



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Resolution No. 9 (2019) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2019, on the financing of the Bern Convention and on initiating the establishment of a new system for obligatory financial contributions by Parties

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;

Recalling that the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European wildlife and Natural Habitats is the main legal instrument in the field of biological diversity at pan-European level, having been ratified by fifty States and the European Union, encompassing the entire European Continent and beyond, thanks to the ratification by four North African states;

Recalling the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the signature of the Bern Convention on 19 September 2019;

Recalling the main mission of the Bern Convention, which is to ensure conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats within its geographic scope, giving special attention to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species, as reflected in Article 1 of the Convention;

Recalling that since the adoption of the UN Agenda 21 and later the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the objectives of the Bern Convention were acclaimed as being largely in line with and contributing to the objectives set for the sustainable development of our Planet (Monaco Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the implementation of worldwide international instruments for the protection of biodiversity, 25 September 1994);

Recalling Resolution No. 7 (2000) on the medium-term strategic development of the Convention on the Conservation of European wildlife and Natural Habitats, adopted by the Standing Committee on 1st December 2000, which sets a role for the Convention in supporting the implementation of the world targets and strategic priorities for biodiversity set at the level of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

Recognising the importance of the Bern Convention as a tool for intergovernmental cooperation at the level of the continent, for ensuring coordinated action and synergies by all relevant actors in their efforts to protect nature for the benefit of all and for contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

Stressing that for forty years this Council of Europe treaty has developed a high number of standards and guidance documents on threatened species and natural habitats in Europe and has been

continuously assisting its Parties in their compliance efforts, while thoroughly monitoring the implementation of obligations and standards;

Recognising the major progress in the setting up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest in the past ten years and the key importance of this Network in ensuring that a coherent and complementary approach to site conservation is applied across the European continent;

Recognising the efficiency of the monitoring system of the Bern Convention, based on both reporting obligations and complaints submitted by individuals and civil society organisations, in supporting national authorities in the successful termination of many case-files on possible violation of the Convention, including using on-the-spot appraisals and mediation as problem-solving tools;

Recognising the productive working relationships that the Bern Convention has established and nourished over the years with other relevant treaties, organisations and processes;

Stressing that today it is largely recognised that biodiversity is fundamental for maintaining ecosystems which deliver essential services for ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights, including human health and well-being;

Recalling that the Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services developed and adopted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in May 2019 in Paris, recognised five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss today: (1) changes in land and sea use; (2) direct exploitation of organisms; (3) climate change; (4) pollution; and (5) invasion of alien species, and also presents an array of root causes or indirect drivers of change which are in turn underpinned by societal values and behaviours;

Recalling the work carried out by the Bureau and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Budgetary matters, in the period 2011-2013, aimed at identifying a viable system for funding the Convention and the Decision of the 33rd Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2013, on financing the Bern Convention;

Recognising that although always secured, the allocation of a financial contribution from the Council of Europe's Ordinary Budget to the implementation of the Bern Convention has strongly diminished over the years and in particular in the past 10 years and has reached a level where further cuts would jeopardise the existence of the Convention, including its Secretariat;

Noting also the recent financial difficulties of the Council of Europe and the contingency plan of the Organisation planned for a period of three years (2020-2023), which was abandoned but could have had an impact on the Bern Convention's allocation by the organisation for both its staff and operational budget;

Having regard to the work of the inter-sessional Working Group on the financing of the Bern Convention throughout 2019 and document T-PVS(2019)1rev, presenting options for identifying a viable new system of funding for the Convention;

Stressing again that the Convention can function well only if it receives adequate and predictable funding for the implementation of its Programme of Activities, for its Secretariat and for the fulfilment of its mandate and objectives;

Noting that the dual funding system of the Convention -budget allocation from the Council of Europe ordinary budget and additional financial support provided by Contracting Parties, although having constituted a good option for ensuring the financial resources for the Convention in the past, is constantly challenged through budgetary cuts operated by the Committee of Ministers to the Council of Europe and is therefore very fragile;

The Standing Committee:

1. Notes the scale of suggested voluntary financial contributions to the budget of the Convention by its Contracting Parties as provided in Annex 1;
2. Urges all Contracting Parties to the Convention to contribute to the budget of the Convention according to the scale of suggested voluntary contributions and invites them to contribute above these suggested amounts;
3. Instructs the Bureau to closely monitor Parties' voluntary contributions and to present the state of payments at each meeting of the Standing Committee to the Convention;
4. Without prejudice to the discretion of each party to set the level of its voluntary contribution, instructs the Secretariat to prepare, on an annual basis, a revised scale of suggested voluntary contributions, considering the level of the financial allocation by the Council of Europe through the Ordinary Budget to the Convention's overall budget, and to present this to the Standing Committee for consideration;
5. Without prejudice to future positions of Contracting Parties on voluntary or obligatory financing mechanisms, an inter-sessional working group on finances shall, with the support of the Secretariat and the Bureau, in pursuance of options 1 and 3, draft full proposals for amending the Convention and for a Partial Agreement concerning financing. Both proposals shall be made available to Parties four months before the date of the 40th Standing Committee, for discussion, possible adoption, and possible submission of either or both proposals for approval by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Annex 1: Scale of contributions by Contracting Parties for 2020

Contracting Party	% of total amount	Total amount of annual contribution (Euros)
Albania	0,25%	1 300,00
Andorra	0,25%	1 300,00
Armenia	0,25%	1 300,00
Austria	1,50%	7 800,00
Azerbaijan	0,25%	1 300,00
Belgium	1,75%	9 100,00
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0,25%	1 300,00
Bulgaria	0,63%	3 250,00
Croatia	0,63%	3 250,00
Cyprus	0,25%	1 300,00
Czech Republic	0,63%	3 250,00
Denmark	1,50%	7 800,00
Estonia	0,63%	3 250,00
Finland	1,50%	7 800,00
France	10,00%	52 000,00
Georgia	0,25%	1 300,00
Germany	10,00%	52 000,00
Greece	0,63%	3 250,00
Hungary	0,63%	3 250,00
Iceland	1,50%	7 800,00
Ireland	1,50%	7 800,00
Italy	10,00%	52 000,00
Latvia	0,63%	3 250,00
Liechtenstein	0,25%	1 300,00
Lithuania	0,63%	3 250,00
Luxembourg	0,25%	1 300,00
Malta	0,25%	1 300,00
Moldova	0,25%	1 300,00
Monaco	0,25%	1 300,00
Montenegro	0,25%	1 300,00
Netherlands	2,50%	13 000,00
Norway	10,00%	52 000,00
Poland	2,00%	10 400,00
Portugal	2,00%	10 400,00
Romania	0,63%	3 250,00
Serbia	0,25%	1 300,00
Slovak Republic	0,63%	3 250,00
Slovenia	0,63%	3 250,00

Spain	4,00%	20 800,00
Sweden	1,50%	7 800,00
Switzerland	10,00%	52 000,00
North Macedonia	0,25%	1 300,00
Turkey	1,50%	7 800,00
Ukraine	0,63%	3 250,00
United Kingdom	10,00%	52 000,00
Belarus ¹	0,25%	1 300,00
Burkina Faso	0,25%	1 300,00
European Union	4,75%	24 700,00
Morocco	0,25%	1 300,00
Senegal	0,25%	1 300,00
Tunisia	0,25%	1 300,00
Total	100,00%	520 000,00

¹ Belarus, Burkina Faso, the European Union, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia, are Parties to the Bern Convention, but non-member States to the Council of Europe.