

International Day for Biological Diversity 2022: The Bern Convention is the COE's tool to ensure that Humans, Nature and Wildlife may share a future

Strasbourg, 22nd May 2022: According to the IUCN Red List, more than 40,000 species are threatened with extinction globally today. This concerns e.g. 26% of mammals, 41% of amphibians, and 13% of birds. The main threats come from the fact that their habitats are disappearing or changing due to human interference, e.g. deforestation or human-induced climate change.

On International Day for Biological Diversity and its theme, “Building a shared future for all life”, we would like to raise awareness of this issue and encourage collective efforts of striving towards a planet that flourishes with life, to the benefit of both humans and nature!



The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats ([Bern Convention](#)), signed by 50 countries in- and outside of Europe, aims to ensure the conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats, with special attention to endangered and vulnerable species. To do this, one of its core activities is to consider complaints from attentive civil society which feel that their governments are undertaking actions that are putting biodiversity at risk. Those complaints turn into so-called [case files](#) that the Convention's Standing Committee may then confer on. Based on these case files, we can see that the species protected under the Bern Convention are currently threatened by energy projects such as fracking and mining, infrastructure and construction work (airports, harbours, roads, urbanisation), agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, pollution, poisoning, culling, hunting, inadequate legal protection or enforcement and bad coastal management. With these threats to endangered wildlife and habitats, a growing human population and a decline of global biodiversity, it becomes obvious that one of the main challenges of the future is to find ways for humans and nature to share the limited space of our planet in a way that is beneficial to both. This is why the motto of this year's Biodiversity Day fits the work of the Bern Convention excitingly well.

Whenever such a possible breach of the Convention is reported, the Standing Committee looks into ways of reducing this threat, such as through raising the specific country's awareness, collecting ideas to support the country in reducing it, using its expert groups, e.g. on the conservation of birds or marine turtles, as well as on-site appraisals. **With these instruments, the Bern Convention is the Council of Europe's most applied tool for the conservation of species and their natural habitats.** At the moment, the Convention is working on over 40 active case files for the conservation of species such as the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), or the Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)

balcanicus). The Bern Convention also facilitates the conservation of entire habitats within its [Emerald Network](#).

Although the work for biodiversity and habitat conservation is particularly complex as the contracting countries have to balance environmental interests with social and economic ones, there are success stories to the work of the Bern Convention! An example is that of Georgia, which has found a space for dialogue between policy makers, scientists and civil society so that today, many of its endemic and rare species are recognised and protected by domestic as well as international regulations. This is thanks to the country's integration of National Parks with pan-European Emerald Network sites as a fruit of a scientific, political and social effort over nearly three decades. Honouring the effort of the numerous involved representatives, experts and consultants and manifesting its hope to continuously contribute to building a shared future for all life, the Bern Convention wishes everybody a very happy International Day for Biological Diversity!

For more examples, visit the Convention's [40th Anniversary website](#) or its [Voices of Nature website](#).