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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

32nd meeting
Strasbourg, 27th-30th November 2012

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES
TO THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE
BERN CONVENTION
ADVISORY GROUP OF EXPERTS ON BUDGET**

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

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AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Azerbaijan is opposed to cut activities as mentioned in Option 1. Option 2 seems not feasible either. Therefore the preference goes to Option 3.

CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE**FINANCING THE WORK OF THE BERN CONVENTION****CZECH REPUBLIC'S VIEW**

Recognizing the importance of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats in the field of the protection of the endangered natural habitats and endangered vulnerable fauna and flora species in Europe, the Czech Republic is ready to discuss possibilities and views how to ensure the effective Bern Convention continuation.

As for the proposed options included in the document T-PVS (2011) 10 we oppose the Option 2 suggesting "Elaboration of a Council of Europe "Partial Agreement" on the Convention" because we find very unhappy to lose the Council of Europe budgetary support which is still significant contribution even if decreasing. Bearing in mind difficult financial and economic situation there is a real risk that many Parties will not join the Partial Agreement because of the cost of the Bern Convention and high contributions. We do not expect that Parties not currently contributing to the budget of the Convention on the voluntary basis would be in position to commit themselves to provision of contributions under a mandatory regime

Under given economic circumstances it would be also very difficult for our Government to commit itself whereas the national budget has been and will be continuously trimmed.

We are in favour of the Option 3 that means to maintain the present system of double funding by Council of Europe and voluntary contributions and reinforce voluntary contributions by the establishment of a "recommended voluntary" contribution by each Party.

or

We propose that the Bern Convention is financed from:

- Council of Europe's ordinary budget;
- Recommended voluntary contributions provided by Parties
- Extra voluntary contributions provided by Parties

Recommended voluntary contributions provided by Parties would cover essential activities (percentage/level of the Bern Convention budget should be discussed) and less important activities would be covered either by contributions received through a scheme of extra voluntary contributions or in any other way (savings from previous year, reserves). This could also mean structuring the work plan into more categories according to the priority of planned activities. Core activities would have to be covered by Council of Europe's ordinary budget and Recommended voluntary contributions. The rest of envisaged activities would be further divided into 2 or 3 categories reflecting their importance. The workplan would be revised and approved at each meeting of the Standing Committee - reflecting the current state of financial contributions received or pledged.

It might seem that this creates a great deal of uncertainty in securing the funds for implementation of the work programme in the given year, however, it gives each Party the flexibility to make contributions in line with its current budgetary possibilities.

FINLAND / FINLANDE

Letter by the Ministry of the Environment of Finland

Dated 23 March 2012

Ministry of the Environment thanks you for your letter 25 January 2012 and will present its views on the funding of the Bern Convention.

On 2012 the Ministry of the Environment has made an appropriation of 7000 € to the Bern Convention. Next year we are planning to allocate the same amount. This depends on how the total appropriation will be shared with different agreements.

As the Bern Convention is a priority for Finland, the Option 1 is not supported by us.

The Government of Finland is planning the next year budget, and we can not make a compulsory commitment. So the Option 2 is not actual, but can be possible 2014 or later, if the satisfactory solution is not otherwise achievable.

Taking into account the financial situations and especially the future budgetary development of the Ministry, Option 3 is better for Finland. It gives more time to prepare the future appropriations and to integrate to the changes. It might also be an easier solution for such countries too, which have not paid voluntary contributions (Appendix 3). Those countries have a great responsibility to the future of the Convention.

The Ministry can not yet appoint the expert to the Select Group, but will do it as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Matti Osara

Matti Osara
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FRANCE / FRANCE



MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCOLOGIE, DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE,
DES TRANSPORTS ET DU LOGEMENT

*Direction générale de l'aménagement
du logement et de la nature
Direction de l'eau et de la biodiversité*

La Défense, le

*Sous-direction de la protection et de la valorisation des
espèces et de leurs milieux
Bureau de la faune et de la flore sauvages*

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**Objet : Position de la France relative au futur système de financement de la
Convention de Berne**

Par votre courrier du 25 janvier dernier, vous avez aimablement sollicité l'avis des autorités françaises quant à l'évolution du système de financement des travaux de la Convention de Berne, et je vous en remercie.

Les services compétents du Gouvernement français ont examiné de près le document T-PVS (2011) 10 « Financer le travail du système de la Convention de Berne » présentant la situation budgétaire actuelle de la convention et trois options de financement pour les années à venir.

