

Strasbourg, 22 May 2017
[Inf10e_2017.docx]

T-PVS/Inf (2017) 10

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

37th meeting
Strasbourg, 5-8 December 2017

**1st meeting of the Restricted Group of Experts
on Biodiversity and Climate Change**
Paris, 14-15 June 2017

**CONCEPT NOTE ON THE EXPECTED RESULTS
OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE RESTRICTED
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

CONCEPT NOTE
ON THE EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE RESTRICTED GROUP
OF EXPERTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. CONTEXT

In 2006, on the initiative of its Standing Committee, the Bern Convention launched its work on the issue of climate change and biodiversity conservation, with the creation of a dedicated Group of Experts.

The Group of Experts on Climate Change and Biodiversity is customarily composed of delegates designated by Contracting Parties to the Convention, of invited experts or consultants and of partner organisations, from both the non-governmental sector and from other major environment related Conventions and Agreements. The mandate of the Group is to present to the Standing Committee specific proposals, guidance and/or Recommendations to help Parties address the challenges of climate change in the implementation of the Convention and its objectives.

Under the impulsion of this Group, nine Recommendations were adopted by the Standing Committee in the period 2006-2012, including some specific ones, for instance on climate change and mountain regions, climate change in European islands, invasive alien species and climate change and Conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions.

In 2012, in an attempt to improve Parties' implementation of the Bern Convention standards in this field, the Standing Committee adopted [Recommendation No°159 \(2012\)](#) on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change. The reason for the adoption of this new Recommendation was the observation that the very large number of recommended actions throughout the years created a deflation in their implementation at national level.

2. BERN CONVENTION PROGRAMME OF WORK ON CLIMATIC CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

In the period 2014 - 2015, the need to continue facilitating both implementation and reporting by Parties continued to guide the work of the Convention. The Group of Experts prepared a new [Programme of Work on Climate Change and Biodiversity](#) which was adopted by the Standing Committee to the Convention in 2015. Although this Programme of Work is constructed around 9 priority areas, the need to streamline the action by Parties and the observation that they need support in order to effectively and quickly implement the existing guidance have placed the three following areas of work as priority ones:

- a. Promote the implementation of agreed recommendations
- b. Assess species' vulnerability
- c. Establish and manage protected areas appropriately

The issue of effectively communicating on the vital role biodiversity plays in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change was also largely discussed by the Group of Experts and lead to the adoption of a specific [Recommendation No.187 \(2016\) on communicating on climate change and biodiversity](#). A publication called [Manual on Communicating climate change and biodiversity to policy makers](#) was also developed.

3. CREATION OF A RESTRICTED GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

In order to facilitate and speed up further work on the realisation of the priority areas of the Programme of Work, the Standing Committee decided to establish, in 2017, a Restricted Group of Experts on Climate Change and Biodiversity. This restricted Group, composed of a small number of

national delegates and an equal number of experts from partner organisations, would meet in alternate years with the full government designated Group of Experts. The total number of participants in such meetings should not exceed 15.

On the decision of the Bureau of the Convention, in 2017 six countries were invited to send a representative to the Group, namely Albania, France, Italy, Norway, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland. The choice of the countries was based on two criteria: 1) the geographical representation of Parties to the Convention and 2) the interest and active participation of countries in the work of the Convention on the issue of Climate change since 2006. Four experts from long-term partner organisations are also invited to participate at the meeting. The possibility to invite an additional expert/speaker was also foreseen.

4. THE MANDATE OF THE RESTRICTED GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

The mandate of the Restricted Group of Experts is to streamline action by Parties in the field of biodiversity conservation in the face of climate change by facilitating the practical implementation of the Bern Convention Programme of Work. For this purpose, the Restricted Group will:

- a. review the current standards (Recommendations and guidance) of the Convention;
- b. review the existing reporting and monitoring tools of the Convention to assess progress by Parties;
- c. assess the feasibility and plan the ways and timeframe for implementing the three main priorities of the Programme of Work;
- d. propose new procedures and tools which could support Parties' action and facilitate the exchange of good practices and initiatives, including guidance on the collection and analysis of information and data; and
- e. propose eventual partnerships to be established for implementing the Programme of Work and guide their implementation.

The first meeting of the Restricted Group of Experts will thus serve as a platform for brainstorming and planning the next steps in the Convention work in the field.

5. ENHANCING CO-OPERATION WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT

As from January 2017, the Bern Convention Secretariat was placed in a new Division called Major Risks and Environment, within the Division Culture, Nature and Heritage of the Directorate General for Democracy.

