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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

37<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 5-8 December 2017

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**Other complaints**

**Presumed risk of national extinction of great  
bustards (*Otis tarda*) in Serbia**

**- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -**

*Document prepared by  
the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Serbia*

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**Republic of Serbia**  
**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**  
**AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

No: 37-00-9/2017-17

Date: 4 April 2017

Belgrade

**Council of Europe**  
**Department for Biological Diversity**  
**Secretariat of the Berne Convention**  
**F-67075 Strasbourg**  
**Iva Obretenova, Secretary**

**Subject: Complaint No. 2016/6-Presumed risk of national extinction of great bustards (*Otis tarda*) in Serbia**

Dear Ms Obretenova,

With regard to the Complaint of the Council of Europe no 2016/6 – presumed risk of national disappearance of great bustards (*Otis tarda*) in Serbia, which has been submitted to the Secretariat of the Berne Convention by the association EPAR from Subotica (Serbia), on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection we would like to inform you of the following:

1. The great bustard (*Otis tarda*) belongs to the group of the rarest and most endangered birds in Europe. The nesting population trend and the size of the areal are almost everywhere in a mild or sharp decline. According to IUCN conservation status categories, it has been labelled as globally vulnerable species (VU – Vulnerable). In Serbia, it is a strictly protected species in accordance with the Rulebook on Declaration and Protection of Strictly Protected Wild Species of Plants, Animals and Fungi (“Official Gazette of the RS“, no 05/10, 47/11, 32/16 and 98/16). The only remaining flock of great bustards in the country lives in the territory of North Banat, which constitutes the South-Eastern edge of the Central European part of its areal. Conservation of this edge population is of invaluable significance to the survival of other populations situated further to the North of the Pannonian Plain.

2. In accordance with the Regulation on establishment of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” (“Official Gazette of the RS”, no 37/97), the area has been placed under protection of the state as a Category 1 area of national and international significance for the purpose of conservation of the habitat of the strictly protected species of the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) in Serbia, whose population is only situated in this protected area with a wider zone, covering an area of 979 ha. Established prohibitions and limitations of land use referred to in the Regulation have been harmonised with the need to preserve the fundamental natural values of the protected area.

3. Management of this protected area has been entrusted to the Hunting Society “Perjanica” from Mokrin in Vojvodina Province.

4. This protected area has also been identified as an ecologically significant area of national and international relevance “Great Bustard Pastures” in Addendum 1. Regulations on the Ecological Network (“Official Gazette of the RS”, no 102/2010) under number 2, which is a candidate Emerald site (RS 0000022), international Important Bird Areas - IBA (RS008IBA) and International Plant Areas.

5. On the basis of an objection by the EPAR Association from Subotica, which was submitted electronically through a Focal Point for the Berne Convention, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection has created the Commission for Administrative Supervision in the Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” (Decree no 353-02-1748/2016-17 of 25 October 2016) with a view to conducting administrative supervision and control of operations and transactions of the Hunting Society “Perjanica”, in accordance with the Law on Nature Protection and the Regulation on establishment of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures”.

The Commission conducted administrative supervision of the Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” on 31 October 2017. Administrative supervision was conducted in the presence of representatives of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province, which is competent for expert supervision, and Provincial Secretariat competent for environmental protection operations, which is in charge of conducting inspection.

On the basis of an inspection of the documentation and the status of protected area, it was ascertained that there were almost no more bustards, that the number of individuals had declined, that the population had migrated to a part of the area which is not within the protected area, but in immediate vicinity of the outer border. It was also stated that the bustard population trend was such that it had the tendency of grouping towards the central flock, as well as that it had been proposed that the habitat of the bustards be protected with a view to ensuring conditions for their return, and that the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province had prepared a Study of Protection for Expansion of this Protected Area, covering habitats that are currently inhabited by a population of the great bustard.

