

2000



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 2 May 2000
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T-PVS (2000) 18

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

Meeting of the Bureau

Strasbourg, 27 April 2000

REPORT OF THE MEETING

*Secrétariat Memorandum
prepared by
the Directorate of Sustainable Development*

1. Opening of the meeting and the adoption of the agenda

The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, Mr Gerard C.Boere (Netherlands) welcomed the other members of the Bureau, Mr Patrick van Klaveren (Monaco) and Ms Iлона Jepsen (Latvia), as well as the representatives of the Secretariat, in particular Mr KlausSchumann, the General Director-of the DG-IV (Appendix 1).

The agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix 2 of this document.

2. Information on the structural and budgetary changes in the Secretariat

Mr Schumann informed the Bureau members on the structural and budgetary changes in the Secretariat that have been proposed by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe for the year 2001.

As a follow-up to the recommendations proposed by the Committee of Wise Persons, an analysis of the role of the Council of Europe in the global context and its place *vis-à-vis* European Union and OSCE was carried out. This analysis led to the prioritisation of the organisation's activities. A number of new activities, such as creation of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, field offices in Kosovo and Sarajevo and reinforcement of the monitoring functions of the organisation, were considered a priority action. along with existing activities on safeguarding democracy and human rights.

In the situation of the zero growth budget for the year 2001, this situation led to inevitable cuts in the financing and staff in certain spheres of activities. For the environmental sector, a 40 % cut in the budget and staff is foreseen for the year 2001.

However, this should not be only seen in the negative sense. These developments will assist in prioritising the activities in the environmental sector in general, and the Bern Convention, in particular. Bern Convention should be presented more as a Pan-European instrument, which serves as a control mechanism of environmental standards in wildlife issues. In the context of the Council of Europe, it needs to become more politically relevant.

The Members of the Bureau agreed that in this context, the Meeting of the Select Group on the Strategic Development of the Bern Convention is particularly relevant for reviewing the strategic objectives of the Bern Convention in general, and its streamlining in the face of certain budget and staff cuts.

3. Progress of the 2000 work programme and decisions (Doc T-PVS (2000) 15)

The Secretariat provided information on the progress of the 2000 work programme and decisions.

It informed the Bureau members that the report of the Standing Committee has been circulated to the Contracting Parties and the Observer states, as well as submitted for adoption to the Committee of Ministers. At its 705th meeting, which took place on the 30 March 2000, the Committee of Ministers adopted the abridged version of the report.

3.1. Development of the Convention

- Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention

On the 28 March 2000 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan signed the Bern Convention, therefore on the 1st July 2000 Azerbaijan will become the 42nd Contracting Party to the Bern Convention.

- Memorandum of Co-operation with the Secretariat of the CBD

At its 705th meeting, which took place on the 30th March 2000, the Committee of Ministers authorised the Secretary General to sign the Memorandum of Co-operation between the Secretariat of the Bern Convention and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- Memorandum of Co-operation with the European Environment Agency

The text of the Memorandum of Co-operation was submitted to the legal services of the Council of Europe for their opinion. Subsequently a revised text was sent to the European Environment Agency on 11th February 2000 for consideration.

3.2. Progress of the 2000 work programme

a. Emerald Network

- Group of Experts for the setting up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

The meeting of the Group of Experts is scheduled to take place in Strasbourg on the 18-19 September 2000. Among others it will assess the progress achieved by the target countries in setting up the Emerald Network and propose actions to stimulate further development of the network.

- Pilot projects – Emerald Network

In the year 2000 the Emerald Network pilot projects have started in the following countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Poland. The projects in Turkey and Slovakia started late in 1999 and are ongoing. Romania and Moldova were also proposed to start projects this year. The results of these projects will be available by the end of 2000 - beginning of 2001.

- Meeting of the Emerald Network pilot project leaders

This meeting took place on 17-18 April 2000 in Bratislava. It was co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Phare Topic Link on Nature Conservation.

The participants included members of the Emerald teams from the following twelve countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey. These countries have either started Emerald projects or are planning to do so in the near future.

