case-file system (by stagiaire Maribel Rodriguez)**
- 13. Any other business**

A P P E N D I X 2

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

Standing Committee / Comité permanent

Meeting of the Bureau / Réunion du Bureau

Strasbourg, le 11 september 2006

**PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS /
LISTE PROVISOIRE DES PARTICIPANTS**

FRANCE / FRANCE Ms Véronique HERRENSCHMIDT, Responsable de la mission internationale, Direction de la nature et des paysages, Ministère de l'écologie et du développement durable, 20, avenue de Ségur, F-75302 PARIS 07 SP
Tel : +33 1 42 19 19 48. Fax : +33 1 42 19 19 06
E-mail : veronique.herrenschmidt@ecologie.gouv.fr (E) (F)

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 (E)

LATVIA/LETTONIE Ms Ilona JEPSENA, European Commission, Environment Directorate General B2, B2 Nature and Biodiversity, Avenue de Beaulieu 5, B-1160 BRUXELLES / Belgium.
Tel : +32 2 296 91 49. Fax: +32 2 299 08 95. E-mail : Ilona.jepsena@ec.europa.eu (E)

INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES

Mr William VALK, 6 Cour du Bain des Juifs, 67000 STRASBOURG, France.
Tel: +33 3 88 35 50 56. Fax: +33 3 88 70 50 98. E-mail: william.valk@wanadoo.fr

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 sur 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 Carolina LASÉN-DÍAZ, Administrator of the Biological Diversity Unit / Administrateur de l'Unité sur la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 390 21 56 79. Fax : +33 388 41 37 51. E-mail : carolina.lasen-diaz@coe.int

Ms Hélène BOUGUessa, Principal administrative assistant / Assistante administrative principale, Biological Diversity Unit / Unité sur la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 3 88 41 22 64. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : helene.bouguessa@coe.int

Ms Snezana MANCIC, Biological Diversity Unit / Unité sur la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 390 21 42 45. Fax : +33 388 41 37 51. E-mail : snezana.mancic@coe.int

Ms Véronique de CUSSAC, Biological Diversity Unit / Unité sur la Diversité biologique
Tel : +33 3 88 41 34 76 Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : veronique.decusac@coe.int

A P P E N D I X 3

COMMENTS OF THE BUREAU OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE BERN CONVENTION CONCERNING RECOMMENDATION 215 (2007) OF THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

ON “CLIMATE CHANGE: APPROACHES AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL”

The Bern Convention Bureau:

1. Welcomes the interest of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in tackling global warming as one of the most serious challenges to sustainable development;
2. Shares the concern of the Congress that the fight against climate change should be central to the actions of all decision-makers and that national governments should develop comprehensive national actions plans to combat and to adapt to climate change;
3. Notes with interest the recommendation from the Congress that member countries and observer States should develop adequate adaptation measures and include them into long-term development strategies, in particular in those areas most at risk;
4. Stresses that the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention has recognised climate change as a priority issue as it affects biological diversity in the territory covered by the Convention, including species, habitats and the Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald Network;
5. Notes that biodiversity can play an important role in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change, as well as the need to adapt nature conservation work to the challenges of climate change in order to minimise its impact on the species and natural habitats protected under the Convention;
7. Encourages all Member States and observers states to the Council of Europe to participate in the work of the new Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, set up by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in November 2006.
8. Acknowledges the valuable contribution made by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to the first meeting of the Group of Experts, held in Strasbourg on 14-15 June 2007, where Recommendation 215 (2007) was introduced and made available to participants.
9. Invites the Congress, as well as the Parliamentary Assembly, to continue the collaboration and co-ordination with the Bern Convention on this important issue, and explore the possibility of joint future activities.
10. Notes the need to co-ordinate and co-operate with other relevant international biodiversity-related agreements and ongoing initiatives on this issue.