



Strasbourg, 19 May 2005
[tpvs05e_2005.doc]

T-PVS (2005) 5

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

Meeting of the Bureau

Strasbourg, 8 April 2005

MEETING REPORT

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

1. Adoption of the agenda

Ms Véronique Herrenschildt, Chair of the Standing Committee of the Convention, opened the meeting on 8 April 2005. She welcomed the other two members of the Bureau: Mr Jon Gunnar Ottosson, Vice-Chair, and Ms Ilona Jepsen, and the representatives from the Secretariat.

The draft agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix 1.

The participants are listed in Appendix 2.

2. General information

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the forthcoming Summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005. The aim of the Summit was to address the problems which Europe would have to face in the coming years and to define the Council of Europe's role in the European institutional landscape.

A political declaration on the future role of the Council of Europe was expected to be approved, together with an action plan in which due emphasis would be given to sustainable development.

One group of member states wished to include a reference to stepping up action on sustainable development in the declaration.

The Secretariat also told the Bureau that, as part of the management restructuring, every effort would be made to establish environmental protection and sustainable development as a transversal theme, cutting across all sectors of the Council of Europe. This new approach, which would lend added value to the Council's work, could be organised around the following activities:

- Framing a European strategy for sustainable development;
- Raising awareness about sustainable development through education;
- Stepping up local pilot projects.

3. Progress of the 2005 programmes of activities

The Secretariat outlined progress on the work programme for 2005.

a. Monitoring of the implementation of the legal aspects of the Convention

The report on implementation of the Convention in Hungary was available.

b. Conservation of natural habitats – Emerald Network

The Emerald Network was continuing to expand. Various workshops were planned, or had already been held, in 2005 in Serbia and Montenegro, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Azerbaijan.

The European Environment Agency was lending its support to the launch process in the Balkans states in order to be consistent with Natura 2000.

c. Monitoring of species and encouragement of conservation

- *Invasive alien species*

An international workshop on invasive plants in the Mediterranean-type regions of the world was to be held from 25 to 27 May in Montpellier. This meeting will help raise awareness of the threats that invasive alien plants posed to native flora in Mediterranean-type regions.

The Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species was to meet in Palma de Majorca from 9 to 11 June 2005. Its tasks would include surveying the progress made in implementing the European Strategy and promoting an exchange of information between the authorities, focal points and the networks concerned.

- **Conservation of invertebrates**

A group of specialists on invertebrates was to meet in Strasbourg on 19 and 20 May 2005 to examine guidelines for preparing a draft European strategy for invertebrates.

- **Conservation of large carnivores**

The seminar on the transboundary management of large carnivore populations was to be held in Osilnica, Slovenia, from 15 to 17 April 2005. It was being organised with the Slovenian Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture and the *Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe* (LCIE), in association with the Austrian LIFE project on bears.

Among the topics to be discussed were implementation of the Action Plans adopted by the Standing Committee, comparison of management systems, ecological corridors, public acceptance of large carnivores and the drawing up of regional action plans (for the Carpathians, the Alps and the Balkans).

The Secretariat should initiate soon the juridical and scientific study on the possible delisting of the wolves from Appendix II to Appendix III in link with the use of article 9 of the Bern Convention. This study should be presented well in time to the next Standing Committee.

d. Conservation of sea turtles

The 2nd Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles was to be held in Kemer, Antalya (Turkey) from 4 to 7 May 2005. It was being organised in association with the Secretariats of the Barcelona, Bonn and Bern Conventions and with the IUCN's Group of Specialists on marine turtles, with the support of the Turkish Ministry of the Environment and the WWF-Turkey.

The purpose of the conference was to meet all the partners involved in marine turtle research and protection, to review implementation of the action plans and to suggest appropriate conservation measures.

e. Wind power generation and wildlife

A meeting of the group of experts on wind power generation and wildlife was to be held in Brussels on 31 May 2005. It was being organised by the European Commission in close consultation with the Secretariat.

f. Conservation of the European sturgeon

A meeting on protection of the sturgeon in the Danube delta was to be held in July 2005 in Vienna. The Secretariat would assist, as far as its resources allowed, in drawing up an action plan for the European sturgeon.

g. Tax incentives and other economic measures for habitat protection

The workshop on tax incentives and other economic measures for habitat protection was being postponed until 2006 owing to insufficient funding.

h. Strategy for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

A contract for preparing a strategy for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea had been agreed with Accobams.

i. Conservation of amphibians

Action plans on two threatened species of amphibians would also be drawn up for the *Rana latesti* species and the *Triturus cristatus* complex.

* * *

*

The Bureau noted these various items of information with interest. It suggested that, in order to achieve the target set by the Johannesburg and Kyiv Conferences to halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010, it might be worth reviewing the action already taken under the convention in order to identify any gaps. It believed, for example, that freshwater fish called for special attention.

4. Application of the convention - Files

4.1. Specific sites – Open files

a. Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)

The Secretariat said that there was no new information to report. The Vice-Chair informed the Bureau that the DG-XI has in mind to go to Cyprus for a discussion on Natura 2000 Network and this could be an opportunity to discuss the subject of Akamas.

b. Building of a canal in the Bystroe Estuary (Danube delta, Ukraine)

The Parliamentary Assembly Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs had met in Paris on 10 December 2004. The protection of European deltas had been among the items discussed. The committee had heard a presentation by Ms Herrenschildt, examined a preliminary draft report and held an exchange of views.

