



Monitoring visit to Patara and Fethiye (Turkey) to check enforcement of conservation measures for the oldest living species on Earth

Strasbourg, 23 July 2015 – An on-the-spot monitoring appraisal will take place on 28-30 July 2015 to Patara and Fethiye Specially Protected Areas, following a complaint submitted by MEDASSET to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

Sea turtles are among the oldest living species on Earth, and at the same time one of the most endangered reptiles. Two endangered sea turtle species, loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) and green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) nest regularly in the Mediterranean, namely in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. They are both protected by the Bern Convention and by EU Nature legislation.

In 2013 the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention opened a case following a complaint submitted by MEDASSET under the Convention's case-file system. The NGO denounced the severe threats presumably posed to marine turtles by the lack of adequate management of Fethiye and Patara nesting beaches as a result of the tourism development of the areas. At core of the complaint, among other conservation problems, a summer house development project next to Patara beach, the presumed inadequate management of Fethiye SPA, and the plans to build a shipyard dock in Agköl.

The on-the-spot visit was decided by the Standing Committee, with the agreement of Turkey, in view of identifying a set of recommended actions that – if implemented - could avoid a breach of the Convention

The visit will be conducted by an independent expert, a member of the Convention's Secretariat, MEDASSET, and representatives of the IUCN and WWF-Turkey. Besides the visit of the site, the programme includes meetings with the national and local authorities, as well as with other stakeholders.

More information: www.coe.int/bernconvention



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