5.1. On the basis of conducted Administrative Supervision on 31 October 2016, in official premises of the Hunting Society “Perjanica”, for the purpose of elimination of irregularities and illegalities established in the procedure of the Administrative Supervision, the association is ordered to do the following:

- To prepare the Rulebook on Internal Order and Security Guard Service within 30 days and submit it to the Ministry for approval.
- To prepare the Decision on Fees for Use of the Protected Area within 60 days and submit it to the Ministry for approval.
- To prepare the Plan for Management of SWR “Great Bustard Pastures” for the period 2017 - 2026 within 90 days and submit it to the Ministry for approval.
- The Ministry will officially inform the manager of SWR “Great Bustard Pastures” and the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia on the management method of an ecologically significant area of national and international significance in accordance with the law and the Regulation on the Ecological Network, with the obligation to propose, with respect to nature protection, measures ensuring the preservation of the favourable status of sensitive, rare, endangered habitats and habitats of particular relevance for preservation of populations of strictly protected and protected wild species;
- Having in mind that the Regulation on the Ecological Network includes candidate Emerald sites on the list of ecologically significant areas in Addendum 1 to this Regulation, it is necessary to establish management of the Emerald site “Great Bustard Pastures” on the national level and to ensure all necessary conditions for this area to be protected from outside threats and to be subject to an appropriate regime for achieving the sufficient conservation status of species and natural habitats in accordance with the Recommendation no 157 (2011) on the status of candidate Emerald sites and guidelines on the criteria for their nomination. This document recommends to the Member States to undertake the necessary measures of protection and preservation of habitat types and species in Emerald sites and to ensure harmonisation of all administrative, developmental and management plans connecting these ecological requirements for long-term preservation and survival of these habitats and species which are characteristic for Emerald sites.

5.2. Progress in application of imposed measures from the Administrative Supervision:

- The Study on Review of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” was submitted by the Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province on 17 April 2015 (registered in the Ministry under the number 353-02-767/2015-17). It was returned for correction on 11 September 2015.
- The corrected Study on Review of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” was submitted by the Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province on 26 September 2016 (registered in the Ministry under the number 353-02-1921/2016-17). The Regulation on Protection of SRW “Great Bustard Pastures” is being prepared.
- The Decision on Fees for Use of the Protected Area Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” was transmitted electronically on 9 March 2017.
- The Rulebook on Internal Order and Security Guard Service of the Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” was also transmitted electronically (in early March - the precise information will be submitted to you).
- The Plan for Management of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” was submitted 29 March 2017 (registered in the Ministry under the number 353-02-113/2017-17).

6. The Report of the Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning and Environmental Protection, which is competent for conducting inspection and exercising public prerogatives for nature protection on the level of the Vojvodina Province.

Out of the total of 25 protected areas, which are within the competence of the Provincial Inspection, the largest number of interventions were conducted in the area of the Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures” - namely, over 20% of the total number of inspections conducted in the above mentioned period. The basis for action were mostly complaints (approximately 12 complaints annually on average) submitted by external agents, referring to land users conducting activities in violation of measures referred to in the act on protection of protected area, or with non-compliance or without fulfilling conditions of nature protection, as prescribed by the competent professional organisation, the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province.

The Hunting Society “Perjanica” has, in the capacity of the manager of the protected area of Special Wildlife Reserve “Great Bustard Pastures”, regularly participated in specific project activities of preservation, revitalisation and improvement of natural habitats of the great bustard, as well as ensuring the control and inspection of human activities in the protected area, by hiring a security guard.

One of the main roles of the security guard service of the manager is preserving individuals of the great bustard and direct supervision of locations where female birds were observed in the reproduction period or nesting. This measure has been financially supported by ensuring salaries for security guards, supply of motorcycles for field transport and appropriate equipment.

Since 2010, some of these activities were undertaken voluntarily by members of the Association for the Protection of the Great Bustard from Mokrin and the Bird Study and Protection Society of Serbia. Funds for operations of the security guard service were mostly provided by the competent ministry for environmental protection affairs, and partly by the Provincial Secretariat.

Keeping in mind the fact that it is necessary to invest joint efforts of all relevant authorities, institutions and organisations in Serbia and the region, for the purpose of a better and more efficient protection and preservation of rare and endangered wild species, good international cooperation has been developed with regard to protection of the great bustard and its habitats with neighbouring countries (Hungary, Austria and Romania). Numerous visits, consultations and exchanges of experience were realized. An international meeting was organized in 2007 in Mokrin, with participation by experts from Central Europe. In late 2016, project application was prepared and submitted with the topic of preservation of habitats of the great bustard - Conservation of key animal species of Pannonian Steppes in a border region between Hungary and Serbia, within the framework of the invitation to cross-border cooperation IPA CBC INTERREG HUNGARY-SERBIA (PA 1: Improving the cross-border water management and risk prevention systems, Action 1.2: Nature protection and conservation of water based habitats), with participation by multiple partners from Serbia and Hungary. The project idea includes significant measures of protection of individuals of the great bustard and its natural habitats, which might, due to a donation within the framework of EU pre-

accession funds, considerably contribute to the solution of the problem of disappearance of the only population of the great bustard in Serbia.