The members of the Inquiry Committee set up under the Espoo Convention had been appointed. The committee had met on several occasions and was due to deliver an opinion on 13 May 2005.

An informal meeting attended by the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Romanian and Ukrainian ambassadors and the Secretariat representative had been held in Strasbourg on 4 March 2005 to discuss the presentation of Recommendation No. 111 (2004) to the Committee of Ministers.

The Ukrainian authorities were planning to hold an international conference on the conservation and sustainable development of the Danube delta in Odessa in September 2005.

Before the conference there would be two workshops: one in Ukraine on 27 April 2005 on monitoring the Danube delta and the other in Romania on the impact studies concerning the Bystroe Estuary project.

The Bureau noted these various initiatives with interest.

c. Motorway construction through the Kresna Gorge (Bulgaria)

The Secretariat reminded participants that at its last meeting (29 November – 3 December 2004), the Standing Committee had decided to open a file on this matter in order to encourage the Bulgarian government to further implement the actions and intentions set out in Recommendation No. 98 (2002).

There was no new information to report.

4.2. Possible new files

a. Conservation of the Hermann tortoise in the *plaine des Maures* (France)

Following the decision of the Standing Committee to accept the French government's invitation to visit the site, an expert, Mr Guy Berthoud (Switzerland), had visited the *plaine des Maures* on 29 and 30 March 2005 together with a member of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat presented the results of the visit, the aim of which had been to:

- Examine the measures taken to protect the Hermann tortoise in the *plaine des Maures*;
- Study the various threats facing the species;
- Take a close look at the application to expand the Balançan rubbish dump.

Both the site visit and the discussions held with the major part of concerned actors (officials from various government departments, local councillors, scientists, associations) had highlighted:

- ✓ The tremendous biological and landscape diversity of the *plaine des Maures*;
- ✓ The severe stress being exerted on this highly coveted area, which was subject to constant, rapidly growing pressure (expanding industrial zones and transport infrastructure, the clearing of land for vines, forest fires, etc);
- ✓ The existence of numerous protection facilities, but also several recent instances of serious damage to the natural habitats of the Hermann tortoise and the Natura 2000 sites;

- ✓ Various failures and examples of lack of understanding between the parties concerned;
- ✓ The lack of effort to find a proper solution to the problem of the Balançan rubbish dump;
- ✓ The need to practise effective management not only of the sites identified in the “Habitats” Directive but also of the peripheral habitats with high tortoise densities.

The expert would propose:

- That the current conservation action, which was considered too narrow, be widened in favour of a more dynamic, comprehensive approach based on reviews of the functionalities of the landscape and discussions with local residents and a wide-ranging programme covering the entire area where the Hermann tortoise was present;
- That consideration be given to listed species of which there are many in this region, the Hermann tortoise being the most symbolic;
- That further consideration be given to the question of waste and interim arrangements made for the Balançan rubbish dump until an alternative site could be found;
- That the plan to restore the tortoise population, which had been in existence since 1994, be implemented;
- That encouragement be given to traditional Mediterranean activities which helped create a conducive environment for tortoises;
- That action be taken at the earliest possible stage when planning major transport projects (high-speed rail link) so that appropriate technical arrangements, such as crossings, could be made right from the outset.

The Bureau took note of the results of this visit which had helped provide a better insight into the complexity of the situation. It asked for realistic measures to be included in the draft recommendation to be submitted to the Standing Committee.

4.3. Pending complaints

a. Plans to turn an important site for bats into a museum (Netherlands)

Following a complaint from Leiden Natural History Museum about The Hague city council’s plans to turn part of the casemate system, the “*Delflandbunker*”, the most important hibernation site in the Netherlands and north-western Europe for the pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*), into a museum and visitor centre, the Secretariat had written to the Netherlands government asking for information. So far there had been no reply.

The area in question was a Natura 2000 site. Eurobats had also contacted the Secretariat to draw its attention to the negative impact that this project would have not only on the pond bat but also on other species hibernating in the bunkers, which offered unique ecological conditions.

The Bureau decided that if there was no reply over the next few months, it would treat the matter as a possible new file at its next meeting.

b. Road construction project in a border region of Switzerland and Germany “Zollfreistrasse”

The Secretariat had received a complaint from the Swiss and German “Friends of the Earth” associations about plans to build a road link between the towns of Lörrach and Weil, which could lead to a loss of biodiversity in the area affected by the project. This area was home to rare species of flora and fauna, some of which were protected by the Bern Convention or included in the Swiss Red List.

The Secretariat told the Bureau that although, in its view, the site was of no real European importance, it had nevertheless written to the governments concerned, asking for information.

The Swiss authorities had replied to the request for information. The purpose of the road, which would cross 700 metres of Swiss territory, was to relieve daily traffic problems; in 1977, Switzerland and Germany had signed an official agreement on this subject.

The natural features and landscape affected by the project had been assessed by the competent cantonal and federal authorities as being of local to regional importance. In 1996, the Federal Court

had ruled that the project was in keeping with national and international environmental protection law. Planning permission had been granted in 2002 but the work had not started as some legal procedures were still under way.

In the opinion of the Swiss government, the construction of the road did not contravene the provisions of the Bern Convention.

