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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

35th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

RECOMMENDATION No. 180 (2015)
ON IMPROVING THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE
OUTSIDE PROTECTED AREAS PROPER

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

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Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Recommendation No. 180 (2015) on improving the conservation of nature outside protected areas proper

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Considering Articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Convention;

Having regard to its Resolution No. 1 (1989) on the provisions relating to the conservation of habitats;

Having regard to its Recommendation No. 16 (1989) on Areas of Special Conservation Interest;

Having regard to its Resolution No. 3 (1996) on the setting-up of a pan-European Ecological Network and Resolution No. 5 (1998) concerning the rules for the Network of areas of special conservation interest (Emerald Network);

Recalling its Recommendation No. 25 (1991) on the conservation of natural areas outside protected areas proper, calling on Parties to take the appropriate measures to ensure that nature conservation becomes a regular part of spatial planning and territorial development and is fully integrated into all key policy and economic areas and sectors;

Welcoming the considerable efforts deployed by Parties and Observer states on the implementation of the Calendar for the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (2011-2020) adopted in December 2010, which commits them to the completion of its constitution process by 2020;

Recognising the significant achievements in the setting-up of the Emerald Network in the period 2010-2015, leading the Network to cover nearly 600 000 km² in Eastern and Central Europe and the South-Caucasus at the end of 2015;

Recognising the work of the European Union and its Member States on the development of the Natura 2000 Network and their current efforts on improving the management of the Network and achieving a favourable conservation status for threatened species and habitats;

Recognising that the European Union and its Member States are important drivers for biodiversity conservation processes in the continent, especially thanks to the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Green Infrastructure Initiative;

Welcoming the results and recommendations by Dr Rob Jongman presented in his analysis report on the follow-up given by Parties to the measures encouraged by Recommendation No. 25 (1991) on the conservation of natural areas outside protected areas proper [T-PVS/PA (2015) 8], in particular his conclusion that Contracting Parties to the Convention have developed many measures and expertise in the field since the adoption of the Recommendation, including trans-boundary cooperation;

Conscious that nature conservation policies based solely on protected areas are not efficient enough to ensure the functioning of healthy ecosystems and the maintenance in the long-term of the services they provide;

Recognizing in this regard initiatives such as the EU Green Infrastructure Initiative, the Council of Europe's Pan-European ecological network, and others that have the potential to support healthy ecosystems and maximize the delivering of a wide range of ecosystem services outside protected areas;

Bearing in mind that many Contracting Parties still need to ensure the shift towards more coherent and comprehensive policies aiming to connect existing natural areas and to improve their ecological quality,

Recommends Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites Observer States to:

1. Continue their efforts in ensuring that all policy sectors contribute to reduce the fragmentation of ecosystems and to improve the connectivity between major natural areas, including Emerald and Natura 2000 sites, on their territories;
2. Strengthen cooperation and exchange of practices between Parties, in particular between those holding long-term experience in nature protection outside protected areas and those beginning to work towards the establishment of their ecologically connected national networks of protected areas;
3. Work towards improving the understanding and visibility of the economic and social benefits which natural solutions provide to human society and thus help mobilise resources for the establishment and management of green infrastructures and ecologically connected networks of protected areas;
4. Continue to inform the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on any relevant measures they have already taken or intend to take and their effects on the ground, charging the Secretariat to make this information available to all Parties and to facilitate the exchange of best practices between countries.

The Committee further instructs the secretariat to undertake and to present a comprehensive synthesis report on progress of the implementation of the present Recommendation at the request of the Committee.