



Strasbourg, 12 December 2025

T-PVS/Inf(2025)41

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

45th meeting

Strasbourg, 8 - 12 December 2025

**Terms of Reference of the Working
Group on exploring mechanisms to
guide amendments to the appendices of
the Bern Convention**

I. BACKGROUND

At its 44th meeting in December 2024, the Bern Convention Standing Committee discussed the possibility of devising a dedicated evidence-based mechanism and criteria for granting or changing the protection status of a species in order to ensure that the process is objective, transparent and supports the Standing Committee in fulfilling its role. The Standing Committee also considered that it could be time to review [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments.

Advancing towards that goal, bearing in mind [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#), the Standing Committee decided to set up a Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention, particularly to develop criteria for amending appendices I, II & III to the Bern Convention.

The Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention met twice in 2025. At its second meeting, it examined proposals to improve the process for amending Appendices I, II and III of the Convention, outlining three possible options. The Group considered that Option A (Amending Recommendation No. 56 (1997)) and Option B (Establishing an ad hoc expert advice mechanism) appeared the most appropriate in the short term. The Secretariat was invited to further assess the feasibility of all options. Option C (Establishing a permanent scientific advisory group) will remain under consideration as a fallback. The outcomes of this work was presented to the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration.

II. SCOPE

Considering Bern Convention Standing Committee [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments, and the need expressed by the Bern Convention Standing Committee for a dedicated evidenced-based mechanism and criteria for granting or changing the protection status of a species, the Working Group is requested to:

- Propose a new version of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) to provide clear guidance and criteria for amendments to the level of protection status of fauna and flora species in the framework of the Bern Convention and bearing in mind the practice in other international treaties related to nature conservation;
- explore and develop proposals for a new mechanism involving the use of *ad hoc* external expert advice to provide scrutiny of evidence submitted in support of proposals for amendments to the Appendices of the Bern Convention. This will include:
 - o exploration of possible collaboration with IUCN.
 - o an administrative procedure for submitting proposals for amendments to the appendices, including a definition of the information that needs to be provided for the assessment of the proposal;
 - o advice to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention on any necessary changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee.

Additionally, where resources permit, consider the merits and disadvantages of establishing a permanent scientific advisory group including the wider role such a group could play in supporting the wider aims of the convention.

III. COMPOSITION

The Working Group will comprise representatives of Contracting Parties and Observers to the Bern Convention and may comprise other relevant third parties as deemed necessary.

The Working Group will select one Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst its members.

IV. WORKING METHODS

The members of the Working Group will provide input through online meetings, written contributions to draft papers, reports, and other means as appropriate.

The working language will be English.

The Working Group will determine its own meeting frequency. The Working Group will operate by online means.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee will review and evaluate the work of the Working Group at the Bureau's meetings through the year.

The Working Group will report to the 46th Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

In co-operation with the Chair, the Secretariat will coordinate and assist with the organisation and preparation of the agenda for the meetings of the Working Group and any other support activities deemed necessary.