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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Group of Experts on
Protected Areas and Ecological Networks**

4th meeting
18-19 September 2012
Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France

**Minutes of the 1st Emerald biogeographical
Seminar for Switzerland**

*Document established
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The seminar was chaired and opened by *Jan Plesnik*, Chair of the Bern Convention Standing Committee, followed by a welcoming speech by *Sarah Pearson Perret*, Head of Section Species, Habitats and Ecological Networks of the Swiss Federal Office for Environment.

Opening session

On behalf of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, *Jan Plesnik* expressed his warm thanks to the hosts from the Federal Office for Environment for organising the meeting. *Mr Plesnik* explained that the seminar is of key importance for the building of the Emerald Network and the results of today's assessment should be seen as an opportunity to identify the concrete further action to be implemented by the Swiss authorities to complete the Network on their territory. He acknowledged and expressed his gratitude for the fruitful partnership set up between the Council of Europe and the European Environment Agency and its European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity to support the Emerald process.

Sarah Pearson welcomed the participants to the event and underlined the seminar was of particular importance for Switzerland, in particular for supporting their efforts for additional site identification. The country delivered the database with their 37 sites in 2009 and after the official nomination of these sites as candidates in 2011 they are working on ways to identify additional site proposals since then. She stressed in addition that the completion of the Emerald Network is included as a milestone in the national strategy for the implementation of the CBD Aichi targets 11 and 12. *S. Pearson* stressed in conclusion that through the Emerald Network they are trying to contribute to the conservation of species and habitats of national priority, as well as of those with a Red List status.

Iva Obretenova, Emerald project manager at the Council of Europe presented recent and on-going processes aimed at ensuring an increased harmonisation between the Emerald and the Natura 2000 Networks:

- a recent translation of Annex 1 to Resolution No. 4 (1996) on natural habitats requiring specific conservation measures into the EUNIS habitats classification;
- a recent comparison exercise between the species listed under Annex 1 to Resolution No. 6 (1998) and the list of species of Annex I of the Birds Directive and Annex II of the Habitat Directive, which resulted in a revised Annex 1 of Resolution No. 6 (1998) adopted by the Standing Committee in 2011;
- a similar comparison exercise to be developed between the lists of habitats targeted by Resolution 4 (1996) of the Bern Convention and the Annex I of the Habitats Directive this year;
- a draft Resolution on the national designation of ASCIs and their management and reporting, to be discussed at this year's meeting of the Bern Convention group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks (GoEPAEN).

In conclusion, *Iva Obretenova* reminded that the meeting of the GoEPAEN will be particularly important and invited the colleagues from Switzerland to participate and contribute to the discussions on the national designation and management of the Emerald sites.

Dominique Richard, Manager of the ETC/BD stressed the importance of the seminar for reaching consistencies in terms of ecological networks across Europe. She explained that the methodology used for the assessment of the Emerald sites is largely inspired by the methodology the ETC/BD has contributed to build for Natura 2000. The idea behind the biogeographical process is not to assess the sites proposed as such, but their contribution to ensure the conservation of the Bern Convention species and habitats.

D. Richard further explained the methodology to be used during the assessment and addressed difficulties encountered by the ETC/BD in carrying out the background assessments caused by still remaining errors and inconsistencies in the Emerald database delivered by the country. She stressed that these gaps will have to be taken care of after the Seminar.

Simon Capt, Emerald coordinator for the country presented the general approach of the Emerald site identification and the habitat inventories context in Switzerland. The Swiss Emerald team has initially decided to look for areas outside their nationally protected areas in order to obtain additional protection for the species and habitats of national importance. They now have the possibility to look at their existing protected areas, which are still not included in their Emerald proposals, such as their inventories at federal level or other categories as well as areas with no existing protection. So far birds and large mammals have not been taken into account for the selection of sites.

Friedrich Wulf, responsible for the Emerald Network at the European Habitats Forum informed that the NGOs following the development of the Network in the country support the approach used by the Swiss authorities and actively contribute to the work on the sites identification and description. He stressed Switzerland's important responsibility for the protection of alpine endemic species and suggested that the habitat approach should partly address the shortcomings of Resolution 6 of the Bern Convention which does not include these species.

Discussion on the sufficiency of species and habitats in the candidate Emerald sites

The discussion on sufficiency of representation of species and habitats in proposed ASCIs was carried out species by species and habitat by habitat for each of the two biogeographic regions present in the country (Alpine and Continental).