Je vous prie de bien vouloir prendre connaissance de la position de la France à cet égard, ci dessous exposée :

La France privilégie l'option 3 : « *maintien du système actuel de double financement par le Conseil de l'Europe et par des contributions volontaires, et renforcement des contributions volontaires par l'établissement d'une contribution « volontaire recommandée » à verser par chaque Partie* ».

Nous pensons que cette option devrait être accompagnée des mesures suivantes :

- une stabilisation de la contribution du Conseil de l'Europe à la Convention de Berne

- les Parties et le Secrétariat suscitent une participation financière accrue de l'Union européenne aux travaux de la Convention de Berne
- les Parties et le Secrétariat recherchent d'autres sources de financement, en particulier des fondations ou structures privées, intéressées par la question de la protection de la biodiversité en Europe
- un recentrage des activités de la Convention de Berne sur des activités réellement essentielles et abandon des activités moins utiles (diplômes européens?)
- les demandes de contributions volontaires adressées aux Parties porteront sur des programmes spécifiques (à mentionner clairement dans la demande), et non pas sur l'ensemble des activités, de manière à faciliter la mise à disposition de fonds par les services financiers compétents des Parties.
- les Parties et le Secrétariat interviendront auprès du Conseil de l'Europe pour développer la thématique du « droit à un environnement sain » au Conseil des droits de l'homme, qui permet de faire un lien judicieux entre la préservation de l'environnement (mandat de la Convention de Berne) et les droits de l'homme, action prioritaire du Conseil de l'Europe.

Enfin, la France prévoit de nommer un représentant à la réunion du groupe consultatif d'experts qui se réunira le 24 avril 2012 pour analyser les propositions reçues. sous réserve de confirmation de sa part, Monsieur Mathieu Schuster :

Rédacteur Conseil de l'Europe - suivi des droits de l'homme en CEO, Balkans, Asie centrale - correspondant OSCE Dimension humaine - suivi thématique : lutte contre la torture, sous-direction des droits de l'homme et des affaires humanitaires dgp/nuoi/h, ministère des affaires étrangères et européennes, tél : 01 43 17 47 59 - fax : 01 43 17 51 05, e-mail: mathieu.schuster@diplomatie.gouv.fr, représentera la France à cette réunion.

La France attache une importance particulière à la Convention de Berne et souhaite vivement que ses activités, gérées par un Secrétariat très efficace, puissent continuer de rassembler les pays de la grande Europe autour de la conservation de la nature dans son territoire. pour ce faire, les Parties doivent faire en sorte que des moyens suffisants puissent lui être octroyés à l'avenir.

Veillez recevoir, madame, l'expression de mes plus cordiales salutations.

MOLDOVA / MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova considers it is necessary to introduce amendments to the Convention related to **annual mandatory contributions** that have to be payed by the contracting parties.

The Republic of Moldova, through the National Environmental Fund, respects its assignments related to payment of annual mandatory contributions to International Environmental Conventions to which it is Part.

MONACO / MONACO

COMMENTAIRES DE LA PRINCIPAUTE DE MONACO CONCERNANT LA REFORME BUDGETAIRE DE LA CONVENTION DE BERNE

Faisant suite à votre courrier en date du 25 janvier dernier et avec un peu de retard, je vous prie de bien vouloir trouver, ci-dessous, les commentaires de la Principauté de Monaco concernant la réforme budgétaire de la Convention de Berne.

S'agissant de l'option 1, il est tout à fait envisageable que certaines activités puissent être mises en « stand by », tel que le diplôme européen et qu'une priorité soit donnée à des travaux plus concrets. Cependant, il serait dommage de perdre les travaux de certains groupes de travail.

Si l'option 3 nous apparaît comme la meilleure solution, Monaco ne pourrait accepter de verser une contribution volontaire régulière supérieure à 8 000 euros et ne saurait accepter la contribution recommandée de 20 000 euros.

De plus, si le Conseil de l'Europe ne reverse plus les financements nécessaires, qu'advient-il de la côte-part dédiée à la Convention incluse dans la contribution ordinaire des Etats au Conseil de l'Europe ?

D'une manière générale, si le Conseil de l'Europe décide ne plus apporter le financement nécessaire au bon fonctionnement de la Convention de Berne, le maintien même de cette Convention au sein dudit Conseil n'est pas un dogme. En effet, une réflexion pourrait être engagée sur un rattachement éventuel de la Convention de Berne à une autre organisation, telle que le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) Europe. Ce rattachement n'est pas impossible et permettrait ainsi à la Convention de s'inscrire dans un ensemble plus cohérent et de mieux s'inscrire dans les synergies en cours de développement sur le thème de la biodiversité et des services écosystémiques.