In the light of this information, the Bureau decided to take no further action on the complaint.

c. Construction of the Balchik wind farm – Via Pontica (Bulgaria)

At its meeting in September 2004, the Bureau had asked the Bulgarian government for a full report on this matter. No such report had been submitted. The Secretariat reminded participants that the NGOs' complaint concerned the construction of Bulgaria's first wind farm, the chosen site being on the Via Pontica, one of the most important migration routes.

At the last meeting of the Standing Committee, the possibility of visiting the site had been envisaged.

The Bulgarian government had confirmed that it was willing to receive a visit from an expert.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to arrange this expert appraisal, the aim of which would be to examine the project to determine whether it was compatible with the obligations arising from the Bern Convention. Full account should be taken of the Standing Committee's work on wind farms.

5. Follow-up to recommendations – Developments

5.1 Follow-up to recommendations

a. Follow-up to Recommendation No. 107 (2003) on the Odeluca dam (Portugal)

The Secretariat drew the Bureau's attention to the information provided by the Portuguese authorities.

There were no new developments with regard to the construction of the dam. The infringement procedure instituted by the European Commission was still in progress. The national water authority was funding studies in order to assess and minimise the dam's impact on habitats, flora and fauna:

- The national action plan for the conservation of the Iberian lynx (ILCA) was being evaluated by the State Secretary's Office. It was due to be adopted at the end of 2004;
- Various monitoring and research projects were being conducted, including a LIFE project to create natural conditions conducive to the reintroduction of the lynx;
- Co-operation with the Spanish authorities: an agreement had been signed to set up a bilateral committee which would be responsible for matters relating to the conservation of the lynx and the imperial eagle.

The Portuguese authorities had outlined a scheme to reintroduce the lynx in the Malcata nature reserve.

The Bureau took note of the information, saying that the situation would continue to be kept under close review.

b. Follow-up to Recommendation No. 108 (2003) on the proposed construction of the "Via Baltica" (Poland)

Pursuant to Recommendation No. 108 (2003), a tenders committee had been set up by the project's sponsors, the Roads Directorate (DGPM). It would be responsible for preparing the terms of reference for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and would supervise the entire procedure. The NGOs were represented on this committee.

In addition, a report on the development of this section of Corridor No. 1 was being prepared by the Directorate General for Regional Policy. Much of this report was concerned with identifying sites which were of environmental importance and which called for a specific approach. The report would serve as a basis for the Strategic Environmental Assessment and should be available by the end of 2005.

Following a letter from the “*Coalition to save Rospuda River Valley*” about the threats posed by the new section of the Via Baltica which it was planned to build between Augustow and Suwalki, the Secretariat had written to the Polish government.

5.2 Catching, killing or trading of protected birds in Cyprus

The Bureau took note of the information provided by the NGOs and welcomed the close co-operation between the UK and Cypriot authorities. It observed that despite every effort to stop them, these illegal practices were still going on, and decided to keep the matter under review.

6. Proposed amendment to Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure

The Secretariat presented the proposed amendment which sought to widen the composition of the Bureau to reflect the increase in the number of contracting Parties and the need for broader representation.

The Bureau felt that the proposal was legitimate and decided to include it in the agenda of the Standing Committee, which would be required to appoint the two new members.

7. Opinion of the Bureau

The Secretariat told the Bureau that the Ministers’ Deputies had instructed it to prepare an opinion on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1689 (2004) on “Hunting and Europe’s environmental balance”.

After discussing the recommendation, the Bureau adopted the opinion (as it figures in appendix 3 to this report), taking the view that, provided it was controlled, hunting could play a role in the preservation and development of numerous areas of natural importance in Europe.

It welcomed the possible drafting of a charter, which should be done in consultation with all the parties involved and with due regard for the work already done in this area in 1985 ((Recommendation N° R (85) 17 of the Committee of Ministers on the training of hunters).

Ms Jepsen further drew the Bureau’s attention to the existence of a guide on hunting, which had been published under the “Birds” Directive.

8. Other business

There was no other business.

The next meeting would be held on 12 September 2005.

The Chair declared the meeting closed, after thanking the participants.



APPENDIX 1

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Strasbourg, 9 March 2004

Standing Committee **Bureau meeting**

Strasbourg, 8 April 2005
(Room 17, opening : 9.30 am)

DRAFT AGENDA

1. **Adoption of the agenda**
2. **General information**
3. **Implementation of the 2005 Programme of activities**
4. **Implementation of the Convention : Files**
 - 4.1. **Specific Sites - Files open**
 - Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)
 - Ukraine: building of a canal in the Bystroye Stuary (Danube delta)
 - Bulgaria: motorway construction through the Kresna Gorge
 - 4.2. **Possible new files**
 - France: Conservation of the Hermann turtle in the plaine des Maures
 - 4.3. **Complaints in stand-by and other informations**
 - Project of a museum in an important hibernation site for bats (Netherlands)
 - Road construction project in a border region of Switzerland and Germany "Zollfreistrasse"
5. **Follow-up of the Recommendations - Evolution of the situation in:**
 - Portugal: Odelouca dam [Recommendation No. 107 (2003)]
 - Poland: proposed construction of the 'Via Baltica' [Recommendation No. 108 (2003)]
6. **Proposal of amendment of article 19 of the Rules of procedure of the Standing Committee**
7. Draft opinion of the Bureau on Recommendation 1689 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Hunting and Europe's environmental balance
8. **Other business**



