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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

39th meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2019

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Draft Recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

Document prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Participation

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Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. … (2019) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2019, on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

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 Article 4 of the Bern Convention, requiring each Contracting Party to take appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of (i) natural habitats that are endangered and (ii) the habitats of wild flora and fauna, especially those species listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention and endangered and vulnerable migratory species;

Recalling that Article 4 of the Bern Convention also requests Parties to use their planning and development policies to avoid or minimise deterioration of the areas they protect for the purposes of Article 4;

Recalling Resolution No. 1 (1989) on the provisions relating to the conservation of habitats;

Recalling Recommendation No. 16 (1989) inviting Contracting Parties to designate areas of special conservation interest to ensure that necessary and appropriate conservation measures are taken for each area situated within their territory and to review regularly or continually in a systematic fashion their performance in the implementation;

Recalling Resolution No. 3 (1996) on the setting-up of a pan-European Ecological Network, creating a group of experts mandated to carry out the necessary activities related to the building up of the Emerald Network by Contracting Parties and observer states;

Recalling Resolution No. 5 (1998) concerning the rules for the Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network) entrusting the Standing Committee with the periodic review of the contribution of the Emerald Network towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention;

Recalling the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (2011-2020) [document T-PVS/PA(2010)8], committing Contracting Parties and Observer states to the Bern Convention to the completion of the Emerald Network constitution process by 2020;

Recalling the three dimensional Road Map for achieving a fully operational Emerald Network in seven countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus [document T-PVS/PA(2016)10], identifying key steps to be undertaken by relevant national authorities and others between 2016 and 2019 to conclude the establishment by 2020 of a complete and fully operational Emerald Network in four countries of Central & Eastern Europe (Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine) and three countries in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia);

Bearing in mind that for Contracting Parties which are Member States of the European Union, the Emerald Network sites are those of the Natura 2000 Network and that the procedures established under the European

Union Directives 2009/147/EC (codified version of the amended Directive 79/409/EEC) and 92/43/EEC are those to apply for them;

Bearing in mind the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Target 11 establishing a conservation target of 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of marine and coastal areas and Target 12 aiming to prevent the extinction of known threatened species and to improve and sustain their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline;

Welcoming the overall progress in the development of the Emerald Network since 2010 and in particular the 3,260 Emerald Network sites[1], representing on average 14% of the national territory of participating countries;

Acknowledging the fifteen countries which have benefited from at least one biogeographical evaluation of their proposed Emerald Network sites according to the Revised criteria for assessing the National Lists of proposed Emerald sites (ASCIs) at biogeographical level and procedure for examining and approving Emerald candidate sites [document T-PVS/PA(2015)16] adopted in 2013 by the Standing Committee;

Acknowledging the seven countries which have initiated phase III of the Emerald Network constitution process and have adopted Emerald Network sites on their territories, namely Andorra, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine;

Concerned however by the numerous Contracting Parties lagging behind despite the technical and scientific assistance provided by the Secretariat and despite their commitment to step up their efforts in order to achieve the objectives of the revised Emerald Network Calendar 2011 – 2020;

Conscious of the approaching deadline for the achievement of the milestones set in the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (2011-2020);

Stressing the urgent need for bolder action at national level by relevant authorities;

Urges Parties to take urgent action for ensuring the Emerald Network is in capacity to meet its objective;

Recommends to:

1. The Albanian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2011 and to update their Emerald Network database based on the outcomes of the Natura 2000 projects funded through EU's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance;
2. The Andorran authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in June 2019 and to identify new selected sites to complement the 2 Emerald Network sites already adopted;
3. The Armenian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminars held in November 2017 and October 2019 and to request the Standing Committee for the formal adoption of their Emerald Network candidate sites;
4. The Azerbaijani authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2017 and October 2019 and to request the Standing Committee for the formal adoption of their Emerald Network candidate sites;
5. The Belarussian authorities to address conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminars held in May 2018 and June 2019 and to request the Standing Committee for the formal adoption of their remaining Emerald Network candidate sites;
6. The authorities of Burkina Fasso to follow up on the pilot project of 2004 and to start with the implementation of Emerald Network by submitting a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
7. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2011 and to update their Emerald Network database based on

[1] Figures from December 2019

the outcomes of the Natura 2000 projects funded through EU's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance;

8. The Georgian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminars held in November 2017 and October 2019 and to request the Standing Committee for the formal adoption of their remaining Emerald Network candidate sites;
9. The authorities of Iceland to begin with the implementation of the Emerald Network and to submit a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
10. The authorities of Liechtenstein to begin with the implementation of the Emerald Network and to submit a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
11. The authorities of Monaco to begin with the implementation of the Emerald Network and to submit a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
12. The Montenegrin authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2011 and to update their Emerald Network database based on the outcomes of the Natura 2000 projects funded through EU's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance;
13. The Moroccan authorities to follow up on the pilot project of 2009 and to start with the implementation of the Emerald Network by submitting a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
14. The authorities of North Macedonia to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2011 and to update their Emerald Network database based on the outcomes of the Natura 2000 projects funded through EU's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance;
15. The Norwegian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in June 2016 and to request the Standing Committee for the formal adoption of their remaining Emerald Network candidate sites;
16. The Moldovan authorities to address conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminars held in May 2018 and June 2019;
17. The authorities of Senegal to follow up on the pilot project of 2004 and to start with the implementation of the Emerald Network by submitting a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
18. The Serbian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in November 2011 and to update their Emerald Network database based on the outcomes of the Natura 2000 projects funded through EU's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance;
19. The Swiss authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminar held in July 2012, to urgently identify new selected sites to complement the 37 Emerald Network sites already adopted and to deliver an updated Emerald Network database;
20. The Tunisian authorities to start with the implementation of the Emerald Network by submitting a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;
21. The Turkish authorities to follow up on the pilot project of 2000 and to start with the implementation of the Emerald Network by submitting a database containing scientific information on the sites selected for ensuring the long-term survival of the species and habitats to be protected according to the relevant resolutions of the Bern Convention;

22. The Ukrainian authorities to address the conclusions of the biogeographical evaluation seminars held in May 2018 and June 2019;

Instructs the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, in liaison with the Bureau to the Standing Committee:

i. to prepare a detailed evaluation of the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (2011-2020), including on its contribution to the achievement of the Convention's objectives and to present it to the Standing Committee at its 40th meeting;

ii. to draft a post 2020 Strategic Plan for the completion of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest grounded on the outcomes of the evaluation referred to in point i. above and which should cover the period 2021-2030 and take into account the new global biodiversity framework and its eventual targets for protected areas, to be finalised at the CBD COP 15 in Kunming (China) in 2020;

iii. to design a monitoring framework of the setting-up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest and to report on progress on yearly basis to the Standing Committee.

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