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UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI

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Dear Ivana

**BERN CONVENTION – ADVISORY GROUP OF EXPERTS ON BUDGET:
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS AND REQUEST FOR WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS**

1. I refer to your letter dated 25 January regarding the creation of an Advisory Group of Experts to explore options for improving the finance and efficiency of the Bern Convention (“the Convention”) and also seeking Contracting Parties views on the long-term financing of the Convention. You were also seeking suitable nominations for participants to join the Advisory Group.
2. It is indeed unfortunate that the reform process at the Council of Europe (CoE) has had budgetary consequences for the Convention resulting in further cuts to the amount the Convention receives from the CoE. We have taken into consideration the paper, “*Financing the Work of the Bern Convention*” which provides current financial trends, challenges for 2012-2013 and options for financing the Convention in the future, in providing this response.
3. The UK’s involvement with the Convention has, for many years and as a result of resource levels, had to be fairly selective. The value of the Convention to the UK is, in the main, via the various Groups of Experts (GoE). We are currently actively engaged in a number of the GoE, including those for; Biodiversity and Climate Change; Invasive Alien Species and European Islands Biological Diversity and our expertise is readily sought and, we think, gratefully received. The sharing of expertise and experiences; the open debate on issues of policy, legislation and implementation and the opportunities to influence each other’s thinking are obvious benefits from the Working Groups for all Parties. We would therefore be concerned about losing the value of the Working Groups disproportionately to cuts in other areas of the Convention’s work. That said we do feel that there may be some scope to run such groups more economically. For example, by having biennial instead of annual meetings and a smaller ‘work planning’ group in the intervening year where necessary - as is done with the Invasive Alien Species Group. There may also be more scope to operate the Groups through a more active “virtual” role in proactively managing discussion topics, webinars, information exchanges etc. Prioritisation of deliverables will clearly become even more essential than before.
4. We agree, because of the decreases in funding from the CoE and the variability of voluntary contributions from Parties (with the likelihood of these reducing rather than increasing in the future), that there needs to be a fundamental rethink of how the Convention is financed now and in coming years.
5. Given the current financial climate the **UK’s preferred option would be Option 1**, and we would be happy to feed into any rationalisation exercise regarding the Convention’s activities. Prioritising and scaling back is a recurrent theme in many areas in these times and we cannot presently see ourselves being able to provide the contribution of €156,000 that would be required under a legally binding agreement as

suggested in Option 2. Similarly regarding Option 3, we are not currently in a position whereby we could make a standing commitment to the “recommended contribution” of €60,000. Having said that we are of course interested to hear the views of other Parties to the Convention in respect of binding contributions and, depending on the views of others, may be open to discussing Option 3 once the current financial climate improves.

6. One further point relating to the “*Financing the Work of the Bern Convention*” paper is that it would have been helpful if it had provided some detailed information about, and analysis of, the key benefits that the Convention has recently contributed to or indeed where it has been (and continues to be) a main player for specific biodiversity issues over the past few years.

7. Each Contracting Party will have its own Convention-related priorities for which its contribution will provide (or is perceived to provide) specific benefits to them (or indeed wider benefits such as those that act across the Bern’s agreement area e.g. on matters of a transboundary nature (of which, the latter is a strength of the Convention)). In responding and adapting to current pressures we think the Convention needs to draw together a well focussed analysis of where and how it will add value in the future. This would help Parties to decide on priorities and the level of commitment that is justified.

8. In terms of looking at other ways to mobilise additional funds, one potential avenue to explore may be (given the refocusing of CoE funding towards human rights and democracy and away from biodiversity-related activities) for the Convention’s Secretary General and the Standing Committee to explore the value and importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the well-being of society and to enabling and empowering people to meet their needs in a sustainable way.

9. Equally relevant are the significant ecological and economic impacts of invasive alien species which are increasingly recognised globally. It might, therefore, be worth setting the biodiversity-related activities in this kind of context for exploration with the CoE’s Committee of Ministers and explaining how the work of the Convention contributes to this overarching CoE agenda/mandate as a way to argue the case/bid for continued or increased funding.

10. Similarly, we are not clear whether there are other CoE funding mechanisms that the Convention could access as a component of a future funding model given the role that biodiversity plays in terms of sustaining human rights and societal well-being. This may help alleviate the pressure on the Convention of reduced and variable contributions by Contracting Parties.

11. I hope you will find this contribution to the funding of the Bern Convention issue useful in your deliberations.

12. Unfortunately the UK is unable to nominate anyone to participate in the Advisory Group of Experts on Budget at this time.

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