APPENDIX 2

Strasbourg, le 6 avril 2005
[list part Bureau avril 2005.doc]

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

Standing Committee / Comité permanent

Meeting of the Bureau / Réunion du Bureau

Strasbourg, le 8 avril 2005
Palais de l'Europe, Salle 17

PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE PROVISOIRE DES PARTICIPANTS

FRANCE / FRANCE Mrs 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@environnement.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 JEPSSEN, 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@cec.eu.int (E)

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 Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Chef de la Division du Patrimoine naturel et 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

Mrs 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 61. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : françoise.bauer@coe.int

Ms Elisa RIVERA, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique

Tel : +33 3 88 41 50 72. Fax : +33 3 88 41 37 51. E-mail : elisa.rivera@coe.int

Mrs Véronique de CUSSAC, Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity Division / Division du Patrimoine naturel et de la Diversité biologique

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

APPENDIX 3



Strasbourg, 8 April 2005
[tpvs03erev_2005.doc]

T-PVS (2005) 3 rev

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

25th meeting
Strasbourg, 28 November – 1 December 2005

**Opinion of the Bureau of the Standing Committee
on Recommendation 1689 (2004)
of the Parliamentary Assembly
on Hunting and Europe's environmental balance**

Secrétariat Memorandum
prepared by
the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage

CONTENTS

Appendix 1

Recommendation 1689 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly
on Hunting and Europe's environmental balance

Appendix 2

Opinion of the Bureau of the Standing Committee

Appendix 3

Recommendation N° R (85) 17 of the Committee of Ministers
to Member States on the training of hunters

Appendix 4

Recommendation N° R (94) 7 of the Committee of Ministers
on a general policy for sustainable and environment-friendly tourism development

1. Background

The Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly adopted this Recommendation in Warsaw on 23 November 2004 (full text in appendix 1). The Deputies considered it at their 909th meeting, brought it to the attention of their governments, as well as of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention for information and possible comments, and invited the GR-C to prepare a draft reply.

2. About the Recommendation

The Parliamentary Assembly notes that hunting is practised in all European countries. Some 120,000 full-time jobs are said to be generated by hunting in Europe. Hunting may serve to regulate ecosystems or harm them if badly managed. Thus it is important to control the impact of hunting on natural resources, in keeping with the principle of sustainable development and in compliance with the legal instruments of the Council of Europe, in particular the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

The countries of central and eastern Europe's potential (with species which has become rare or almost extinct elsewhere) is far greater in comparison to western countries, since hunting was relatively restricted in the communist era. In this context, the Assembly is concerned at the changes made in recent years concerning the liberalisation of hunting. Nevertheless, if managed professionally and scientifically, the hunting tourism resulting from that liberalisation may prove to be a factor of development for rural and mountain regions.

Consequently, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

- i. draw up a European charter on hunting, as a guide setting out common principles and good practices for hunting, particularly for the organisation of hunting tourism on the continent;
- ii. set up a mixed pan-European network, made up of hunters and ornithologists, with the task of monitoring migratory bird populations along the major migration routes;
- iii. harmonise, on a European scale, the systems for training hunters, which should be based on a common core syllabus backed up by specific training courses resulting, where applicable, in the awarding of a European hunting permit.

A number of recommendations are addressed through the Committee of Ministers, to the governments of member states, notably an invitation to sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, the Bern Convention.

3. Action

The Bureau adopted on 8th April 2005 the opinion in appendix 2 to this document.

Appendix 1

Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Recommendation 1689 (2004)¹

Hunting and Europe's environmental balance

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that hunting is widely practised in all European countries and forged by a long tradition. However, individual hunting traditions differ greatly in Europe from country to country, ranging from hunting as a source of food to hunting as a sport or a social event. For some time, there has been a shift in the behaviour of hunters towards practices that are more respectful of nature, game and habitats, which also contributes to the preservation of rural lifestyles, particularly where farming and forestry are concerned. Some 120 000 full-time jobs are said to be generated by hunting in Europe.

2. Hunting may serve to regulate ecosystems but may also harm them if badly managed. For that reason the Assembly considers that, from the environmental point of view, it is important to control the impact of hunting on natural resources, in keeping with the principle of sustainable development and in compliance with the legal instruments of the Council of Europe, in particular the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

3. The Assembly regrets, however, that among the Council of Europe member states, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Russia, San Marino and Serbia and Montenegro have not yet signed the Bern Convention.

4. The countries of central and eastern Europe are in an unusual situation in that their game potential is far greater than that of most of the western countries, since hunting was relatively restricted in the communist era. Some species that have become or are becoming extinct in the rest of Europe are still abundant in central and east European countries, as is the case, for example, of certain large carnivores much sought after by hunting trophy enthusiasts: the brown bear (*ursus arctos*), the wolf (*canis lupus*) and the lynx (*lynx lynx*).

5. In this context, the Assembly is concerned at the changes made in recent years in central and east European countries concerning the liberalisation of hunting. Nevertheless, it believes that, if managed professionally and scientifically, the hunting tourism resulting from that liberalisation may prove to be a factor of development for rural and mountain regions. It may also make a significant contribution to rural tourism, ecotourism, job creation and the preservation of local traditions.

