Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 205 (2019) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2019, on the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030 for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds

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;

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

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species;

Recalling that Article 6 requires Parties to take the necessary and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix II, prohibiting in particular all forms of deliberate capture and keeping, and deliberate killing, as well as the possession and internal trade in these animals, alive or dead;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 5 (1986) on the prosecution of persons illegally catching, killing or trading in protected birds, which encouraged Parties to ensure the prosecution of persons illegally catching or killing birds or establishments commercialising live and/or protected birds and Recommendation No. 90 (2001) on the catching, killing or trading of protected birds in Cyprus, which encouraged Cyprus to properly implement the actions suggested in Recommendation No. 5 (1986);

Further recalling its Recommendation No. 155 (2011) on the illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds, which identified the main challenges related to the legal, biological and institutional aspects, and suggested a series of urgent measures for enhancing national and international cooperation, fostering adequate enforcement of existing legislation, and promoting dialogue between all relevant interest groups, noting traditions, cultures and values;

Recalling the Larnaca Declaration, adopted at the 1st European Conference on illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds (Larnaca, Cyprus, 6-8 July 2011), which called on responsible stakeholders, governments, local communities, law enforcement agencies, and nature conservation NGOs, including hunting associations, to unequivocally condemn all forms of illegal taking and trading of wild birds, to pledge a zero tolerance approach to illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, and to adopt a full and proactive role in fighting against these illegal activities;

Recalling the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, adopted by the Standing Committee on 29 November 2007, and particularly its Principles No. 2 – Ensure that regulations are understandable and respected; No. 3 – Ensure that harvest is ecologically sustainable; No. 8 – Empower local stakeholders and hold them accountable; and No. 11 - Encourage cooperation between all stakeholders in management of harvested species, associated species and their habitats;

Recalling the 2nd Conference on Illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds which took place in Tunis on 29-30 May 2013 and which has identified, through an open and collaborative process, three areas where urgent

action should be implemented by relevant actors for ensuring the eradication of IKB, namely legislation enforcement, awareness and education and biological aspects;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 164 (2013) on the implementation of the Tunis Action Plan (TAP) 2013-2020 for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 171 (2014) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 5 December 2014, on the setting-up of national policing/investigation priorities to tackle illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds, recommending Parties to improve efforts aimed at enhancing inter-sector cooperation at national level and involving all relevant Ministries, particularly the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Interior or Home Affairs, Justice and Education;

Further recalling its Recommendation No. 177 (2015) on the gravity factors and sentencing principles for the evaluation of offences against birds, and in particular the illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds;

Recalling the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and its target 1 "Fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives", and the Roadmap elaborated for addressing illegal killing of birds in EU member states, in line with the Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020;

Acknowledging the setting-up of an Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), pursuant to Resolution 11.16 (Rev. COP12) adopted at CMS COP11, and revised at COP12, entitled "The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds", that aimed to facilitate the implementation of the Bern Convention Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020; and stressing the Cairo Declaration on supporting a zero-tolerance approach to the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean Region developed at the 1st meeting of the MIKT in July 2016;

Noting the Programme of Work of the MIKT developed for the period (2016-2020) at the Task Force's 1st meeting in July 2016;

Recalling the mid-term review of the Tunis Action Plan, developed in 2016, and its conclusion, among others, of the need for more action by Parties in the identification of policy and investigation priorities, on improving the awareness of the judiciary about IKB and on identifying black spots and understanding the drivers of IKB;

Acknowledging the benefits of the coordinated approach successfully followed at the international level by the Bern Convention together with other concerned and partner MEAs, organisations and stakeholders, and in particular the excellent cooperation with the CMS, the AEWA and the EU and its Member States, on matters related to the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds;

Recalling the 1st Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (Bern SFPs Network) and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) in Sliema, Malta, on 22-23 June 2017 and the development of a joint Bern Convention - CMS MIKT Scoreboard which supports Parties in self-assessing their national progress on the implementation of their commitments in this area;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 196 (2017) on the establishment of a Scoreboard for measuring progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds;

Noting with concern the results of the BirdLife International 2015 Review of the scale and extent of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean and their 2017 Review of illegal killing and taking of birds in Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran;

Recalling the results of the first assessment of national Scoreboard reporting [document T-PVS/Inf(2019)10], presented at the 2nd Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Point on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental

Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, which took place in Rome in May 2019;

Welcoming the transparent and consultative process, initiated in 2018 by the Bern Convention, for shaping the post-2020 strategic priorities on IKB, starting from a questionnaire for Bern Convention Parties and MIKT members and observers, through a high-level analysis of developments since the adoption of the TAP 2013-2020, a strategic assessment of the state of implementation of the TAP and a SWOT report, which led to the development of recommendations for a draft post-2020 strategic framework for action which includes a vision, objectives and high-level targets;

Reminding that this initial post-2020 strategic framework was then transformed into a Strategic Plan, debated at the 2nd Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Point on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean and further consulted with all relevant actors through two electronic consultations;

Further reminding that the 2nd Joint meeting of the Bern SFPS Network and CMS MIKT suggested that the Rome Strategic Plan on Illegal Killing of Birds 2020-2030 should become a joint strategic document of the Bern Convention and the CMS MIKT;

Aware of the urgency of stepping up efforts towards the eradication of illegal practices affecting bird populations and acknowledging the widespread adoption of the zero-tolerance approach towards IKB;

Recommends and encourages Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites Observer States to:

1. Implement appropriate actions of the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030 appended to this Recommendation in order to;

    a) understand the scope, scale of and motivations behind IKB;
    b) establish an active prevention of the illegal killing, taking and trade of birds;
    c) ensure that illegal killing of birds is addressed effectively and efficiently in national legislation;
    d) ensure that effective and efficient enforcement of relevant legislation is undertaken;
    e) ensure effective and efficient justice for IKB-related offences;

2. Inform the Standing Committee on relevant actions taken under the plan.

The Bern Convention Secretariat is requested to cooperate with the CMS Secretariat to support, as appropriate, Parties in their use of the Rome Strategic Plan, in coordination with the Special Focal Points Network for IKB under the Bern Convention and the CMS MIKT.

Annex: Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030: Eradicating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Wild Birds in Europe and the Mediterranean region