As an introduction to the discussions on habitats, Doug Evans explained that the prepared assessments are based on the current version of Resolution 4 of the Bern Convention. Once revised and harmonised with Annex I of the Habitats Directive, this Resolution will incorporate new habitats, which may involve further proposals for Emerald sites by Switzerland and other Parties to the Bern Convention.

Given the acknowledged gap in sites proposals for birds species, no assessment could be done by the ETC/BD. Instead the discussion will focus on building the reference list of birds species for each of the two concerned biogeographic regions.

The conclusions of the assessments were compiled by *Marc Roekaerts*, consultant to the Council of Europe. Examples of assessments performed for species and habitats are presented respectively in appendices II and III to these minutes and will be further accessed in their full version once validated by all parties on the Council of Europe' web site.

Conclusions of the seminar: next steps

Dominique Richard, Manager of the ETC/BD appreciated the efforts made by the Swiss Emerald team during the assessment and thanked her colleagues from the ETC/BD for their hard work on the assessment of the Swiss candidate Emerald sites. She stressed that a second biogeographic seminar for Switzerland could be envisaged only when a very important progress has been achieved in the identification and description of additional site proposals.

Concerning the immediate follow-up steps to the Seminar, the group agreed that:

- The Swiss Emerald team is going to receive the final draft conclusions from the evaluation by 20th of July 2012 and their feedback/comments are welcome by the 15th of August;
- The Swiss Emerald team will take care of the inconsistencies in their database mentioned at the beginning of the Seminar so that a corrected database is uploaded on the CDR
- For the site which currently does not include either a species listed in Resolution 6 nor a habitat listed in Resolution 4 of the Bern Convention (name??) but which is proposed due to its importance for endemic species: the Emerald team should mention in the standard data form that, once Resolution 4 on habitats is harmonised with Annex I of the Habitats Directive, the designation of the site as Emerald will be suitable for one of the screened types of habitats as described in Annex I of the Habitats Directive
- Once the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention officially approves the 37 Candidate sites as Emerald, the corresponding database should be made publicly available by the European Environment Agency through the Biodiversity Data Centre

Iva Obretenova, Bern Convention Secretariat, also thanked the participants for their hard work before and during the Seminar as well as all the efforts and support from the ETC/BD and its staff to the Emerald Network constitution process.

In conclusion, Mr *Jan Plesnik*, Chair of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, reported on a message conveyed by the newly appointed Director of the Council of Europe on the need to better communicate on achievements made under this Emerald process. We should look for opportunities to do so. He also thanked all participants for their hard work. On behalf of the Bern Convention Standing Committee, he further expressed the deep gratitude to the ETC/BD and the EEA, for their long-term support to the Emerald Network constitution process.

Appendix I: Participants' list

EMERALD BIOGEOGRAPHIC SEMINAR IN SWITZERLAND

Thursday, 5 July, 2012

Hotel Euler in Basel, Switzerland

Participants' list

Name	Organisation/country	Position
Country Representatives		
Sarah Pearson Perret	Federal Office for Environment	Head of Section Species, Habitats, Ecological Networks
Christine Fehr	Federal Office for Environment	Scientific Collaborator, Section Species, Habitats, Ecological Networks
Urs Känzig	Bern Canton, Office of Agriculture and Nature	Head of Division Nature Conservation
Simon Capt	CSCF (Centre Suisse pour la Cartographie de la Faune)	Emerald Coordinator
Yves Gonseth	CSCF (Centre Suisse pour la Cartographie de la Faune)	Director
Fabien Fivaz	CSCF (Centre Suisse pour la Cartographie de la Faune)	Technical expert
Raymond Delarze		Independent expert
Non-Governmental Organisations		
Eva Inderwildi	BirdLife Switzerland	Conservation and IBA Officer
Friedrich Wulf	ProNatura/European Habitats Committee	Leader International Biodiversity Policy
Council of Europe		
Jan Plesnik	Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic	Chair of the Bern Convention Standing Committee
Iva Obretenova	Council of Europe, Bern Convention Secretariat	Ecological Networks Project Manager

Marc Roekaerts		Independent expert to the Council of Europe
European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) core team		
Dominique RICHARD	ETC/BD	Manager, European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity
Doug EVANS	ETC/BD	Nature and Biodiversity Senior Officer
Zelmira SIPKOVA	ETC/BD	Nature and Biodiversity Officer

Appendix II

Example of draft detailed conclusions on representation of Bern Convention Resolution 6 species in proposed Emerald Sites (proposed ASCIs) in Switzerland

References :

Online cartographic databases:

CSCF: <http://lepus.unine.ch/carto/>

Online atlas of Bryophytes: http://www.nism.uzh.ch/map/map_en.php

Info flora: <http://www.crsf.ch/?page=donneesonline>

National red list publications:

Kirchofer A., Breitenstein M., Zaugg B. 2007: Liste rouge poissons et cyclostomes – Liste rouge des espèces menacées en Suisse. Office fédéral de l'environnement, Berne & Centre suisse de cartographie de la faune, Neuchâtel. 64 p.