6. Consequently, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

- i. draw up a European charter on hunting, as a guide setting out common principles and good practices for hunting, particularly for the organisation of hunting tourism on the continent;
- ii. set up a mixed pan-European network, made up of hunters and ornithologists, with the task of monitoring migratory bird populations along the major migration routes;
- iii. harmonise, on a European scale, the systems for training hunters, which should be based on a common core syllabus backed up by specific training courses resulting, where applicable, in the awarding of a European hunting permit;
- iv. invite the member states to take measures with a view to:
 - a. signing and ratifying, if they have not already done so, the Bern Convention and ensuring that its provisions are transposed into domestic legislation and complied with, particularly with regard to the protected species listed in Appendix II thereto;
 - b. applying in a uniform manner the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites – the “Washington Convention”);
 - c. encouraging dialogue between associations of hunters and ecologists, anti-hunting and animal welfare organisations, and between hunters and farmers, to foster better co-operation for the preservation of the environmental balance;
 - d. integrating hunting tourism in economic and ecological development programmes in rural and mountain regions;
 - e. encouraging the implementation of the new European Union Rural Development Regulations, particularly their provisions concerning wildlife protection.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 23 November 2004 (see [Doc. 10337](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Coifan).*

Appendix 2

OPINION OF THE BERN CONVENTION BUREAU ON RECOMMENDATION 1689 (2004) OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON HUNTING AND EUROPE'S ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE

The Bern Convention Bureau:

- Welcomes Recommendation 1689 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Hunting and Europe's environmental balance as they consider that hunting, if properly managed, may play a role in maintaining and enhancing many areas of natural interest in Europe;
- Welcomes the idea of elaborating, in collaboration with concerned stakeholders, of a European Charter of Hunting dealing with all relevant aspects of hunting and wildlife conservation
- Recalls that the Council of Europe Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) already provides a legal framework to regulate the hunting of species so as to keep their populations out of danger;
- Notes that principles established in Recommendation N° R (85) 17 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the training of hunters are still fully valid;
- Notes that appendix 2 to Recommendation N° R (85) 17 of the Committee of Ministers already contains "*suggestions for a code of conduct for hunters*" which list principles and good practices for hunting aimed to encouraging hunters to adopt practices and attitudes that will result in a greater respect to ecological consideration and a more sustainable hunting;
- Notes that the monitoring of the conservation status of populations of bird species protected by the Bern Convention and listed in its Appendices II and III, which include all birds regularly hunted, is already carried out at the national level by governments, conservation agencies, scientific institutions, and ornithologist in a very efficient manner in most Council of Europe states and other hunters organisations and conservation organisations (in particular BirdLife partners) are often associated to data gathering and analysis;
- Furthermore notes that there are already mechanism of co-ordination at the scientific level for both the gathering of population data (counting of individuals, ringing, etc.) and their collection and analysis at the European level, and that no new network is therefore necessary to carry out this task;
- Recalls that appendix 1 to Recommendation N° R (85) 17 provides suggestions for the hunters' examination syllabus which could form the basis of a possible harmonised European hunter examination and related training courses;
- Considers that game tourism should be subject to specific attention by governments to avoid that it exists an excessive hunting effect on certain vulnerable species or leads to unsustainable human pressure on areas of interest for nature, in particular those included in the Bern Convention Emerald Network and the European Union Natura 2000 Network;
- Believes that organisers of game tourism should make special efforts to ensure that their clients are aware of the hunting legislation of the country being visited, so as to respect scrupulously its laws and regulations, including those on export of trophies;
- Recalls that general principles mentioned in appendix to Recommendation N° R (94) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on a general policy for sustainable and environment-friendly tourism development, in particular general principles 2 which states that every planned tourism activity should be geared to sustainable development and its impact on environment should be assessed.

The Bern Convention Bureau suggests that the Deputies may wish to:

- Encourage governments of Member States of the Council of Europe to promote principles for sustainable hunting such as those suggested for a "code of conduct for hunters" appended to Recommendation N° R (85) 17 of the Committee of Ministers on the training of hunters;

- Invite governments of Member States to launch campaigns aimed to shifting the behaviour of hunters toward practices that are more respectful of the ecological and social values of nature and game;
- Invite governments of Member States to ensure that domestic legislation on hunting is fully compatible with provisions in the Bern Convention, and it is strictly enforced, reinforcing where necessary controls on procedures and making penalties for non-respect of hunting regulations more dissuasive than at present;
- Invite governments of Member States to pay particular attention to game tourism, ensuring that it is carried out in full respect of the legislations of all states involved and it does not cause unsustainable pressures on game species or natural habitats protected by the Bern Convention;
- Invite governments of Member States to promote, in close co-operation with hunting organisations, training of hunters taking into account the proposals for the hunters' examination syllabus specified in appendix 1 of Recommendation N° 4 (85) 17;
- Invite Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the Bern Convention to consider its signature and ratification;
- Invite governments of Member States to encourage dialogue between all sectors of society interested in hunting (hunters, conservationist, foresters, farmers, animal welfare organisations, etc.) so they may all co-operate for the preservation of the environment and the maintenance in favourable conservation status of game species;
- Invite governments of Member States to both assess the possible impact on the environment of game tourism and ensure that planned game tourism activities are geared to sustainable development, as proposed by general principle 2 of appendix 1 to Recommendation N° R (94) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on a general policy for sustainable and environment-friendly tourism development.
- Invite the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention to consider the elaboration, in collaboration with concerned stakeholders, of a European Charter on Hunting dealing with all relevant aspects of hunting and wildlife conservation