## 7. Report by the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province

### 7.1. Numbers of great bustards

Data from the Complaint on the numbers of large bustards are partially incorrect. The Complaint states that 12 males regularly appeared during 2007-2008. Based on relevant scientific literature (Stojnić&Puzović, 2014), the number of great bustard males in Serbia during 2007-2008 was 7 to 9 individuals, not 12. Likewise, the above decrease in numbers from 40 to 9 individuals since 1997 to date does not correspond to data from scientific and professional literature, where at most 36 individuals are noted for late 20th century (Stojnić et al, 2009), while up to 11 individuals are noted during the current period.

However, it is absolutely correct and a cause for concern that the number of great bustards has decreased, that the number of strutting males is critical, that it has been decreasing gradually since 2006, and that during the transition from 2009 to 2010 it fell drastically from 6 to 1. There is no evidence or explanation for this phenomenon. A hypothesis, presented in the paper (Stojnić&Puzović, 2014), indicates a potential migration to larger neighbouring populations in Hungary, due to the known aggregation behaviour pattern of great bustard males, registered in Spain in the late XX century.

### 7.2. Pastures

At least ten herds of cattle, sheep, or mixed herds graze regularly in the Reservation. It is important to note that grazing is generally recognized as extremely useful for the conservation and maintenance of great bustard habitats, as stated in the Reservation development plans (Conservation Study, Management Plan) and relevant literature, such as Bankovics (2005).

### 7.3. Hunting

The fall wildlife hunt cannot represent a serious problem for great bustards. Since the start of monitoring of great bustards in the north of Banat (in the 1990s), they naturally move from the Reservation to the Vajlerka locale during fall and winter, their usual winter grounds near the Romanian border. Data on the wintering of great bustards at the Vajlerka locale during the period 2005-2008 has been presented in the paper (Stojnić et al, 2008). This occurs regardless of whether there is hunting, tilling or similar human activity in the Reservation or on Vajlerka. The phenomenon whereby the places of residence of great bustards during fall and winter, as a rule, generally differ to spring-summer locations is present across the areal of this species.

### 7.4. Agriculture

Mowing of grass, mentioned in the Complaint, is regularly present across the Reservation, though insufficiently. It is one of the principal methods for managing the habitats of the great bustard in the Pannonian Plain. During the joint field visit to the Reservation on 24 November 2016, the coordinator for the protection of the great bustard in Hungary, Lorant Miklos, noted orally that the central parts of the Reservation are insufficiently mowed. However, having in mind that mowing is potentially dangerous, a large number of precautionary measures are undertaken during these activities (previous location check, presence of guards, prescribed way of moving the machinery...) For the period from 2005 to 2016 there is one item of data from 2008 showing abandonment of the nest due to disturbance from mowing, but not for grass, but lucerne. This was a nest located in an unexpected place, outside the Reservation and the wider range of known nesting grounds. It was only found when the tractor driver reported the female taking flight from the lucerne field.

The tilling of land within great bustard habitats in Serbia cannot be eliminated under the current social situation, having in mind that there is a significant number of private parcels in the Reservation. Their use cannot be prohibited without adequate financial compensation to the owners, and funds for this are not available. Therefore, harmonization is implemented between these activities and nature conservation goals, since the parcel owners regularly obtain adequate permits showing they are under the control of the guard service. Likewise, the prohibition of land tilling is not environmentally justified, only its control and harmonization.

### 7.5. Dead individuals located

The data from the Complaint on the dead specimens of great bustards located in 2008 and 2009 by the Reservation guards are correct. These are remains that could not be toxicologically analysed due to insufficient preservation. It was impossible to determine whether it was poisoning, predator activity or some other cause of death. The Institute has no data or information on the poisoned great bustard specimens found on 20 May 2011 and 19 June 2011, nor does it have any on the common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) from 2015. A feather of a great bustard was found in the summer of 2016, reasonably assumed to have been killed by a predator, most likely a fox. Predatory activity, mainly by foxes, is one of the most significant endangering factors for the great bustard across the area. The control of predator numbers is an important activity in the Reservation. Additionally, the maintenance of grass habitats is also important, because this enables great bustards to detect danger early, and thus escape the predators in time.

