

Thematic Committee ECCH&H Environment, Climate Change, Heritage & Health


MEETING online 30.11.2021 - Report

Presents:

EUROPARC: Stefania Petrosillo
EAA: Sophie Hueglin, Jesper de Raad
CIVILSCAPE: Gerhard Ermischer
IDF Europe: Alina Chebes
ECYC: Jonas Posset
IDF Europe: Elisabeth Dupont

Meeting's Presidency: EAA Sophie Hueglin

Report by: EUROPARC Stefania Petrosillo

AGENDA	REPORT	ACTION
• Bern Convention		
Update from Friedrich Wulf NGOs Letter to the Delegates of the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention	<p>Friedrich prepared a summary of the difficult situation of the Finance of the Bern Convention, including the list of Member States that are not in order with their voluntary contributions. – see annex 2</p> <p>Friedrich has also prepared a letter <i>NGO concerns regarding the financing of the Bern Convention</i> addressed to the Delegates of the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention. This letter has been signed already by 15 NGOs and will be submitted this week during the Bern Convention Standing Committee meeting. – see annex 3</p>	<p>Friedrich and Gerhard will agree how to formalize the signature of ECCH&H and the logo to be used*</p> <p>(*update: done. Below the “logo+title” to be used for our Committee:</p>  <p>Thematic Committee ECCH&H Environment, Climate Change, Heritage & Health</p>

	ECCH&H Thematic Committee of the Conf. of INGOs has agreed to support the letter. The practical modalities to sign the letter should be clarified as ECCH&H cannot have a specific logo, according to the CoE rules.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Convention (ELC) 		
<p>Update from Gerhard and Sophie</p> <p>Letter asking Germany to sign the Convention</p>	<p>The Convention is crucial as it involves not only environment, but many other critical sectors as industry and energy. For that the convention is important and its interpretation can be very sensitive.</p> <p>Sophie suggests to support a new publication about the ELC by asking libraries to pre-order the book <i>Landschaftshandeln - Grundzüge, Potenziale und Zukunft der Europäischen Landschaftskonvention</i>, https://www.beck-shop.de/bruns-kuehne-jenal-raumfragen-stadt-region-landschaft-landschaftshandeln/product/12597114. Sophie already has a digital copy from the authors, but the publication date has been moved forward again and again by Springer.</p> <p>German and Austria are the only Member States that have not signed the ELC. Negotiations regarding the new government are currently ongoing in Germany between the SPD, FDP and the Green Party: there are signs that the FDP is willing to sign, but the ELC has not made it into the coalition treaty.</p> <p>A letter has been prepared addressed to the members of the new federal government to <i>Call for the signing of the European Landscape Convention</i>. NGOs, associations, university professors, individuals, will be asked to sign and share the letter – see annex 4</p> <p>Gerhard and Sophie have shared the draft of the letter in German and English and ask the support and the signature of the ECCH&H and its members.</p>	<p>Gerhard and Sophie will keep the Committee informed</p> <p>To be decided how to formalize the signature of ECCH&H (as done for the letter of the Bern Convention)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication on Conventions 		
	<p>First round the table about the activities done by each ECCH&H member to communicate about the CoE Conventions.</p> <p>The prepared Jamboard “INGO Committee communication” (https://jamboard.google.com/d/1RiD1liUumfnJ2z3g_Z2AZz0UHTFr0iSkfIgZCnaH9vs/viewer), was not editable, so the members will fill in as soon as it will be possible.</p> <p>The analysis of the results and the discussion is reported to the next meeting.</p>	<p>Carol Ritchie will make editable the Jamboard for the other members</p> <p>Members will fill in before the next meeting</p> <p>This point will be on the agenda of the next meeting</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECCH&H Committee in the CoE website 		
	<p>Gerhard invites the ECCH&H to publish the description of the committee, and the agenda and the reports of the meetings in the CoE website, in order to make the work of the Committee more visible (https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/environment-climate-change-heritage-and-health)</p> <p>The person to contact for the website is Lusine.SAHAKYAN@coe.int</p>	<p>Stefania will prepare the documents to be published and will agree them with the Committee members. Then she will contact the person in charge of the website</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights and Nature 		
<p>Stefania update about European Parliament debate on rights of nature</p>	<p>Ongoing debates about human rights and rights of nature, promoted by the MEP (Member of European Parliament) and lawyer Marie Toussaint. She is interested to know more about the activities of ECCH&H. It is possible to imagine future contacts if needed and appropriated.</p>	<p>For more information: https://www.marietoussaint.eu/une-initiative-europeenne-pour-les-droits-de-la-nature</p>
<p>Gerhard update on Recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment</p>	<p>The Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment (CDDH-ENV) is preparing Recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment “<i>Promotion and protection of human rights by ensuring a clean, healthy and sustainable environment</i>”. Gerhard and Stefania have received an internal preliminary draft. Possible to provide inputs for comments by 22 December 2021 (addressed to DGI-CDDH@coe.int) The comments received will be taken into account by the CDDH-ENV during its third meeting on 26 - 28 January 2022.</p>	<p>Gerhard will share the document with the other members. (*)</p> <p>Then we will discuss if and how provide inputs.</p> <p>Inputs for comments by 22 December 2021</p> <p>(*) update: done.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New members 		
	<p>Harry Rogge of the European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO) expressed interest to join the ECCH&H Committee</p> <p>Languages issues: French and English are the official languages of CoE, but ECCH&H working language is English. Nevertheless, several participants speak French and can support possible future new members if necessary.</p>	<p>Carol is asked to contact Harry Rogge EUROGEO, hrogge@ziggo.nl</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next meeting 		
	16 th December 2021 h.15 CET	

ANNEX 1.

SCREEN SHOT of the meeting



ANNEX 2.

