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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

41st meeting
Strasbourg, 30 November – 3 December 2021

Complaint on stand-by: 2017/4

**Presumed threat to Emerald site
«Tarutynskyi Steppe» (UA0000137) from the development of cultivation
(Ukraine)**

- REPORT BY THE COMPLAINANT -

*Document prepared by
The Ukrainian nature Conservation Group*

NGO «UKRAINIAN NATURE CONSERVATION GROUP»



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№ 1032/ 2021

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Secretary of the Bern Convention

Subject: new report on 2017/4: Other complaint: Presumed threat to Emerald site «Tarutynskyi Steppe» (UA0000137) from the development of cultivation (Ukraine)

In 2018 we provided you the information that the threats to the protected Emerald Network site – «Tarutynskyi Steppe» (UA0000137) still exist.

Since our last report the situation had not changed.

The damaged plots were not revegetated, but no new cases of plowing appeared.

The agreement between the Ministry of Defense and local farmers resulted to damage (plowing) of 1300 ha of natural steppe area within this Emerald site (represented by habitat E1.2 of the Resolution 4).

This Emerald area is a natural steppe area covered with natural vegetation, mainly occupied by the habitat type E1.2., listed in Resolution 4 of the Berne Convention. In 2016, the local unit of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine concluded an agreement with the local farmer that the farmer would process the land of the site and distribute profits between them. Such an agreement was illegal because the territory has the status of a local protected area in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation.

The farmer has plowed up a large part of the site and began to treat it with herbicides and plant agricultural crops. Such works were stopped only when 1300 hectares were already plowed. All natural habitats and species in the specified territory have been destroyed. The Ministry of Defense intends not only to continue processing the disassembled area, but also to cultivate crops on the rest of the territory of protected area..

Non-governmental organizations began to defend this Emerald area in court and received a positive decision, but during the last year the court decision was not enforced. The territory remains cultivated and no restoration works were carried out, the amount of damages was not reimbursed.

In addition, the Ministry of Defense filed a lawsuit with a demand to eliminate the conservation status of local protected area on this Emerald territory, the trial continues.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has also created a special working group to address this issue, but the working group's decision is not being implemented.

The State Ecological Inspection of Ukraine on behalf of the special working group of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine has calculated the losses incurred to the natural objects of the local protected area and determined the amount of such losses in the equivalent of 1 billion euros. Instead, such an assessment does not cover losses of most of the species and habitats from Resolutions 4 and 6 of the Berne Convention present on this territory, because Ukraine does not have methods for calculating damages caused by their destruction.

After the Convention had appealed to the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the situation did not change. **The threat still exists.** The damages were not reimbursed. Moreover, the Ministry of Defense plans to conduct trainings within this Emerald site in future, with tank trainings and building, which is totally unacceptable

for nature conservation goals. This position was presented during official meetings of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The negotiations for enhancing the protected status of the area were held in the past, but served for temporizing only. While the negotiations went on, the military forces worked on the development of the documents, needed for the establishment of a polygon instead of the protected area.

Within the Emerald site «Tarutynskyi Steppe» several species and habitats are protected: Emerald species (from SDF):

A042 *Anser erythropus*, A255 *Anthus campestris*, A089 *Aquila pomarina*, A029 *Ardea purpurea*, A222 *Asio flammeus*, A396 *Branta ruficollis*, A133 *Burhinus oedicephalus*, A403 *Buteo rufinus*, A243 *Calandrella brachydactyla*, 1078 *Callimorpha quadripunctaria*, A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*, A027 *Casmerodius albus*, 4028 *Catopta thrips*, A080 *Circaetus gallicus*, A081 *Circus aeruginosus*, A082 *Circus cyaneus*, A084 *Circus pygargus*, A231 *Coracias garrulus*, A122 *Crex crex*, A038 *Cygnus cygnus*, A429 *Dendrocopos syriacus*, 4067 *Echium russicum*, A026 *Egretta garzetta*, A379 *Emberiza hortulana*, A511 *Falco cherrug*, A098 *Falco columbarius*, A103 *Falco peregrinus*, A097 *Falco vespertinus*, A321 *Ficedula albicollis*, A320 *Ficedula parva*, A127 *Grus grus*, A075 *Haliaeetus albicilla*, A092 *Hieraaetus pennatus*, A131 *Himantopus himantopus*, A338 *Lanius collurio*, A339 *Lanius minor*, 1060 *Lycaena dispar*, A242 *Melanocorypha calandra*, 2633 *Mustela eversmannii*, A129 *Otis tarda*, A072 *Pernis apivorus*, 2608 *Spermophilus suslicus*, A397 *Tadorna ferruginea*.

Emerald Habitat types (from SDF): E1.2, F3.247, G1.7

Thanks. Kind regards,
Oleksii Vasyliuk, UNCG