In the course of the workshop the participants have exchanged experiences on the Emerald Network process; identified major obstacles and problems that arise in the course of practical project implementation and sought to find solutions to these problems.

The report of the meeting together with the adopted conclusions will be presented to the Standing Committee.

The Bureau noted the progress of the Emerald Network. It considered also that an inclusion of geological sites into the Emerald Network could become a potential extension of the Bern Convention.

b. Workshop on ecological corridors for invertebrates: strategies of dispersal and recolonisation in today's agricultural and forestry landscapes

The Workshop on ecological corridors for invertebrates is scheduled to take place on 10-12 May in Neuchâtel (Switzerland). It will be followed by the meeting of the Group of Experts on Invertebrates will take place on the 13 May 2000.

The objective of this meeting is to analyse the different causes of disappearance of the main invertebrates' species in Europe and debate the possible strategies of dispersion of invertebrates through ecological networks.

The report of the workshop with possible recommendations will be presented to the Standing Committee.

c. Group of Experts on large carnivores in Europe

The meeting of the Group of Experts on large carnivores in Europe is scheduled to take place in Oslo on the 22-24 June 2000.

This meeting will be dedicated to reviewing the status and conservation problems of large carnivores on the territory of Contracting Parties and Observers states of the Convention; suggesting appropriate conservation action of large carnivores; follow-up the drafting and implementation of national and regional Action plans on these species. A particular attention will be devoted to conservation of large carnivores in the Scandinavian Peninsula.

d. Seminar on Biological Diversity and Law: achievements, shortcomings and new trends

The seminar on Biological Diversity and Law in homage to Cyrille de Klemm took place in Paris on 30-31 March 2000. The seminar analysed the questions related to legislation on conservation and use of biological diversity both at national and international levels.

The proceedings of the seminar are in preparation in collaboration with the French Institute for Environmental Law.

3.3. Studies

All studies, foreseen in the programme of activities for the year 2000 have been contracted. For most of them the reports will be available at the end of the year.

The study on the impact of tourism development on marine turtles nesting (in preparation by Mr Andreas Demetropoulos) will be presented at the meeting of the Standing Committee as an item for information.

3.4. Biennial reports

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to send the letters of remind to the Contracting Parties that have not submitted the reports.

4. Implementation of the Convention: files

4.1. Specific sites

- *Caretta caretta* in Patara (Turkey)

With reference to this case the Secretariat informed the Bureau that there were no new specific developments.

- Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)

The Secretariat informed the Bureau members of this case.

Following the decisions of the Standing Committee, on 21 January 2000 the Secretariat has sent a letter to the Cyprus government. It urged the Cyprus government to implement Recommendation No. 63 (1997) of the Standing Committee. In particular, the Secretariat stressed the fact, that the delegations expressed their desire to see National Park coming into effect in Akamas. The Secretariat asked the Cyprus authorities to inform them on the action taken regarding this issue.

The Secretariat received a letter on this issue from the 'Friends of Akamas Executive Committee' This letter stressed the urgent need for immediate withdrawal of development permissions on the area of Akamas Peninsula, the establishment of a protected area status for the Akamas Peninsula following the guidelines of the World Bank study.

The Secretariat also received a letter from Cyprus Conservation Foundation, which calls for action on this issue and mentions that the EU is exerting pressure on the Cyprus government to deal with Akamas in accordance with EU standards, placing it on the list of protected areas.

To date no official answer has been received from the Cyprus government. However, the Secretariat was informed by the Cyprus Conservation Foundation, that the Cyprus government has take a decision that does not comply with recommendation no. 63 (1997) of the Standing Committee.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to contact the Cyprus government and to forward the following statement: 'The Bureau has examined the case of Akamas peninsula at its meeting of 27 April 2000. The Bureau expresses its concern over the lack of progress on this file. It has also learnt that the Cyprus government has taken a decision concerning Akamas Peninsula, which does not meet many of the points of Recommendation No. 63 (1997) of the Standing Committee.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to ask the Cyprus government for further information on this case and to submit a full report for the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

- ***Cricetus cricetus* in the Netherlands**

The Chairman, Mr Boere, speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, confirmed that the case has received a lot of attention from the Dutch government. A government report on this case file will be submitted to the Standing Committee.