Monney J.-C., Meyer A. 2005 : Liste Rouge des reptiles menacés en Suisse. Édité. Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage, Berne & Centre de coordination pour la protection des amphibiens et des reptiles de Suisse, Berne. 46 p.

Schmidt B.R., Zumbach S. 2005 : Liste Rouge des amphibiens menacés en Suisse. Édité. Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage (OFEFP), Berne & Centre de coordination pour la protection des amphibiens et des reptiles de Suisse (KARCH), Berne. 46 p.

Gonseth Y. & Monnerat, C. 2002: Liste Rouge des Libellules menacées en Suisse. Edit. Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage, Berne & Centre suisse de cartographie de la faune, Neuchâtel. 46 p.

Species code	Species name	Biogeo. region	N° sites	Population - SDF	Comments	Proposed conclusion	Final concl	Final comment
4056	<i>Anisus vorticulus</i>	ALP					Add to to the Ref. I.	
4056	<i>Anisus vorticulus</i>	CON					Add to to the Ref. I.	
1013	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	ALP			No sites proposed in the ALP. CSCF map: recent records also from the ALP.	IN MAJ	IN MAJ	
1013	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	CON	1	1C	1C site proposed in total - low coverage. CSCF several recently confirmed localities in the CON –NE.	IN MOD	IN MOD	
1014	<i>Vertigo angustior</i>	ALP			No sites proposed in ALP. CSCF map: recent records also from the ALP.	IN MAJ	IN MAJ	

Appendix III

Example of draft detailed conclusions on representation of Bern Convention Resolution 4 habitats in proposed Emerald Sites (proposed ASCIs) in Switzerland

References :

D&G = Delarze, R. & Y. Gonseth (2008): Guide des milieux naturels de Suisse : écologie - menaces - espèces caractéristiques; Rossolis, Bussigny, 424 pp. Deuxième édition.

Info Flora = *Info Flora*– Centre national de données et d'informations sur la flore de Suisse <http://www.crsf.ch>

Pflanzengesellschaften der Schweiz <http://pages.unibas.ch/vegetation-ch/>

EUNIS Code	EUNIS name	Region	N° sites	Habitat area (Ha)	Comment	Proposed conclusion	Final conclusion	Final comment
C1.1	Permanent oligotrophic lakes, ponds and pools	Alpine	2	34	1C, 1D (0-2%). Wider distribution ? eg oligotrophic lakes in Engadine & Grisons noted in Bigler et al (2006) ¹ . Includes sites for Charophytes (see Auderset Joye.& Schwarzer 2012) ²	IN MOD ?	IN MOD	Discussion on definition between PalHab and EUNIS; Definition of EUNIS will be used to enlarge the number of sites
C1.1	Permanent oligotrophic lakes, ponds and pools	Continental	1	55	Ecological evaluations missing. Only site in region ? (seems unlikely)	IN MOD & CD	IN MOD & CD	Discussion on definition between PalHab and EUNIS; Definition of EUNIS will be used to enlarge the number of sites
C1.222	Floating [Hydrocharis morsus-ranae] rafts	Alpine	0		Info flora shows 2 sites for <i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i> near Lac Lemman. Habitat present?	?	IN MAJ	Definitely present

¹ Bigler, Christian, Oliver Heiri, Renata Krskova, André Lotter, et Michael Sturm. 2006. « Distribution of diatoms, chironomids and cladocera in surface sediments of thirty mountain lakes in south-eastern Switzerland ». *Aquatic Sciences - Research Across Boundaries* 68 (2): 154-171.

² Auderset Joye D.& Schwarzer A. 2012: Liste rouge characées. Espèces menacées en Suisse, état 2010. Office fédéral de l'environnement, Berne, et Laboratoire d'Ecologie et de Biologie Aquatique de l'Université de Genève. L'environnement pratique n°1213: 72 p

