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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

31st meeting
Strasbourg, 29 November - 2 December 2011

RECOMMENDATION
ON THE STATUS OF CANDIDATE EMERALD SITES AND
GUIDELINES ON THE CRITERIA FOR THEIR NOMINATION

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 157 (2011) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 2 December 2011, on the status of candidate Emerald sites and guidelines on the criteria for their nomination

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 3 and 4 of the Convention;

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

Having regard to its Recommendation No. 14 (1989) on species habitat conservation and on the conservation of endangered natural 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;

Recalling its Resolution No. 4 (1996) listing endangered natural habitats requiring specific habitat conservation measures;

Recalling its Resolution No. 5 (1998) concerning the rules for the Network of areas of special conservation interest (Emerald Network);

Recalling its Resolution No. 6 (1998) listing the species requiring specific habitat conservation measures;

Recalling the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (2011-2020) adopted in December 2010, committing Contracting Parties and Observer states to the Bern Convention to the completion of the Emerald Network constitution process by 2020;

Recalling the "Bern Declaration on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe: 2010 and beyond" and in particular its principle 6 which urges Parties to pursue the setting up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest, in order that it can be completed in Europe by 2020, at the latest, and developed in other regions with Contracting Parties of the Convention, and recalls the positive implications for local development that may be derived;

Welcoming the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011 – 2020) and the 'Aichi 2020 targets' adopted at the 10th COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity and taking note in particular of target 11, committing Parties to conserve at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas through well managed, ecologically representative and connected protected areas;

Taking note, with appreciation, of the EU 2020 biodiversity Strategy, endorsed by the Council of the European Union in June 2011, and more particularly its target 1, which calls on Member States to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives;

Welcoming the efforts of Contracting Parties and Observer states and the support of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency in the development of the Emerald Network, as a contribution to step up averting global biodiversity loss, with regard to the Aichi headline target 11;

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;

Welcoming the considerable efforts of Contracting Parties on the implementation of the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network (2011 – 2020) in view of the identification of potential Emerald sites on their territory;

Considering the *Criteria for assessing the National Lists of proposed ASCIs at biogeographical level and procedure for examining and approving Emerald candidate sites* adopted by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention on 9th December 2010, as well as the official “candidate Emerald site” status it provides for;

Conscious that the ecological quality of proposed Emerald sites should be preserved as soon as they are officially nominated as ‘candidate Emerald sites’ by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention;

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

1. Take the necessary protection and conservation measures in order to maintain the ecological characteristics of the candidate Emerald sites;
2. Ensure that, if and when appropriate, these measures include administrative, management or development plans corresponding to the ecological requirements for the long term survival of species and habitats present in the proposed Emerald sites, in particular those of the Bern Convention Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) or specified by Recommendation 16 (1989) and that these are set in place at the latest once ASCIs have officially been adopted by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention;
3. Ensure that the site proposals submitted to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention for official nomination as candidate Emerald sites comply with the minimum criteria proposed in the guidance set out in Appendix 1 to the present Recommendation.

Invites Contracting Parties, the European Commission and the European Environment Agency to consider listing biodiversity among the programme priorities for the neighbourhood policy.

APPENDIX I

Guidance

This guidance draws on the discussions of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks at its 3rd meeting (2011) as well as on the expert opinion of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity. It complements the provisions of the *Criteria for assessing the National Lists of proposed ASCIs at biogeographical level and procedure for examining and approving Emerald candidate sites*, adopted by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention at its 30th meeting in 2010.

National sites' proposals can be submitted to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention for official nomination as Emerald candidate sites once they fulfil the following minimum criteria:

- a. Are described according to the Emerald standard data form (Appendix I to resolution No. 5 (1998) of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention);
- b. Contain at least one habitat and/or species listed in the Revised Annex I of Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention and/or in Resolution No. 6 (1998) of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention and/or specified by Recommendation No. 16 (1989);
- c. Provide information on site name, site code and site area, together with the site boundary in an agreed GIS format (in the case of an individual cave, the central coordinate of the cave entrance should be provided).