4.2. Possible new files and other information files –on-the-spot appraisal

- **Lake Vistonis and Lafra Lafrouda Lagoon (Greece)**

Following the decision of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat addressed the letter to the Greek authorities on the possibility of the site visit. The Greek authorities have agreed to the on-the-spot appraisal. The Secretariat will be in further contact with the Greek authorities to set the exact date of the visit. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to participate in that appraisal, together with independent experts.

- ***Vipera lebetina schweizeri* (*Macrovipera schweizeri*) in Milos (Greece)**

Following the decision of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat addressed the letter to the Greek authorities on 24 February 2000. In this letter the Secretariat asked for the agreement to the on-the-spot appraisal and proposed it to be carried out in May 2000. The Greek authorities have agreed to the on-the-spot appraisal. The exact timing of the visit will be discussed by the Secretariat. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to participate in the appraisal, together with independent experts.

- **Possible new file:**

* **Brown bear in the Pyrenees**

The conservation of the Brown bear in the Pyrenees seems to be threatened by a proposal to remove the introduced animals, which would curb any possibility and success of the present very exiguous population. The proposal is yet to be confirmed by the French Parliament.

The Bureau decided to monitor this situation and to re-discuss the possibility to propose the opening of a new case file on Brown bear in the Pyrenees at its next meeting in September 2000.

* **Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)**

The threat to the remaining nesting beaches in Cyprus and in Turkey has placed the survival of the small population of the species much at risk. In the light of the study commissioned by the Standing Committee and of the results of the next Conference on marine turtles, the opening of a file could be considered.

The Bureau decided to re-discuss the possibility to propose the opening of a new file at its next meeting in September 2000.

5. Draft agenda for the 20th meeting

The Secretariat presented the draft agenda for the 20th meeting of the Standing Committee.

The Bureau approved, subject to certain amendments, the draft agenda as presented by the Secretariat. A final draft agenda will be decided upon by the Bureau at its next meeting.

The Bureau took the decision that travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the delegates of the following states to the Standing Committee meeting will be covered by the funds allocated by the Council of Europe to the Bern Convention (Activity II.12, Article 2218): all African states, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

The Bureau decided to invite, on the same funds, the Chair of the different groups of experts, so they may participate at the discussion on the future of such groups. The Chairs will have covered their travelling expenses and their subsistence expenses for 2 days. The list of active expert groups is the following:

- plants;
- invertebrates;
- amphibians/reptiles;
- birds.
- large carnivores;
- introduction/re-introduction;
- Emerald Network;

6. Proposals for the programme of activities for the year 2001.

The Bureau added the missing item on the Conference on marine turtles.

The Bureau took the decision to set aside a special ad hoc fund (to be made available from the voluntary contributions) for monitoring emergency situations in environment (e.g. Tisza river, Kosovo, etc).

The Bureau approved, subject to certain amendments, the Standing Committee's draft activities programme for the year 2001, as presented by the Secretariat (T-PVS (2000) 11).

7. Select Committee on the strategic development of the Bern Convention

The Bureau reviewed the points for discussion at the Select Committee on the strategic development of the Bern Convention. It noted the important role of this Committee for the further development of the Bern Convention.

8. Other business

Mr van Klaveren stressed the importance of ensuring coordination of the Bern Convention with other international conventions, in particular CITES.

Mr Boere informed the Bureau members, that as of September 2000, he will be seconded by the Dutch government for a position in Wetlands International. This will not prevent him from performing his duties as a Chairman at the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

9. Date and place of the next meeting

The next Bureau meeting will take place on 6 September 2000 in Strasbourg.



