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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting
Strasbourg, 29 November – 2 December 2022

Other Complaint: 2018/6

**Presumed threats to Emerald Network sites
“Olmanskiye bolota” (BY0000012) and
“Topila Bog” (BY0000083)
(Belarus)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

*Document prepared by
the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus*

Unofficial translation

Secretariat of the Convention on
the Conservation of European
Wildlife and Natural Habitats

On the provision of information

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and would like to provide information regarding the issues indicated in the letter of the Secretariat of the Bern Convention of 3 May 2021 No.2018/6 "On the presumed threats to the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires" (BY0000012) and "Topilo bog" (BY0000083) areas and on the substance of the issues noted in the letter.

1. By the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 111 "On the conversion of the republican reserves "Olmany mires" and "Dnieper-Sozh" of 25 February 2021, these reserves were converted into republican reserves, the area of the reserve "Olmany mires" changed from 94 119 ha to 94 200 ha. The list and borders of land users on the territory of the republican reserves were refined.

In order to ensure strict compliance with the requirements of the environmental legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the Management Plan for the republican reserve "Olmany mires" for 2021 - 2026 was developed. The above Plan was considered at public hearing from 14 December 2021 to 14 January 2022. The results of the hearing are included in the protocol published on the official web site of the Stolin District Executive Committee <http://stolin.brest-region.gov.by>.

Within the framework of the international project "Creating Conditions for Joint Management and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources of the Wetland "Transboundary Ramsar Site "Olmany-Perebrody" of the Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programme "Belarus-Ukraine", funded by the European Union, a Management Plan for the Transboundary Ramsar site "Olmany-Perebrody" (Belarus-Ukraine), which includes the area of the republican reserve "Olmany mires" was developed in 2019.

The Management Plan was presented at the Second Meeting of the Belarussian-Ukrainian Commission for Coordination of Protection and Sustainable Use of Transboundary Protected Areas (October 2019, Kiev), where it was highly appreciated by the members of the Commission.

The provisions of the Management Plan for Transboundary Ramsar Site "Olmany-Perebrody" are reflected in the Management Plan (updated) of the republican reserve "Olmany mires" developed in 2020-2021.

As noted above, the draft of the updated Management Plan for the republican reserve "Olmany mires" is prepared and underwent the procedure of the public hearing. Within the next 2 weeks, the document will be agreed with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus. Following this procedure the Management Plan will be approved and adopted for the implementation by the state environmental institutions in charge of management of the mentioned territories, land users and local authorities.

For reference:

The management plan (updated) for the republican reserve "Olmany mires" has been prepared on the basis of Article 32(8) of the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 150-Z "On Specially Protected Natural Areas" of 15 November 2018 within the implementation of the international project "Polesye - Wilderness without Borders: Protecting one of Europe's largest natural landscapes" ("Protection of Birds of the Fatherland" NGO).

2. As previously reported, the habitats of wild animals and plants of species included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus on the territory of the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires" in 2019-2020 were not transferred under the protection of land users.

Based on the scientific research conducted during 2020 and the materials prepared, on 31 May 2021, the Stolín District Executive Committee adopted decision No.1159 on the transfer of typical and rare habitats, including those located within the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires", under the protection of the State Forestry Institution "Stolinskiy forestry".

Draft decision of the Stolín District Executive Committee on the transfer of **10** habitats of wild plants included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus, located within the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires", was submitted for approval to the State Forestry Institution "Polessky forestry" and received the necessary approvals. The decision of the Stolín District Executive Committee № 126 "On the transfer under protection of ten habitats of wild plants related to species included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus" was adopted January 25, 2022.

Draft decision of the Stolín District Executive Committee on the transfer of **43** habitats of wild animals included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus identified on the territory of the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires" and simultaneously on the territory of the reserve "Olmany mires" is currently under approval by the land users – the State Forestry Institution "Polessky forestry" and JSC "Turovshchina".

Since technical regulations of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus establishing new regimes of protection and use for the habitats of wild animals and plants enter into force on 1 February 2022, relevant decisions will be taken after their entry into force.

3. Brest and Gomel Regional Committees of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection monitor compliance with the environmental legislation on the territory of the Emerald Network of Europe "Olmany mires" (BY0000012) and "Topilo bog" (BY0000083). In 2021, 9 administrative protocols for the regime violation of the same-name reserves were drawn up (8 for individuals, citizens of Ukraine and 1 for the State Forestry Institution "Polessky forestry").

In the course of observations of the condition of the territories adjacent to the previously constructed forest roads on the territory of the reserve, no visual changes in the structure of vegetation and water regime were observed.

We also inform that in 2021 and at present time no cases of placement of unauthorized quarries on the territory of the republican reserve "Olmany mires" were identified.

We take this opportunity to express the assurances of our highest consideration to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention.

Baliaslau Pirshuk



First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
of the Republic of Belarus