### 7.6. Applied measures for the conservation of great bustards and the Reservation

Care for the great bustard and its habitats during the last decades of the XX century was undertaken by the hunters from Mokrin, but more intensive work on its active conservation was only started in the 21st century. To properly envisage the subject matter issue and in addition to the above endangerment factors, the implemented conservation measures also need to be mentioned:

- Sowing cultures for feeding and nesting of great bustards (clover, lucerne, wheat in narrow lanes) based on experiences from Hungary, implemented in several locations, particularly at Debeli At, a traditional place of residence for birds and occasional strutting, as well as at Mancul's farm. A female nested there, and during the fall the birds regularly fed on the remaining lucerne. These activities encompassed up to 32 ha per year in total.

- Maintenance of grass by mowing and clearing, on surfaces susceptible to being overgrown by bushes, ruderal plants and reeds, implemented at the most important points of strutting and nesting of great bustards and other species. At certain locations, where illegal tilling of pastures was previously undertaken, conditions were provided upon the halting of the works for the spontaneous growth of native grassy vegetation, with grazing, removal of ruderal plants and terrain levelling by harrowing. All activities were implemented outside the bird nesting period, encompassing a total of 361 ha during the period 2007-2014.

- Conservation of specimens and nests of the great bustard is implemented through immediate supervision over locations where females in the reproductive period or on the nest have been noticed. Other than finding and conserving specimens and nests, the duties of the guards included directing the activities of farmers, machinery, hunters, cattle farmers and visitors, as well as reducing the number of predators. Efficiency was partial, due to sporadically insufficient numbers, equipment, training and motivation of guards.

- With the aim of improving the conditions for feeding and survival of great bustards during the winter period, activities of additional feeding and clearing of snow from surfaces under rape and clover are regularly being implemented. In order to provide the birds with conditions for finding food during the difficult winter conditions, more than 2,000 kg of silage was taken out during 2007 and 2008. The clearing of snow was applied only under conditions of high snowfall and the creation of an icy crust on the surface, with terrain with a surface area of 110 m<sup>2</sup> thus cleared in 2008.

### 7.8. General conclusion

Having in mind all of the above, the following should be noted. Various endangerment factors are present in the Reservation. Some of them affect the great bustards, others not. By applying various measures of protection, they have been reduced to a significantly lower degree. The population of the great bustard in Serbia is decreasing, particularly drastically since 2010. The causes of this phenomena are not clearly explicable. It is hard to relate them to any of the endangerment factors or their synergic action.

While acting upon the complaint against the request of the Secretariat and Bureau of the Berne Convention, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection is undertaking planned measures in cooperation with other competent bodies and organizations, actively informing and

including non-government organizations into the improvement of the management of the protected area and securing adequate conditions for increasing the numbers of the great bustard population within the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon and we would like to thank in advance the Bureau for highest consideration of this report.

Yours sincerely,  
STATE SECRETARY  
Ms Stana Božović, PhD



**Republic of Serbia**  
**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**  
**AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**  
 Number: 353-02-113/2017-17  
 Date: 25 January 2017  
 Nemanjina 22-26  
 Belgrade

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, State Secretary on authorization decision, number 119-01-51/26/2016-09 on 25 October 2016 in according with Article 54 paragraph 4, Law on Nature Protection („Official Gazette of RS”, no. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10-corr. 14/16) Article 23 paragraph 2, Law on State Administration („Official Gazette of RS”, no. 79/05, 101/07, 95/10 and 99/14) gives

**CONSENT**

on

**Management Program**

**Special reserve of nature „Pastures of Great bustard” for 2017 year**

**EXPLANATION**

Hunting association „Perjanica”, Mokrin, in according with Article 8 Decree of protection on Special reserve of nature „Pastures of Great bustard” („Official Gazette of RS”, number 37/97) where entrusted with the management of this protected area, submitted on 19. January 2017 to Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Program to manage Special reserve of nature „Pastures of Great bustard” for 2017 year for approval (hereinafter: Management program). Decision on adoption of the Management program was brought by Steering committee of Hunting association „Perjanica” at the meeting held 22 December 2016.