APPENDIX 1

Strasbourg, le 7 avril 2000
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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 27 avril 2000
Palais de l'Europe, Salle 16
[n° 04-17-043]

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APPENDIX 2



CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Strasbourg, 10 February 2000
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Standing Committee Meeting of the Bureau

Strasbourg, 27 April 2000
Palais de l'Europe, Room 16
(opening: 9.30)

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Progress of the 2000 work programme and decisions
 - 2.1. Progress of activities
 - 2.2. Memorandum of Co-operation with the CBD
3. Implementation of the Convention: Files
 - 3.1. Specific sites
 - *Caretta caretta* in Patara (Turkey)
 - Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)
 - *Cricetus cricetus* in the Netherlands
 - 3.2. Possible new files and other information files
 - ? on-the-spot appraisal on:
 - Lake Vistonis and Lafra-Lafrouda Lagoon (Greece)
 - *Vipera lebetina schweizeri* (*Macrovipera schweizeri*) in Milos (Greece)
 - ? Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) in the Pyrénées
 - ? Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
4. – Draft agenda for the 20th meeting
- Proposals for the programme of activities for the year 2001
- Select Committee on the strategic development of the Bern Convention
5. Other business – Bern Convention and other conventions (e.g. CITES)



APPENDIX 3

Strasbourg, ... September 2000
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T-PVS (2000) 1

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

20th meeting

Strasbourg, 27 November - 1 December 2000

Palais de l'Europe, Room 5

Opening of the meeting: 9.30 am Monday 27 November 2000

(n°11-48-...)

DRAFT AGENDA

[STILL PROVISIONAL UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2000]

PART I - DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVENTION

1. **Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
2. **Chairman's report and communications from the delegations and from the Secretariat. Reports from new Contracting Parties: Azerbaijan, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Slovenia**
3. **Development of the Convention**
 - 3.1 Strategic development of the Convention and setting-up of priorities
 - Select group on strategic development
 - Assessment of the groups of experts
 - Memorandum of co-operation with the European Environment Agency
 - Development of the Convention "at sea"
 - 3.2 Draft programme of activities and budget for the year 2001
 - 3.3 States to be invited as observers to the 20th meeting

PART II - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION

4. **Monitoring of the implementation of the legal aspects of the Convention**
 - 4.1 Biennial reports (1997-1998) concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8.

* Items for information:

- Seminar on Biological Diversity and Law
- Reports on the implementation of the Convention on some states: Nordic States.

PART III – MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS

5. Threatened species and habitats

Fauna and Flora

- 5.1 Invertebrates: Workshop on ecological corridors for invertebrates, group of experts and draft recommendations
- 5.2 Large carnivores: Group of experts and draft recommendations

Habitats: setting up of ecological networks of areas of special conservation interest

- 5.3 Development of the Emerald Network: group of experts and pilot projects

* Items for information:

- T-PVS (2000) Report on the impact of tourism on marine turtles
- T-PVS (99) 10 rev National and international Initiatives for Plant Conservation in Europe

PART IV – MONITORING OF SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

6. Specific sites and populations

6.1. Files

- *Caretta caretta* in Patara (Turkey)
- Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)
- *Cricetus cricetus* in the Netherlands

6.2. Possible new files:

- [Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)]
- [Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) in the Pyrenees (France)]

6.3. On-the-spot appraisals:

- Lake Vistonis and Lafra-Lafrouda Lagoon (Greece)
- *Vipera lebetina schweizeri* in Milos (Greece)

* These items are presented only for information. They will not be subject to oral presentations or discussion unless on the request of a Party at the adoption of the agenda.

* Items for information:

Caretta caretta in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos (Greece)

Missolonghi wetlands (Greece)

Caretta caretta in Kaminia (Greece)

Conservation of *Oxyura leucocephala* and eradication of *O. jamaicensis* (UK)

Meles meles in the United Kingdom

Cricetus cricetus in Alsace (France)

Meles meles in Ireland

PART V - OTHER ITEMS

- 7. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**
- 8. Date and place of the 21st meeting, adoption of the report**
- 9. Other business (items for information only)**

* These items are presented only for information. They will not be subject to oral presentations or discussion unless on the request of a Party at the adoption of the agenda.