

Strasbourg, 7th November 2023

T-PVS/Files(2023)45

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

43rd meeting

Strasbourg, 27 November - 1 December 2023

**Progress regarding the implementation of
Recommendation No.211 (2021) concerning open case-
files:**

**2013/1: Hydro power development within the territory of
Mavrovo National Park**

**2017/2: Alleged negative impacts on Lake Ohrid and
Galichica National Park due to infrastructure
development
(North Macedonia)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

- October 2023 –

REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
Information on progress regarding the implementation of
Recommendations from the Bern Convention No. 211 (2021)

Status: October 2023

Regarding the Open File No. 2017/2 for the Republic of North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park due to infrastructure development, the following progress has been achieved:

The MOEPP conducts a field visit with a physical presence (the mission is carried out during the period of 24-28.04.2023) in the Emerald Sites, Lake Ohrid and NP Galichica by representatives of the Bern Convention, Ramsar and UNESCO.

An On-Site assessment report for the completed Mission was received by an engaged independent expert, Mr. Andrej Sovinc.

Consequently, we responded to the findings in the Report, which was submitted to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on September 1, 2023.

In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, the MOEPP prepared a Law on the proclamation of Studenciste Marsh as a protected area in category IV–Park of Nature, the same is in the parliamentary procedure for its adoption. On September 14, 2023, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP) held a public debate in the Municipality of Ohrid related to the Draft-Law on the proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature.

On September 15, 2023, a public debate was held in the municipality of Struga related to the Draft-Law on the proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature.

The recommendations of the Bern Convention and an already adopted recommendation from UNESCO have been synchronized: The extended 45th Session of the World Heritage Committee (held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, September 10-25, 2023) related to the procedures for the proclamation of the Studencishte Marsh and Lake Ohrid.

NP GALICICA

In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, a new Management Plan for Galichica National Park (2021-2030) was adopted.

Also, a Management Plan for the Monument of Nature Vevcani Springs (2019-2029)

The Public Institution National Park Galicica (PINPG) has established a Program for long-term monitoring of biological diversity. According to this program, monitoring is carried out on several types of habitats, plants and animal species.

Related to the Open Case 2013/1, which refers to the small hydropower plants in the territory of NP Mavrovo by the Bern Convention for the Republic of North Macedonia, the following progress has been achieved:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning in cooperation with the Public Institution NP Mavrovo, the Macedonian Ecological Society and Global Conservation, signed Memorandum of Cooperation No. 02-2519/1 on April 4, 2023, with the aim of revision/supplement of the Study for the reevaluation of NP Mavrovo (2011), revision of the Catalog (List) of species registered on the territory of NP Mavrovo as well as the development of a Draft-Management Plan with NP Mavrovo.

The revised/supplemented study will enable the MOEPP to continue the procedure for the proclamation of Mavrovo as a protected area and further development and adoption of the Management Plan of NP Mavrovo.

New thematic reports on the current state of natural heritage (biodiversity, elements of geodiversity, habitats, hydrology, landscapes, and others) have been prepared.

Within the framework of the EU Project: Improving Capacities for Natura 2000 and CITES, activities have started to supplement the standard data form (SDF), and thematic trainings for the management of Natura 2000 sites are also being conducted, in which representatives from the NP Mavrovo and NGOs sectors are participating.

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, in cooperation with the European Commission, marked the first LIFE DAY on October 17, 2023.

The Scientific Council at the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Species of Wild Animals supported the adoption of the proposal to include the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in Appendix II and the Balkan lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) in Appendix I of the CMS.

- August 2023 -

REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
Information on the progress regarding the implementation of
Recommendations of the Berne Convention No.211 (2021)

Status: February 2023

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning prepares this information in accordance with the conclusion of the Government as a material for information and it will be submitted to the Secretariat of the Berne Convention on the progress regarding the implementation of recommendations No. 211 (2021), and adopted decisions on the two open files from 06.12.2022 at the 42nd meeting of the Standing Subcommittee of the Berne Convention which was held in the period from 28.11 to 02.12.2022.

