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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November - 2 December 2022

**Concept note on the creation of a Fund for
the Convention on the Conservation of European
Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)**

*Document prepared by
the Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law and examined by the GR-C on 2 June 2022*

Following discussions at the GR-C regarding the institutional and financial stability of the Bern Convention and the proposal to transform the existing special account into a Fund for the Bern Convention in order to increase visibility and encourage member States' contributions, this concept note presents the objectives, functioning and guiding principles of the Fund.

The Fund will be a tool which will complement the resources provided by the Ordinary Budget in order to help the Bern Convention to attain its objectives. It should be seen as a catalyst for raising member States' and Contracting Parties' voluntary contributions.

With a view to strengthening the global visibility of Bern Convention achievements and support from its donors, the Secretariat will step up its resource mobilisation and communication efforts. It will enhance public outreach, building on existing relations with key donors and engaging with the general public, to secure additional contributions. In addition, it will develop communication materials that will allow donors to fundraise themselves.

The purpose of the Fund will be to support national efforts of member States and Parties in implementing the Bern Convention. To this end, the Fund will provide resources for the completion of the programme of activities adopted by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

It will take the form of a special account governed by the relevant rules by which voluntary contributions from member States, Parties to the Convention and other possible contributors are managed.

The Fund will be fed by voluntary contributions from donors, provided that they are consistent with the purpose of the Fund. Each voluntary contribution will be made pursuant to a Contribution Agreement between the donor and the Council of Europe. A donor may earmark its contribution for specific activities.

The Standing Committee to the Bern Convention will act as the governing body of the Fund.

It will:

- establish the programme of activities to be financed with resources of the Fund;
- approve the activities to be financed from the Fund resources;
- ensure that voluntary contributions are earmarked for the objectives and tasks specified in the programme of activities, and that they are consistent with the aims of the Fund;
- monitor the resources of the Fund.

The Standing Committee to the Bern Convention will annually review activities financed by the Fund and discuss and explore means to strengthen the effectiveness of the use of the Fund's resources.

The Fund's resources will be used to finance activities of the programme of activities approved by the Standing Committee. Where applicable, procurement of goods, works and services, including consulting services, financed from the resources of the Fund will be administered in accordance with the Council of Europe's procurement policies and financial rules.

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention will ensure the co-ordination of the implementation of the activities financed from the Fund resources.

The Secretariat will also ensure that, in all activities financed by the Fund, visibility is given to the Fund and the donors, and that in the Council of Europe's publications and communications with beneficiaries, stakeholders and the media, appropriate visibility is given to the Fund and the donors.

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention will report annually to the Standing Committee and to donors on implemented activities.