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION NO. R (85) 17

**of the committee of ministers to member states
ON THE TRAINING OF HUNTERS**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 September 1985
at the 388th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the resolutions of the European Ministerial Conferences on the Environment concerning the protection of wildlife;

Having regard to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats;

Recognising that wildlife must be preserved for present and future generations for its scientific, aesthetic, cultural and educational value;

Considering that hunting may be regarded as an important element in the management of wildlife provided that it respects the ecological needs of species and the requirements of biological equilibria;

Noting however that certain methods and forms of behaviour may have harmful effects on some species;

Conscious of the need to ensure the training of hunters and to make them more aware of their responsibilities towards the natural heritage,

Recommends the Governments of member states:

1. to consider the desirability, where it is not already the case, of subjecting the issue of a game licence to the passing of an examination consisting of a theoretical and a practical test;
2. to take into account, when drawing up the syllabus for such an examination, the suggestions appended to this recommendation;
3. to co-operate with the relevant associations and other bodies in promoting educational action to encourage hunters to perfect their knowledge of fauna in general and of its habitats and of wildlife management;
4. to commend to the relevant associations and other bodies the task of adhering to and setting up a code of conduct for hunters, on the basis of the suggestions found in Appendix II.

Appendix 1 to Recommendation No. R (85) 17

Suggestions for the hunters's examination syllabus

A. Theoretical test

I. Knowledge of fauna and habits: identification and characteristics of game species and protected species

- description
- habitat
- signs of presence
- behaviour
- diet
- breeding
- population dynamics
- population management
- disease
- impact of the species on the environment
- specific arrangements
- main biotopes and capacity of various environments
- impact of agriculture and forestry
- role of predators
- introduction and reintroduction of species
- stocking and release of animals

II. Knowledge of national and international provisions and legislation governing hunting and nature conservation

- Elementary knowledge of international law
- Knowledge of national legislation
- Exercise of hunting rights
- Restrictions on hunting
- Hunting permit
- Hunting grounds (use, rental)
- Hunting seasons
- Hunting plans
- Control of game populations
- Organisation and supervision of hunting
- Authorised means methods, firearms and ammunition
- Compensation for damage caused by game and hunters
- Insurance
- Offences, control
- Care of game
- Protected species

III. Management of game and habitats, hunting methods and practice

Elements required for compiling management plans: population density, population structure (age, sex), quantitative increase, state of population

- Population measurement
- Improvement of environmental conditions and capacity
- Knowledge of firearms, ammunition and other authorised hunting equipment
- Safety rules
- Hunting dogs
- Treatment of dead game

IV. Ethics

Hunters' behaviour towards:

- Fauna and its environment
- Live and dead game
- Themselves
- Other users of nature
- Other hunters
- Other people's property

B. Practical test

Recognition of game species
Handling guns
Shooting
Reflexes
Actual hunt: behaviour in the field
Application of safety rules

Remark

A probationary period may be envisaged before final award of the permit.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (85) 17

Suggestions for a code of conduct for hunters

The purpose of this code is to foster hunting ethics as an essential complement to any legal system, however good it may be. The hunter bears responsibility for a natural heritage that must be passed on to future generations and must not only comply with hunting laws and regulations but also abide by the rules governing the ecological balance. He must be aware of his obligations and responsibilities towards nature in general and game in particular, as well as towards other persons and property. A high standard of conduct will help the hunter to earn the respect of others. Hunting, now a leisure activity, once served to meet material needs; in present-day Europe it inevitably entails an element of management. This shift towards a game-management role for hunters has already begun and should be encouraged.

Rules of conduct

I. Respect the restrictions on your hunting rights: they are dictated primarily by the ecological requirements of species and their habitats

1. Hunt only those species for which hunting is permitted; shooting an animal of a protected species is unworthy of a hunter.
2. Do not associate the pleasure of hunting with the number of kills. "The best hunter is not the one with most kills to his credit."
3. Respect closed seasons and abide by authorised methods and hunting boundaries.

II. Treat all game with respect

1. Refrain from any practice contrary to the spirit and ethics of hunting.
2. Do not use methods of non-selective or mass capture.

3. Do not hunt when game numbers or animals' ability to survive are diminished by natural conditions or where these result in exceptional concentrations facilitating kills in excess of normal hunting practice. Help all wildlife to survive in difficult circumstances.
4. Identify the animal before shooting.
5. Shoot only at normal distances and in normal shooting conditions.
6. Do not shoot close to the boundaries of protected areas, which are indispensable to sound game management.
7. Avoid inflicting unnecessary suffering on game and do not abandon wounded or dead game; organise a systematic search.
8. Make the best possible use of the game you have killed.
9. Do not hunt for gain.

III. Seek to be a competent and responsible hunter

1. Know all you can about the ecology of species.
2. Know the laws and regulations governing hunting and the conservation of wildlife.
3. Participate in group action designed not only to defend the interests of hunters but also to improve the quality of wildlife.
4. Maintain contacts with the authorities and associations responsible for hunting and nature conservation.
5. Talk with environment officials and members of the farming and forestry community to impress upon them the requirements of conservation of the environment and wildlife.
6. Take part in scientific wildlife studies.
7. Further the education and behaviour of young hunters by precept and example.

