

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 122 (2006) of the Standing Committee on the conservation of biological diversity in the context of climate change

(adopted by the Standing Committee on 30 November 2006)

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

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and its natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 2 of the Convention requires Parties to take requisite measures to maintain the populations of wild flora and fauna at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic requirements;

Recalling that Article 4 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of wild flora and fauna species as well as of endangered natural habitats; and give particular attention to the protection of areas of importance for migratory species;

Recalling the 2003 Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity, which includes the commitment to “*halt the loss of biological diversity at all levels by 2010*”, as adopted by Environment Ministers and Heads of delegation from 51 countries in the Pan-European region;

Recalling the 2004 Strasbourg Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the preservation of biological diversity;

Recalling the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its finding that “unprecedented increased efforts” are needed to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target at national, regional and global levels;

Recalling CBD COP Decision VIII/30 which encourages the development of rapid assessment tools for the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use activities which contribute to adaptation to climate change, particularly in vulnerable countries and regions;

Recognising that climate change affects biological diversity in the territory covered by the Convention, including species, habitats and the Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald Network;

Recognising further that biodiversity can play an important role in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change as well as mitigating greenhouse gas emissions;

Recalling the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species - as climate change affects the abundance and spread of invasive alien species and the vulnerability of ecosystems to invasions;

Recognising that the negative impacts of climate change on all forms of land- and water-use, including agriculture, forestry, freshwater resources, coastal systems and marine areas including fisheries and aquaculture, as well as on species and ecosystems, hinder the capacity of Parties to achieve sustainable development;

Having regard to relevant Council of Europe's legal and policy frameworks such as the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, the European Landscape Convention, the European Conference of Ministers responsible for regional planning (CEMAT), and EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement;

Having regard to the EC communication on "*Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond. Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being*", noting particularly its associated targets and actions related to supporting biodiversity adaptation to climate change;

Recognising the need to adapt conservation work to the challenges of climate change so as to minimise its impact on the species and natural habitats protected under the Convention;

Recognising the need to take account of the five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, adopted by Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2005;

Recognising the need to co-operate with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species and its related agreements, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the need to co-ordinate efforts regarding CBD COP Decision VIII/30 on biodiversity and climate change; CMS Resolution 8.13 and AEW Resolution 3.17 on climate change and migratory species; and Ramsar Resolution VIII.3 on climate change and wetlands;

Welcoming the report "*Conserving European Biodiversity in the Context of Climate Change*" by Michael B. Usher [document CO-DBP (2005) 3 revised];

Recommends that Contracting Parties to the Convention:

1. Set up a Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to this recommendation, to provide information and guidance to Parties on understanding climate change impacts and threats, and provide Parties with tools and support in developing appropriate adaptation measures in national policies regarding the species and habitats protected under the Bern Convention.
2. Engage in this work and give it adequate priority and resources for its timely completion.

Annex

Terms of Reference for a Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change

1. Scope

- .1 to exchange information and review the effects of climate change on the biological diversity covered by the Bern Convention, including species and habitats, protected areas, and ecological networks;
- .2 to propose advice and guidance for use in developing appropriate adaptation and management policies and actions for the conservation of the biological diversity mentioned above, including key policies that impact on ecosystem goods and services;
- .3 to present to the Standing Committee specific proposals, guidance and/or recommendations covering 1.1 and 1.2 above, to help Parties address the challenges of climate change in the implementation of the Convention and its objectives.

2. Composition

- 2.1 Engage the expertise of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention, including members of other Groups of Experts established under the Bern Convention and under other Conventions, as appropriate, as well as relevant observers.
- 2.2 The Group of Experts may call on additional expertise on an *ad hoc* basis.

3. Methodology and timeframe

- 3.1 The work of the Group of Experts will take account of the report “Conserving European Biodiversity in the Context of Climate Change” by Michael B. Usher [CO-DBP (2005) 3 revised], as well as of existing relevant instruments and initiatives at the national, European and international level, including the following:

3.1.1 *at the international level*

- the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment;
- the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species and its related agreements, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
- the Global Taxonomy Initiative;
- the IPCC report “Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability”;
- the five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, adopted under the UNFCCC;
- the Regional Seas Conventions.

3.1.2 *at the European level*

- the 2003 Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity;
- the 2004 Strasbourg Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the preservation of biological diversity;
- relevant Council of Europe’s legal and policy frameworks such as the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, the European Landscape Convention, the European Conference of Ministers responsible for regional planning, and EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement;
- the EU Climate Change Programme and its Working Group on Impacts and Adaptation;
- the EC Communication on “Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond: Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being”;
- the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS).

3.1.3 *at the national level*

- protected area management and policy;

- species conservation policy;
- national policies on agriculture and forestry, including production of renewable energy from biomass; freshwater resources; coastal systems and marine areas; as well as land-use planning.

3.2 The Group of Experts will endeavour to submit a set of finalised guidance/recommendations to the Standing Committee for decision by 2008 – with a progress report on its work by 2007.