Management program contains priority tasks, organizational, material and financial assumptions and elements for management tasks, respectively on the objectives of the protection and sustainable use, opportunities and constraints for their implementation, a detailed overview of the annual duties on keeping, maintaining, and improving, displaying and sustainable use of protected area for the purposes of science, education, recreation and tourism and for overall socio-economic development, display the concrete works and creation of adoption of management documents, display entities and organizational and material conditions for the execution of the program, the amount and sources of the necessary financial resources, in accordance with Law on Nature Protection, Decree of protection on Special reserve of nature „Pastures of Great bustard” and Decision on conditions of the protection of nature Provincial institute for nature protection (number 03-2661/2 on 22 November 2016).

This consent is an integral part of the Management program for Special reserve of nature „Pastures of Great bustard” for 2017.

Delivered:  
 - H.A. „Perjanica”, Mokrin,  
 Dositeja Obradovica 8,  
 -Archives

STATE SECRETARY  
 dr Stana Bozovic

Subject processor: Nevena Piscevic	
Executive:	
-Group: Lidija Stevanovic	
-Department: Aleksandra Doslic	
Lawyer: Tatjana Kaludjerovic	
Acting assistant minister: Slobodan Erdeljan	



Министарство пољопривреде и заштите животне средине, државни секретар, по Решењу о овлашћењу број 119-01-51/26/2016-09 од 25. 10. 2016. године, на основу члана 54. став 4. Закона о заштити природе („Службени гласник РС”, бр. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10-исправка и 14/16) и члана 23. став 2. Закона о државној управи („Службени гласник РС”, бр. 79/05, 101/07, 95/10 и 99/14), даје

## САГЛАСНОСТ

на

### **Програм управљања Специјалним резерватом природе „Пашњаци велике дропље” за 2017. годину**

#### *Образложење*

Ловачко удружење „Перјаница”, Мокрин, коме је чланом 8. Уредбе о заштити Специјалног резервата природе „Пашњаци велике дропље” („Службени гласник РС”, број 37/97) поверено управљање тим заштићеним подручјем, доставило је 19. јануара 2017. године, Министарству пољопривреде и заштите животне средине Програм управљања Специјалним резерватом природе „Пашњаци велике дропље” за 2017. годину на сагласност (у даљем тексту: Програм управљања). Одлуку о усвајању Програма управљања донео је Управни одбор Ловачког удружења „Перјаница” на седници одржаној 22.12.2016. године.

Програм управљања садржи приоритетне задатке, организационе и материјално-финансијске претпоставке и елементе за обављање послова управљања, односно циљеве заштите и одрживог коришћења, могућности и ограничења за њихово остваривање, детаљан приказ годишњих задатака на чувању, одржавању, унапређењу, приказивању и одрживом коришћењу заштићеног подручја за потребе науке, образовања, рекреације и туризма и укупног социо-економског развоја, приказ конкретних послова на изради и доношењу управљачких докумената, приказ субјеката и организационих и материјалних услова за извршења програма, висине и извора потребних финансијских средстава, а у складу са Законом о заштити природе, Уредбом о заштити Специјалног резервата природе „Пашњаци велике дропље” и Решењем о условима заштите природе Покрајинског завода за заштиту природе (број 03-2661/2 од 22.11.2016. године).

Ова сагласност саставни је део Програма управљања Специјалним резерватом природе „Пашњаци велике дропље” за 2017. годину.

Достављено:

- Л.У. „Перјаница”, Мокрин,  
Доситеја Обрадовића 8,  
- Архива

ДРЖАВНИ СЕКРЕТАР

др Стана Божовић



**Republic of Serbia**  
**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

→ Number: 353-02-1748/2016-17

Date: 1 November 2016

Nemanjina 22-26

**RECORD ON ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION**  
**OF SPECIAL NATURE RESERVE “PASTURES OF THE GREAT BUSTARD”**

Pursuant to Article 23 para. 2, 45, 46 and 47 of the Law on State Administration (“Official Gazette of the RS” No. 79/05, 101/79 and 95/10), Article 118 paragraph 3 of the Law on Nature Protection (“Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10 - corr. and 14/16), Article 5 of the Law on Ministries (“Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 44/14), the Commission for administrative supervision of Special Nature Reserve “Pastures of the Great Bustard” was formed (Decision No. 353-02-1748/2016-17 dated 25 October 2016) for purpose of conducting administrative supervision and control of work and operation of Hunting Association “Perjanica” (hereinafter: Administrator) in accordance with the Law on Nature Protection and Regulation on designated Special Nature Reserve “Pastures of the Great Bustard” (“Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 37/97).