IV. Be aware of your responsibilities towards the natural heritage shared by all of humanity

1. Pay particular attention to migrating species and to the particular needs of such species passing through or wintering in your country.
2. Take care that traditional ways of hunting in each country make all due allowance for the conservation of migratory species.
3. Assist scientific research into migratory bird species, in particular by answering enquiries about numbers and kills and by returning rings found on birds shot or found dead.

V. You are responsible for your own actions: strictly observe security rules

1. When not hunting:
 - leave your gun unloaded, if possible dismantled and placed out of reach of children and other adults; the same precautions apply to ammunition;
 - when driving keep your gun dismantled or in its case;
 - make sure your gun is in good working order.

2. While hunting:

- use the most suitable weapons and ammunition so that shooting is done properly;
- make sure that your gun barrel is not blocked;
- obey instructions from the leader of the hunting party;
- do not close the breech unless the barrels are pointed at the ground;
- never carry a gun in a horizontal position;
- open and unload your gun before negotiating obstacles;
- unload your gun and leave the breech open when moving from one place to another during the hunt;
- locate your neighbours and everyone taking part in the hunt as well as people out walking and make sure that they know where you are;
- never shoot into a bush nor in the direction of another person even if he seems to be out of range; always make sure of the final destination of your projectile;
- beware of ricochets (on icy or stony ground, etc.).

VI. Show concern for others

1. Avoid damaging farms or woodland (trampling over crops, disturbing domestic animals, leaving gates open, etc.);
2. Preserve public property (signs, sign-posts, telephone wires, power lines);
3. Be courteous and helpful to others in the vicinity;
4. Do not pollute: pick up your spent cartridges;
5. Help prevent game damaging crops;
6. See to it that any compensation for which you are liable for such damage is paid promptly.

VII. Be a good manager

A. Protect and manage game populations

1. Limit kills so as to maintain an optimum density of the various populations and to permit their regeneration.
2. Maintain a healthy, balanced and diversified game population that is adapted to local conditions.
3. Carefully monitor the development of game quality and quantity.
4. Recognise the essential role of predators.
5. Immediately report disease to the competent authorities.
6. Maintain or replenish game stocks from local strains, taking care to avoid genetic and health risks.
7. Prompt representative organisations to negotiate the establishment of hunting plans with the local authorities, setting kill quotas based on sound rules of management.
8. Avoid the practice of releasing game immediately before or during a hunt.
9. Support measures to combat poaching.

B. Protect and manage hunting grounds

1. Help maintain the diversity of habitats, which is the very foundation of nature's richness and the guarantee of hunting's future, by conserving existing habitats and restoring them where necessary.
2. Strive to prevent the destruction of wetlands essential for water game and migrating fauna.
3. Equip hunting areas so that they can meet the needs of game throughout the year.
4. Avoid all unnecessary disturbance during the mating season.
5. Conduct joint activities with the farming and forestry community in order to limit harmful practices (chemical treatment, levelling of embankments and hedges, filling in of pools and ditches, burning off stubble, etc.).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION NO. R (94) 7

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

**ON A GENERAL POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE
AND ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

*(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 September 1994
at the 516th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Organisation is to achieve a greater unity between its members, *inter alia*, in order to foster their economic and social progress;

Having regard to the various activities carried out within the Council of Europe and other international organisations;

Bearing in mind the declaration of the ministerial conference held in Lucerne from 28 to 30 April 1993 on "Environment for Europe", which calls on the Council of Europe to pursue its activities to promote ecologically viable tourism;

Taking into account the declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio from 3 to 14 June 1992;

Stressing that tourism constitutes one of the mainsprings of economic growth and is likely to become the foremost world industry;

Acknowledging that tourism is a factor in bringing peoples together, forging a European identity and heightening awareness of the value of their natural and cultural heritage;

Noting a growing interest in all forms of tourism associated with the discovery and knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage;

Convinced that the environment has an intrinsic value which is greater than its value as a tourism asset;

Underlining that the relationship between tourism and the environment is a delicate one;

Aware of the threats posed to the natural and landscape environment and local populations and cultures by the excessive and uncontrolled development of tourism;

Observing that levels of tourism development and fragility of the areas concerned vary from one country to another, and even from one region to another;

Convinced of the need to establish a general framework in order to safeguard and restore the quality of the environment, which is the prime resource of tourism,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

a. base their tourism development policy on the principles and measures set out in the appendix to this recommendation, tailoring them where necessary to the special features of fragility of certain regions;

b. ensure that the national, regional and local authorities, those institutions responsible for tourism and the environment, the tourist industry and all other sectors involved be duly informed of this recommendation and respect the principles contained herein;

Instructs the Secretary General to convey this recommendation to the international organisations and international financial bodies working in the field of the development of tourism.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (94) 7

I. General principles

1. The principles of prevention, precaution and remedial action allied with the need for sustainable development should underlie any tourism development policy.
2. Every planned tourism activity or development should be geared to sustainable development and its impact on the environment should be assessed; environmental considerations should be integrated into the decision-making process from the start of the project.
3. In principle, no permission should be given for any project having a significant environmental impact without evidence of its environmental, economic and financial viability. However, if this cannot be proven, other considerations may be taken into account, such as the project's contribution to socio-cultural development.
4. Tourism development should be totally or partially self-financing where possible, with the emphasis on achieving or building on sustainability.
5. Tourism development should be a gradual process and not outstrip infrastructure improvements. Tourism projects must be carried out within the limits of the local infrastructure.
6. Tourism should be developed so that in addition it benefits the local community, provides support for the local economy and takes account of the latter's ability to absorb development. Wherever possible, it should encourage employment of the local workforce and use local materials and traditional skills.
7. Tourism activities and amenities should be located in carefully chosen areas so as to restrict development in sensitive regions. Wherever possible, before building any new amenities, the possibility of using, modernising or rehabilitating existing infrastructures should first be considered.
8. Tourism activities and development must respect the scale, nature, character and capacity of the local physical and social environment of the place in which they are sited, as well as its natural resources, landscape quality, historic and archaeological heritage and cultural identity.

