

Strasbourg, 1 September 2021
[files24e_2021.docx]

T-PVS/Files(2021)24

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

41st meeting
Strasbourg, 29 November – 3 December 2021

Complaint on stand-by: 2017/6

**Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður
Nature Reserve's authentic birch woods from
new road infrastructure
(Iceland)**

- REPORT BY THE COMPLAINANT -

*Document prepared by
Iceland Nature Conservation Association / Landvernd*

- September 2021 -



The Secretariat of the Bern Convention
Council of Europe,
Avenue de l'Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex,
France

Att. Ursula Sticker, Secretary of the Bern Convention

1 September 2021

Dear Ursula Sticker

We refer our letter, dated 31 December 2020, regarding the conclusions of the meeting of Standing Committee, 40th meeting(virtual), Strasbourg, 30 November- 4 December 2020, LIST OF DECISIONS AND ADOPTED TEXTS; 6.3 Complaints on stand-by 2017/6: Iceland: **Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve's** authentic birch woods from new road infrastructure.

In the letter we expressed that the Board of Landvernd, Iceland's largest environmental NGO, is dismayed by the decision of selecting the route of most environmental concern rather than alternative solutions for facilitating road transportation in the area. Landvernd has participated in two EIA for the project, tabled alternative solution for improving the road system and filed complaints in accordance with Icelandic law. All national resources to avoid the damage the new transport infrastructure will cause have been exploited.

In the letter of December 31, 2020, Landvernd welcomed the decision of the Committee to mandate on the side assessment (OSA) during 2021 and declared the organization is prepared to yield any assistance that is requested to facilitate the assessment. Our offer is still valid.

We would like to inform you that the Road Authority has initiated the construction of the above-mentioned new road. However, we believe it would be of utmost importance to conduct an on-side assessment by the Bern Convention. The assessment would serve as an enlightenment for the authorities and could also pinpoint possible improvements that can reduce the negative impact of the current plans for the construction. Consequently, I encourage you to conduct the on-side assessment as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Audur Önnu Magnúsdóttir, Secretary General of Landvernd



- March 2021 -

Dear Eoghan

Thank you for the e-mail from 15 February to me and Trausti Baldursson.

I would like to point out the enclosed support from Landvernd (our nature protection society), that was enclosed with you e-mail.

Specially these words:

“The Board of Landvernd is dismayed by the recent decision by Icelandic authorities of selecting the route of most environmental concern rather than alternative solutions for facilitating road transportation in the area.”

Otherwise I just refer to previous documents that I have sent.

With very best wishes
Gunnlaugur Pétursson
Iceland

Annex

**The Secretariat of the Bern Convention
Council of Europe,
Avenue de l'Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex,
France**

31. desember 2020

We refer to the meeting of Standing Committee, 40th meeting(virtual), Strasbourg, 30 November- 4 December 2020, LIST OF DECISIONS AND ADOPTED TEXTS; 6.3 Complaints on stand-by 2017/6: Iceland: **Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve's** authentic birch woods from new road infrastructure.

Landvernd welcomes the decision of the Committee to mandate on the side assessment (OSA) during 2021.

Landvernd is Iceland's largest nature conservation organization, an NGO with about 6.000 members. The organization has for over 15 years been engaged in the above-mentioned issue, in effort to prevent the destruction of an important natural area which is linked to the Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve. Landvernd has participated in two EIA for the project, tabled alternative solution for improving the road system and filed complaints in accordance with Icelandic law. The Board of Landvernd is dismayed by the recent decision by Icelandic authorities of selecting the route of most environmental concern rather than alternative solutions for facilitating road transportation in the area.

Landvernd supports the decision to conduct an OSA in Iceland during 2021 and the organization is prepared to yield any assistance that is requested to facilitate the assessment.

I sincerely remain at your disposal,
Audur Önnu Magnúsdóttir, Secretary General of Landvernd