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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

34<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 2-5 December 2014

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**Specific Site - File open**

**Proposed navigable waterway in the Bystroe Estuary  
(Danube delta)  
(Ukraine)**

**REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE**

*Document prepared by  
The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine*

**33<sup>d</sup> Standing Committee to the Bern Convention,  
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2013**

**Report of Ukraine  
on executing of Recommendation N 111 (2004) of the Standing Committee of the Berne  
Convention on the proposal navigable waterway through the Bystroe estuary (Danube  
Delta, Ukraine) adopted by the Standing Committee  
on 3 December 2004**

*Dear Mr. Chairman,*

*Dear Secretary of the Bern Convention,*

*Dear honorable participants and observers of the 33<sup>d</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention!*

Let me present you brief updated report on the state of implementation of **Recommendation No. 111** (2004) on biodiversity conservation in the proposed navigable waterway through the Bystre estuary (Danube Delta, Ukraine).

**According to recommendations of different conventions Ukraine suspended activities** after the Phases 1 of above mentioned project and **did not start the new phase of the project**. Pursuant to the Espoo Convention all documentations on Environment Impact Assessment for the issue has been passed to Romanian side in 2009 and after this to all interested conventions and parties.

According to the international law for the past years Ukraine provided an **international assessment of the EIA for the project**, held **public hearings** on the implementation of the project phase I, sent relevant information to the European Commission, Secretariat of the Espoo Convention, Bern Convention, to other institutions.

In September 2012 the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention sent the grateful letter to the Ukrainian Party for the submission of information and reports at the occasion of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to **the Ramsar Convention in July 2012**. Concerning open files of human-induced negative changes having occurred, occurring or likely to occur (Article 3.2 of the Convention) at the five Ramsar Sites and based on the information, provided by Ukrainian Party, **the Secretariat has closed mentioned files as fully implemented, including for the wetland located in Ukrainian part of Danube delta**.

Ukraine in 2004 has launched a **comprehensive monitoring system** for the Ukrainian Danube Delta, which involves the programs of environmental and engineering monitoring. The coordination of these activities is carried by Ukrainian Research Institute of Ecological Problems and involves many scientific institutions and organizations.

The major findings of the monitoring show continues flow **redistribution** between Ukrainian Kyliysky sleeve and Romanian Tulchynsky sleeve in favor of Romanian part, from 33% to 51% in 50 years of general observations. It may be explained by the consequences of large-scale hydraulic works in Romanian part of Danube delta.

The monitoring did not record decrease neither in **species diversity** of flora and fauna in protected areas, nor deterioration of conservation status of any of protected species or habitats. The impacts of deep-water channel maintenance can be characterized as local and limited. Long-term **hydrobiological studies** shows stability of biotic communities of phytoplankton, zooplankton, zoobenthos, fish fauna in the studied water bodies. Still, certain intermittent violations of local biota in the vicinity of hydraulic engineering works took place.

All alternatives for restoration of the Bystroe waterway were thoroughly reconsidered bearing in mind minimization the influence on nature. The results of last years monitoring proved the correctness of previous scientific and engineering conclusions regarding the warerway. Different economical, social and nature conservation activities in Ukrainian Lower Danube delta region has been

implemented according to the State **program of integrated development of Ukrainian Danube in 2004-2011 years" adopted in 2004 by the** Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Ukraine takes appropriate measures to enhance the **conservation status of the Danube Biosphere Reserve and to expand its territory**. By the Decree of President of Ukraine its area was increased on 3850 hectares, the area of strict conservation was enlarged on 1295 hectares. For the Biosphere Reserve Ukraine prepared ten year report to the UNESCO Programme "Man and Biosphere".

The Danube Biosphere Reserve was included into the List of officially nominated candidate Emerald sites at the 32nd meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention. It protects 27 endangered natural habitats of Steppe and Marine Bioregions from the Resolution No. 4 of the Bern Convention namely: 5 Marine habitats, 4 Coastal habitats, 10 Surface standing waters, 1 Mire, 2 Grasslands, 2 Heathland and Scrub, 2 Woodlands and 1 Estuary. 78 rare and endangered species of fauna and flora from the Resolution No. 6 (1998) of the Bern Convention are protected there. The Danube Biosphere Reserve has Ranger Service to thoroughly protect natural values. Each year it implements scientific programmes and publishes Chronicles of Nature. DBR participate in different international and national projects like - Joint Operational Programme of Romania, Ukraine and Moldova, 2007-2013, funded by the European Union, Project "Adaptation of the Danube Delta to Climate Change through Integrated Water and Land Management" (Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova, 2011-2013) supported by the ICPDR, Project on Restoration of flushing regime on the Ermakiv Isle, which converted it into previous natural wetland style.

**Ukraine regards Agreement** between the Ministry of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Water, Forests and Environmental Protection of Romania and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine on cooperation in the zone of the Danube Delta and Lower River Prut nature protected areas, which came into force in 2006, as one of the practical international tool for joint conservation activities there.

In 2011 the **first meeting** of the above mention Agreement has accepted rules and organization of the Joint Trilateral Commission, mandated the development of joint plan of its activities. This year **Ukrainian Party initiated the second meeting** of the Joint Trilateral Commission, which was kindly hosted by Romanian side on **28th of November 2013 in Tulcha**.

The second meeting shown great opportunity to discuss national and international monitoring results, projects development, endorsed a list of joint activities for coming months. Trilateral cooperation in the field of biodiversity protection in Danube delta region is being improved, 14 joint projects are implemented in the region. The Parties planned **future cooperation between the three countries** based on the agreed list of priority activities. The Commission **highlighted the importance of the common bilateral and trilateral large scale joint projects**, including projects within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and future Cross border Cooperation Programmes Romania - Ukraine and Romania - Republic of Moldova Common Operational Programme, funded by the European Union.

The Parties agreed the third meeting of the Commission to be organized and held in Ukraine in May 2014.

Being driven by recommendations of 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Statnding Committee Ukrainian Party kindly asked environmental authorities of the states - Parties to the Convention via the **Ukrainian diplomatic missions** about their vision on implementation status for the Recommendation. We appreciate the efforts of all our colleagues who had provided us with their visions and positions.

To my honor I should underline that in a majority the states gave their positive view that Ukrainian Party was very accurate and precise in Recommendation 111 implementation and was conscientious in exercising of its tasks.

Being advised by them we are expecting to have a decision of our present meeting on preparation for following closure of the File. So, such a decision could be an illustrative example on how the Bern Convention is a successful and consolidating platform and framework for the internationals efforts on biodiversity protection.

To sum up, I would like to underline that Ukraine **during 2004 – 2013 has executed all range of the requirements of the Recommendation N 111** (2004) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the proposal navigable waterway through the Bystre estuary (Danube Delta, Ukraine) adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 2004 in full.

And once more I would like to thank all our neighbors for taking common efforts for maintaining and restoring the natural state of the delta of the Danube River region.

I appeal to the distinguished audience to support Ukraine, Romania and Moldova in their joint efforts for environmental protection in Danube region.

*Thank you very much for your attention!*