To this end, every project should be subjected to an environmental impact assessment. Where an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required, due to the nature and size of the project and the character of the area to be affected, the following elements should be included:

- the impact on environment, landscape, fauna, flora, water, land and energy resources;
 - the impact on local infrastructure, economy, society and employment;
 - the direct, indirect, immediate and long-term effects of the project;
 - the effects of secondary developments (transport, new infrastructures, etc.);
 - adequate consultation with the local public and local communities;
 - possible remedial or compensating measures.
9. Therefore, where appropriate, every tourism project should:
 - avoid creating additional pressures on the environment;
 - encourage the use of public and non-motorised transport, as well as the most suitable technology for saving water and energy, treating effluent and processing and recycling waste;
 - be accompanied by a monitoring programme to ensure that once in operation, the project keeps to its environmental commitments, and that unforeseen negative impacts are detected and dealt with immediately. Eco-audits should be carried out on large-scale developments;

- strive to make visitors aware of the need to protect the environment and the constraints that this protection entails.

II. Implementation of the general principles

The implementation of the general principles will be at international, national, regional and local level.

A. National authorities

1. In order to implement the general principles national authorities should:
 - a. develop national strategies for sustainable and environmentally-friendly development;
 - b. ensure that the various policies and decision-making levels are coherent and consistent. Tourism development is to be considered in terms of both the overall economy of a country and the local economy;
 - c. attempt to draw up an inventory of the country's cultural and natural resources and set up a legislative framework to enhance and protect them where necessary;
 - d. preserve areas designated as vulnerable by following a policy of land use control and through purchase, renting and management agreements;
 - e. draw up a framework for integrated planning and resource management;
 - f. draw up a national tourism policy taking full account of the environment and defining the role and importance of tourism in the national economy; such a policy should be tied in with overall planning policy;
 - g. ensure close collaboration between bodies responsible for providing reliable statistics on the tourist industry and monitoring the state of the country's environment;
 - h. provide environmental education and training for tourism professionals and ensure that training in the tourism sector builds awareness of the environment;
 - i. run campaigns to build awareness of the environment among local communities, elected representatives in tourist destinations and tourists themselves;
 - j. propose charters for the tourist industry establishing qualitative criteria for environment-friendly tourism;
 - k. control tourist demand and flow, in particular by staggering the tourist season and easing pressure on certain sites by developing other centres of interest, introducing admission fees at certain sites or for certain services, or limiting the number of tourists;
 - l. ensure that sites harmed by excessive tourism are restored as appropriate;
 - m. diversify what is on offer for tourists by encouraging new types of activities as alternatives to mass tourism, based on an interest in the country concerned and knowledge of its heritage, culture and way of life;
 - n. encourage the introduction of environmentally sound products and activities by relevant measures including the awarding of prizes and quality labels;
 - o. consider, where appropriate, the development of a tax incentive scheme to encourage environment-friendly tourism development projects;
 - p. consider the possibility of introducing sanctions penalising those responsible for activities harmful to the environment, geared above all to preventing harm; these should include sufficient levels of compensation to be paid by developers for the repair of any damage caused during the development phase.
2. National authorities, acting through international organisations, should propose that these organisations:
 - a. adopt an integrated planning approach to future development of the tourism industry, emphasising the need to protect the social, natural and cultural environments;

- b.* promote international awards for sustainable tourism respecting the environment;
- c.* publish international guides of good tourism practice *vis-à-vis* the environment, including databases of relevant documents and successful projects;
- d.* support training and awareness-building programmes on tourism and the environment;
- e.* support pilot projects for sustainable tourism and disseminate information about them.

3. National authorities, acting through international financial bodies, should propose that these bodies:

- a.* request environmental impact statements for all projects they finance and run impact assessment studies (EIA) themselves where appropriate;
- b.* ensure that all relevant procedures have been complied with;
- c.* ascertain the environmental viability of the project on the same footing as the economic and financial viability of the project;
- d.* make suitable supervision arrangements to check that the project is properly run;
- e.* encourage the use of the most appropriate technology so as to minimise the impact on the environment.

B. Local and regional authorities

In order to implement the general principles local and regional authorities should:

- a.* exercise control over tourist development with potentially significant environmental consequences through regional, local and urban planning policy and a policy of nature and landscape protection;
- b.* establish local tourism plans, based on inventories of sites and biotopes and on their carrying capacity and social accommodation capacity as well as land use plans; local tourism plans should be integrated into overall local development plans, and local tourism development funding should be provided in the framework of these plans where appropriate;
- c.* make the issue of building permits contingent on requirements such as a guarantee of quality development and respect for the environment, and ensure that these criteria are respected;
- d.* work closely with all public and private-sector operation to ensure co-ordination between different tourism development projects, and maintain a regular, two-way flow of information.