The immediate cause for the administrative supervision of Special Nature Reserve “Pastures of the Great Bustard” is EPAR's application submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection which contains an announcement of the submission of an appeal to the Council of Europe against a possible breach of the provisions of the Berne Convention.

The Commission was conducted administrative supervision in the premises of Hunting Association “Perjanica” on 31 October 2016, in the following composition:

1. Aleksandra Došlić, Commission member, Head of the Protected Areas and Ecological Network Department;
2. Lidija Stevanović, Commission member, Head of the Protected Areas Group;
3. Nevena Piščević, Commission member, advisor in the Protected Areas Group;
4. Slavica Stojanović, Commission member, lawyer;
5. Jelena Dučić, Commission member, independent consultant in the Ecological Network and Eligibility Assessment Division;
6. Tamara Milojević, Commission member, advisor in the Department for Financial Monitoring of Environmental Protection Programs and Projects.

Acting Assistant Minister Slobodan Erdeljan and Duška Budimir attended administrative supervision as representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection.

The following representatives of Hunting Association “Perjanica” attended administrative supervision and provided required data and documents:

1. Bogica Božin, President;
2. Kristina Tepavac, expert associate.

At the request of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, administrative supervision was attended by the following representatives of the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province:

1. Biljana Panjković, Director;
2. Slobodan Puzović, Assistance Director;
3. Nikola Stojnić, advisor.

As well as the following representatives of the Provincial Environmental Protection Inspectorate:

1. Gordana Pavkov, inspector at the Provincial Environmental Protection Inspectorate.

Professional supervision and inspection were organised on that occasion, and resulting reports will make an integral part of this Protocol.

Hunting Association "Perjanica" has 3 employees in its organisational structure, 2 of which are employed as protected areas guards.

By inspecting available documents, and based on the information provided directly at the meeting, it was determined that Hunting Association "Perjanica" has adopted the following normative, program and planning acts since the beginning of its operation:

1. The Founding Act dated 17 June 1974
2. The Statute dated 13 March 2011
3. The Rulebook on the internal order and guardian service (110-00-11/2004-03, dated 9 March 2007),
4. The Program for protection and development of SNR "Pastures of the Great Bustard" for period 2005-2009

By inspecting general documents, the following was stated:

- Protected area Special Nature Reserve "Pastures of the Great Bustard" was created primarily to preserve a habitat of strictly protected species Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) in Serbia, whose population lives only in this wider protected area.
- -This protected area was identified as ecologically, nationally and internationally important area "Pastures of the Great Bustard" in Annex 1 of the Regulation on the ecological network ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 102/2010) under No 2, which is a candidate Emerald site (RS 0000022), an internationally important area for IBA birds (RS008IBA), and an internationally important area for plants.
- -In accordance with Article 40 of the Law on Nature Protection ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10 – corr. and 14/16), the ecological network area, which is also a protected area, will be managed by the Administrator of the protected area. A management plan can be adopted for the ecological network area, and a list of measures prescribed for the preservation, restoration and improvement of the condition of these areas, by a legal entity with assigned ecological network area management authorisation.

Also, by inspecting the documents, it was determined that the Management Plan for SNR "Pastures of the Great Bustard" expired in 2009, and a new one – in accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, was not submitted for approval to the competent Ministry. The representatives of HA "Perjanica" submitted a report that the Management Plan for period 2009-2018 was submitted to the Ministry, stating that 12 April 2014 as the date of submission, however, that they never received an approval. By inspecting the documents, it was stated that they have not received a return receipt from the competent Ministry, or a reference stamp, nor can they confirm with any document that the Plan was submitted to the competent Ministry. By inspecting the documents, it was determined that the Administrator has not adopted Rulebook on the internal order and guardian service, or a Decision on the fees for use of the protected area, or its approval.

It was pointed out that the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province should conduct professional supervision, and that the Provincial Secretariat for Inspection Operations should conduct inspection of the documents for years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Also, the Management Plan for the period 2017-2026 should be drafted for the part of the area which now enjoys the status of protection in accordance with the applicable Regulation on designated protected area. The Administrator was reminded of the legal obligation to maintain public inspection and of the need that the Management Plan, in accordance with Article 43 of the Law on Nature Protection, also contained a part referring to public participation, and that it was not enough to demonstrate the public participation only through the public inspection.