On August 31, 2022, by decision of the Minister, a Working Group for monitoring and implementing recommendations from the Berne Convention was established, consisting of 17 members from several institutions, which has the task of monitoring and implementing the recommendations from the Berne Convention. The working group held 2 meetings in order to review the recommendations from the two open files.

Regarding the Open file No. 2017/2 for the Republic of North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts on Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park due to infrastructure development, the following progress has been achieved:

The MOEPP has started preparatory activities for the implementation of a field visit with physical presence (the mission is planned to be implemented in the period from 24-28.04.2023) in the Emerald Sites, Lake Ohrid and NP Galichica by the Berne Convention. The relevant stakeholders for the meeting have been identified and the main areas to be visited by members of the Permanent Mission to the Berne Convention have been determined.

In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, the MOEPP prepared a Law on the proclamation of Studenchishte Marsh as a protected area in category IV – Nature Park, the same is in the parliamentary procedure for its adoption.

Activities for the adoption of a Draft-Law on the proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature have been initiated. An informal working meeting with representatives of non-governmental organizations, organized by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, was held in order to start activities for the adoption of the Draft-Law on the proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature. During these processes, the MOEPP works transparently by informing and involving all stakeholders.

A working group established by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia prepared the first draft version of the Strategic Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region, which is in accordance with the Decision (44 COM 7B.77) adopted at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Fuzhou, China 2021).

The development of the Strategic Plan for the rehabilitation of the Ohrid region was coordinated with the working group from the Republic of Albania, which jointly defined the strategic goals and the Action Plan.

Taking into account the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Missions from 2020, a meeting of the Joint Committee for the Management of the Lake Ohrid Basin between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania, established in accordance with the Interstate Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Lake Ohrid and its Basin, signed in 2004 and ratified by the Republic of North Macedonia in 2005, was held in the municipality of Pogradec (“Official Gazette of

the Republic of North Macedonia 46/2005”). During the meeting, an agreement was reached on raising the management level and handing over the chairmanship of the Committee in accordance with the dynamics established by the agreement, the composition of the Secretariat and the progress in the preparation of the Strategic Plan for the rehabilitation of the Ohrid region was reviewed.

According to the conclusion of the meeting held by the Joint Committee for the Management of the basin of Lake Ohrid between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania, a technical level meeting was held from May 26-28, 2022 in the municipality of Ohrid between the expert working groups preparing the joint Strategic Plan for rehabilitation, with the aim of a more detailed exchange of data and harmonization of activities.

The Public Institution National Park of Galicica (PINP) has established a Program for long-term monitoring of biological diversity. According to this program, monitoring is carried out on several types of habitats, plant and animal species.

Also, by the Public Institution National Park Galicica-Ohrid, a working version of the Special Plan for the Management of the St. Naum locality, which falls within the borders of the National Park Galicica, is currently being developed.

The information will be considered at the meeting of the Bureau of the Berne Convention on March 29 and 30, 2022.

Regarding the Open case 2013/1, which refers to the small hydropower plants on the territory of NP Mavrovo by the Berne Convention for the Republic of North Macedonia, the following progress has been achieved:

From the current budget of the MOEPP for 2023, part of the financial resources for the preparation of the Valorization Study of NP Mavrovo have been provided. We are currently discussing with donors how could they provide the entire budget for the preparation of the Valorization Study and Management Plan.

Within the framework of the EU project: Improving the capacities for Natura 2000 and CITES, activities have been started to supplement the Standard Data Form (SDF), as well as thematic trainings for the management of Natura 2000 areas, in which representatives from NP Mavrovo and the NGO sector also participate.

Funds have been provided for co-financing 50% of activities for operational costs for nature protection for the PI NP Mavrovo from the PONT Nature Fund and they will be available from the time the re-proclamation process with the National Park of Mavrovo is completed.

The MOEPP has started a process for joining the LIFE Union Programs, which would allow the application of projects in the area of nature.

The MOEPP in cooperation with the United National Environment Program (UNEP, Program Office in Vienna) is launching an important initiative together with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), to list the Eurasian lynx in Appendix II and the Balkan lynx (as a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx), in addition to Appendix II, also in Appendix I.

A meeting is regularly held with the petitioner of the lawsuit, NGO Eco Awareness, where they are informed about the current progress.