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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

36<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 15-18 November 2016

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**Possible File**

**Possible spread of the American mink  
(*Neovison vison*) in Poland**

**- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -**

*Document prepared by  
The Ministry of the Environment, Poland*

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Warsaw,

2016

**MINISTERSTWO ŚRODOWISKA**  
**PODSEKRETARZ STANU**  
**Główny Konserwator Przyrody**  
*Andrzej Szweda-Lewandowski*

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Ms Ivana d'Allesandro  
Head of the Biodiversity Unit  
Convention on the Conservation  
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats  
Secretariat General  
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In response to your letter of 16 December 2016, ref. no.: DG-II Ida/vdc, concerning the possible file regarding the complaint No 2012/3: possible spread of the American mink (*Neovison vison*) in Poland, I would like to provide hereby information on actions undertaken by Poland in this respect.

To begin with, I would like to recall that the Ordinance of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 28 June 2010 on minimum conditions on keeping livestock species other than these, for which the protection standards are laid down in the provisions of the European Union (Journal of Laws No. 116, item 778), was amended in 2015. Due to this amendment additional requirements were introduced in order to minimize the risk of escapes of American mink from farms to nature.

Furthermore, the legislation process on amendment of the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of 9 November 2010 on types of projects likely to have a significant impact on the environment (Journal of Laws No. 2013, item 1397, as amended), is being carried on this year. The amendment foresees lowering the threshold which is used for qualification of a mink farm to the group of projects that are potentially likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

As a result of the above mentioned amendment, the decision on the environmental conditions will be mandatory for all the mink farms that will reach the size set in the draft regulation. Moreover, the projected amendment will have influence on the projects that aim at modification of the existing farms. It is due to the fact that any change resulting in an increase of the stock above the foreseen threshold will be each time subject to a decision on the environmental conditions. Additionally, an important legislative change will enter into force on 1 January 2017 to the Act of 3 October 2008 on the provision of information on the environment and its protection, public participation in environmental protection and environmental impact assessments (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 1235, as amended). Due to this new regulation it will be possible to set environmental conditions and requirements, including safety measures to prevent mink escapes from farms, in every decision on the environmental conditions, irrespectively of a procedure under which the decision will be issued. Currently it is not possible to set such conditions in decisions, if there was no obligation imposed to conduct an environmental impact assessment, i.e. to deliver an environmental impact report of the project. Furthermore, violation of the conditions and requirements set in a decision on the environmental conditions will be subject to administrative monetary penalties.

The undertaken actions are justified because American mink poses a significant threat to native nature, especially to water fowl. Moreover the mink farms are a nuisance to local communities due to emitting of odors and occurrence of damages in poultry stocks.