In line with these internal organisational changes, the meeting of the Restricted Group of Experts should also achieve to identify possible new initiatives to be developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe's European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA). Created in 1987, the EUR-OPA Agreement is a platform for co-operation between European and Southern Mediterranean countries in the field of major natural and technological disasters. Its field of action covers the knowledge of hazards, risk prevention, risk management, post-crisis analysis and rehabilitation. It has to date 25 member States.

Back in 2010, the Bern Convention has already developed guidance on issues facing biodiversity linked to major natural risks such as wild fires, through the [Recommendation No. 147 \(2010\) on guidance for Parties on wildland fires, biodiversity and climate change](#). The issues of nature-based solution and risk management, ecosystem-based management for protected areas, communication on nature-based solutions and hazards are among the areas anticipated for enhanced co-operation.

The Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR) is a global partnership comprised of UN agencies, international and regional NGOs as well as specialist institutes that collectively aim to influence policy, enhance implementation and better coordinate efforts in

environmental management for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable livelihoods. It promotes ecosystems management as the key strategy to reduce disaster risk, increase local resilience and adapt to a changing climate.

A representative of PEDRR is also invited to the meeting, with the objective to present PEDRR's main activities and to contribute to the discussion in order to identify possible collaborations and synergies with the Bern Convention and the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE RESTRICTED GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

The draft agenda of the 1st meeting of the Restricted Group of Experts on Climate Change and Biodiversity appears as appendix 1 to this Concept Note.

The expected results of the meeting are:

- a. New tools for developing action-oriented reporting by the Convention (Priority area a) Promote the implementation of agreed recommendations) are identified and ways for their implementation are planned.
- b. Methods for implementing priority areas b) (Assess species' vulnerability) and c) (Establish and manage protected areas appropriately) of the Programme of Work are identified and ways for their implementation are planned.
- c. New partnerships and strengthened co-operation with other institutions, agreements and Conventions are planned.
- d. The timeframe and actors involved in the realisation of expected results 1), 2) and 3) is prepared and identified.

Appendix 1: Draft Agenda of the 1st meeting of the Restricted Group of Experts on biodiversity and Climate Change

Strasbourg, 2 May 2017
[tpvs08e_2017.docx]

T-PVS (2017) 8

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**1st meeting of the
Restricted Group of Experts on
Biodiversity and Climate Change**

14-15 June 2017
Paris, France

- PRELIMINARY DRAFT AGENDA -

*Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

WEDNESDAY, 14 JUNE, 09H00**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

- Welcome by Gianluca Silvestrini, Head of Major Risks and Environment Division, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

2. QUICK REMINDER ON THE BERN CONVENTION PROGRAMME OF WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND RELEVANT ADOPTED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Presentation by Iva Obretenova, Secretary of the Bern Convention

3. IDENTIFYING SYNERGIES AND POSSIBLE BERN CONVENTION/EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT JOINT INITIATIVES

- Presentation by Gianluca Silvestrini of EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement
- Presentation by Fabrice Renaud, United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, Member of PEDRR, (Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction)

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE RESTRICTED GROUP OF EXPERTS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

- Presentation by Iva Obretenova, Secretary of the Bern Convention

5. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

- Oral presentations by Parties to the Bern Convention

6. STREAMLINING REPORTING FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES ON RELEVANT CLIMATE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BERN CONVENTION

- Reminder of Bern Convention practices and tools in monitoring action by Parties
- Discussion on pros and cons of the present system and identification of new tools

7. SUPPORTING CONTRACTING PARTIES IN IMPLEMENTING STANDARDS AND ACTIONS**7.1 Assessment of Bern Convention species vulnerability: cooperation opportunities with other fora**

- Review of existing tools and methodologies
- Discussion on the most appropriate tools for the Bern Convention

7.2 Supporting adaptive management: identifying core elements of protected areas' adaptive management and planning of eventual joint ventures with other Bern Convention Groups of experts and other partner organisations

- Review of existing tools, initiatives and cooperation opportunities
- Discussion on possible initiatives by the Bern Convention

8. COMMUNICATING ON CLIMATE CHANGES AND BIODIVERSITY

- Reminder of Bern Convention activities and tools
- Oral presentations by Parties
- Discussion on communication strategies and actions

9. PROPOSALS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO THE BERN CONVENTION

- Conclusions of the meeting, proposals to the Standing Committee and next steps

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**CLOSURE OF THE MEETING: THURSDAY, 15 JUNE, 12H30**