It was also pointed out that the Regulation was pending and the Protection Study was to be revised, as well as that it was necessary to draft the Management Plan in accordance with the act on designation, which was to be applicable for the period 2017-2026.

The representatives of the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province stated that there was almost no bustards in the protected area, that the number of units decreased and that the population moved out to the part outside the protected area. It was stated that the bustard population trend was such that it tended grouping towards the central flock, and that it was suggested to preserve the habitat of bustards, which is the reason for expansion of the protected area. They noted that it was much harder to protect the species if it was outside the protected area, referring to Article 48(2) of the Law on Nature Protection, according to which the Institute is responsible for the strictly protected and protected wild species, as well as the holders of such species, protected area administrators, public forest enterprises, users of hunting reserves and fishing areas, which are required to plan and implement the measures and activities for management of populations of the concerned species in accordance with the law.

The Administrator added that most of the complaints actually relates to the part of the land which, according to the new Regulation, should be incorporated in the protected area by expansion of the borders. The representatives of the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province mentioned the Memorandum of Understanding by which the country would engage to protect bustards, and stated the possibility of cooperating on the projects with the neighbouring countries with regard to the protection of bustards, and also pointed out that it was necessary to give priority to the Regulation on designation of SNR "Pastures of the Great Bustard".

It was also noted that, taking into consideration that the largest number of complaints referred to the area outside the protected area, as well as that on the basis of the Institute's opinion, bustards were mainly located in those areas, the bustards, being the strictly protected species, would be the responsibility of the Institute for Nature Protection of Vojvodina Province in accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, until the adoption of the new act on designation which would also include the mentioned areas.

Taking into account the bustard as a strictly protected species and the constant decrease of population of bustards, the need for drafting the Action Plan for Bustard was also pointed out.

On the basis of the administrative supervision carried out on 31 October, 2016 in the premises of the Hunting Association "Perjanica", in order to eliminate irregularities and illegalities identified in the administrative supervision procedure, the Association is required to:

1. Draw up within 30 days a Rulebook on the internal order and guardian service and submit it to the Ministry for approval;
2. Draw up within 60 days a Decision on the fees for use of the protected area and submit it to the Ministry for approval;
3. Draw up within 90 days the Management Plan for SNR "Pastures of the Great Bustard" for the period 2017-20126, and submit it to the Ministry for approval.
4. The Ministry will officially inform the Administrator of SNR "Pastures of the Great Bustard" and the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province about the method of management of the ecologically important areas of national and international importance in accordance with the law and the Regulation on the ecological network, with the obligation, in terms of nature protection, to propose the measures ensuring preservation of the favorable status of the sensitive,

rare and endangered habitats and habitat types of special importance for the maintenance of the population of the strictly protected wild species.

5. Given that by means of the Regulation on the ecological network, the Emerald candidate areas have been included in the list of ecologically important areas in Annex 1 of the mentioned Regulation, it is necessary to establish management of the Emerald site "Pastures of the Great Bustard" at the national level and to ensure that all necessary conditions for protection of this area from external threats are met and that is subject to the appropriate arrangement to achieve a satisfactory status for preservation of species and habitats in accordance with the Recommendation No. 157 (2011) concerning the status of the candidate Emerald sites and the guide on the criteria for their nomination. This document recommends to the Member States to take the necessary measures for the protection and conservation of types of habitats and species in the Emerald sites and to ensure coordination of all administrative, development and management plans, linking these environmental requirements to the long-term preservation and survival of these habitats and species typical for the Emerald sites.

It was also established at the meeting that the Provincial Environmental Protection Inspectorate was to submit to the Ministry a report on the performed inspection of the Administrator's work for the previous three years (2014, 2015 and 2016) until 15 November 2016, as well as that the Institute for Nature Preservation of Vojvodina Province should take the necessary measures to protect the population of the strictly protected species of the great bustard in accordance with Article 48 of the Law on Nature Protection and in cooperation with the relevant owners and users of that part of area presently inhabited by the species, until the establishment of the expanded protected area of on the basis of the Protection Study.

Members of the Commission:

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