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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

39<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2019

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**Draft Resolution**  
**on a vision and role for the Bern Convention in the**  
**decade 2020-2030**

*Secretariat Memorandum*  
*prepared by*  
*the Directorate of Democratic Participation*

**Resolution No. ... (2019) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2019, on a vision and role for the Bern Convention in the decade 2020-2030**

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 40<sup>th</sup> 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 period 2010-2019 and the key importance of this Network for ensuring 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;

Stressing the fruitful working relationships that it has established over the years with other relevant treaties, organisations and processes and notably with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, the European Union (EU), the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);

Welcoming also the efforts in promoting promote synergies between the Bern Convention and other sectors within the Council of Europe with activities and expertise relevant for the environment and biodiversity conservation, notably the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), the Council of Europe Directorate General on Human Rights and the European Landscape Convention, thus favouring a better use of resources and improving the relevance of the Convention in the work of the Council of Europe and for improving the understanding and use of the interlinkages between environmental protection and human rights;

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, giving a particular importance of the human dimension of the activities promoted under the Bern Convention;

Recalling that the Convention's work priorities has been framed by Programmes of Work, adopted on a biennial basis by the Standing Committee and following the Council of Europe's programme and budget cycle, whose implementation is piloted and monitored by both the Bureau and the Standing Committee to the Convention;

Acknowledging the Convention has developed/co-developed, adopted and implemented several thematic and action-oriented policy documents, in particular in the period 2010-2019, notably:

1. [Revised Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest \(2011-2020\)](#)
2. [Programme of work on Climatic change and biodiversity conservation](#)
3. [Tunis Action Plan \(2013-2020\) for the eradication of illegal killing, trapping and trade of wild birds](#) and several bird Species Action Plans
4. [European Strategy for Plant Conservation](#) (2008-2014)
5. [European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species](#) and several Codes of Conduct on IAS

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;

Acknowledging that the Bern Convention's work is strongly contributing to responding regionally to the drivers and causes of the severe biodiversity loss, as identified in the Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services and in particular its work on (1) the setting-up the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) and supporting the management of the ASCI areas, on (2) supporting the control and eradication of IAS, on (3) formulating recommendations and supporting action on addressing climatic changes and their impact on biodiversity and initiating work on addressing climate change in protected areas, on (4) promoting and targeted site and species conservation action through its monitoring and case-file systems and (5) raising awareness and better understanding of the interlinkages between environmental protection and human right;

Reaffirming that the main role of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention is to monitor its application, assist States in the implementation of its provision and make proposals for improving its relevance and effectiveness, as reflected in Article 14 of the Convention;

Taking note of Resolution No. ... (2019) on the financing of the Bern Convention and on initiating the establishment of a new system for obligatory financial contributions by Parties;

Conscious of the need for a more strategic planning of the work of the Convention, in particular in time of budget constraints and diminishing human and financial resources and in view of ensuring the appropriate synergies and partnerships are established with all relevant treaties, initiatives and organisations, in particular for the period 2020-2030 for which a new global biodiversity framework is going to be finalised at the CBD COP 15 to take place in Kunming (China) in 2020;

*Resolves*, for the purpose of confirming and improving its relevance and effectiveness, to set the following vision for the Bern Convention for the period 2020-2030:

*Building on its 40-years-long experience and achievements, the Bern Convention continues to support its Contracting Parties in ensuring the conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats within its unique geographic scope and to pro-actively support the concrete implementation, at the regional pan-European level, of the Global Biodiversity Framework by addressing the main*

*challenges facing nature conservation today and in particular the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, in accordance with its mandate and in close cooperation with all other relevant treaties, organisations and initiatives.*

*Resolves*, for ensuring the realisation of the vision, to assist the Bern Convention by:

- a) drawing up a long-term Strategic Plan, which could streamline the work of the Convention and give highest priority to components of its past Programmes of work, which contribute to formulating and delivering response at regional level to the main challenges facing biodiversity, as identified in the IPBES Global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- b) reinforcing further the strategic partnerships and appropriate synergies with all relevant treaties, organizations and initiatives at regional pan-European level;
- c) increasing the political profile of the Convention, both inside and outside the Council of Europe at regional and international levels, including by opening its scope to work on the interlinkages between environmental protection and human rights, within the limits of its mandate and objectives as set in Articles 1 to 3 of the Convention.

*Sets up* a Working Group charged with the development of a Bern Convention Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2030, after the adoption of the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which can finetune the above vision for the Bern Convention into concrete and operational targets and actions and identify the potential partners for their implementation;

*Instructs* the Secretariat and the Bureau to the Bern Convention to initiate and support the implementation of this Resolution.