Finance of the Bern Convention – by Friedrich Wulf, 22 November 2022

Traditionally, the Bern Convention is financed

- a) by the Council of Europe's Ordinary budget and
- b) by voluntary contributions (no contributions by the Council of Europe)

With the Focus of the Bern Convention turning more and more towards Human rights issues, budget cuts enacted by the Committee of Ministers of the CoE and voluntary contributions decreasing, the financing of the Bern Convention and its ability to operate are increasingly at stake. Staff is reduced, and there is only limited budget for undertaking on the spot appraisals and other important tasks.

The budget of the Convention for 2022 foresees EUR 725.440 EUR, of which roughly 400.000 are for staff and pensions, and ca 330.000 for the programme of activities.

Of these, 237.000 EUR are expected to come from the CoE's Ordinary Budget, while 488.440 EUR need to be come from voluntary contributions.

So far, 14 parties have paid 219.765 EUR, and another 107.400 have been pledged from further 6 parties. 30 parties have not paid or committed anything yet.

In sum, 326.000 EUR are available, which still leaves a funding gap of 162.440 EUR to be filled.

The issue of finance has been discussed extensively in recent years, and in result resolution 9 (2019) was adopted at the 39th Meeting of the standing committee, which contains 3 elements:

- 1.) A table with suggested scales of voluntary contributions, fixing a sum of 1.300-52.000 EUR to be paid (annex to the resolution)
- 2.) An agreement to explore the options of an enlarged partial agreement (EPA), which would provide a reliable basis for finance
- 3.) A proposal for an amendment of the convention

Also, a working group on finance has been installed, which met 4 times this year. In result, the standing committee, at its upcoming 41st meeting on Nov.29th, 2021, is asked to:

- 1) Agree on the suggested scale of voluntary contributions as suggested in the annex to resolution No. 9 (2019)
- 2) Look at the draft enlarged partial agreement elaborated by the working group and the GR-C, (the Committee of Minister's) rapporteur group on education, culture, sport, youth and environment)
- 3) Mandate the working group on finance to pursue the elaboration of the draft amendment for consideration by the 42nd standing committee (Nov/Dec 2022) – the WG already produced a draft for an Art. 14 bis which refers the modalities of identifying the scale of financial contributions into an annex.

Among the issues negotiated are the demands of the EU to distinguish between a "core" and a "programmatic" budget, as is the case in other conventions. Also, the EU does not want to pay more than 2.5% of the core budget, arguing that it is for its members states to contribute.

The negotiations on the draft amendment of the Convention are expected to take longer (but should move ahead as planned), while more immediate measures are:

- To call on parties that have not done so to commit to pay their voluntary contribution as assigned in the suggested scale of contributions (Iceland, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Denmark**, UK, **Ireland**, **Portugal**, **Spain**, **Poland**, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, BiH, BG, Georgia, **Greece**, **Italy**, Liechtenstein, **Malta**, Moldova, Montenegro, **Romania**, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia).
- To call parties to
 - a) say if they would join an EPA (there was a survey by the WG to get responses)
 - b) support the EPA at the SC Meeting

Regarding the EU, it would be good if the EU could encourage its members to support the Bern Convention by

- a) Paying their share in the voluntary agreements
- b) Deciding to join the EPA
- c) Support the adoption of the EPA at the SC meeting
- d) Support to move ahead with the amendment of the Convention.

To:

Delegates of the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention

26.11.2021

NGO concerns regarding the financing of the Bern Convention

Dear Delegates of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention,
Dear members of the Standing Committee,

As you know, the Bern Convention is the only pan-European agreement in the field of nature conservation, also including countries in North Africa. Its mission is to ensure that wild flora, fauna and habitats are maintained at, or restored to, sustainable levels. The Convention enables cooperation and coordination across borders, building bridges between science and citizens, and uniting governments and society at large in a common endeavour. With its instruments such as action plans for threatened species, the Emerald Network of protected areas and the case-file system, it is an indispensable frame for coherent efforts to preserve nature in the whole of Europe and beyond.

As you also know, the financial situation of the Convention is dire. Traditionally, the Bern Convention is financed a) by the Council of Europe's Ordinary Budget and b) by voluntary contributions of Contracting Parties.

With the focus of the Council of Europe (CoE) turning increasingly towards human rights issues, cuts to the Ordinary Budget of the CoE and voluntary contributions decreasing, the financing of the Bern Convention and its ability to operate are increasingly at stake. Staff is reduced, and there is only limited budget for undertaking on-the-spot appraisals and other important tasks.

Present situation

The budget of the Convention for 2022 foresees EUR 725.440 EUR, of which roughly 400.000 EUR are for staff and pensions. Around 330.000 EUR are foreseen for the programme of activities. Of the total amount, 237.000 EUR are expected to come from the CoE's Ordinary Budget, **while 488.440 EUR need to come from voluntary contributions.**

According to the information provided for the Standing Committee meeting, as per 17/11/2021, 14 parties have paid 219.765 EUR, and another 107.400 have been pledged from further six parties. Thirty parties have not paid or committed anything yet.

In sum, 326.000 EUR are available, which still leaves **a funding gap of 162.440 EUR** to be filled.

Steps taken so far

The issue of finance has been discussed extensively in recent years, and in result Resolution No. 9 (2019) was adopted at the 39th meeting of the Standing Committee, which contains three elements:

- 1.) A table with suggested scales of voluntary contributions, fixing a sum of 1.300-52.000 EUR to be paid (annex to Resolution No. 9 (2019))
- 2.) An agreement to explore the options of an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA), which would provide a reliable basis for finance
- 3.) A proposal for an amendment of the convention

Proposed way forward

Also, a working group on finance has been installed, which met four times this year. In result, the Standing Committee, at its upcoming 41st meeting on Nov. 29th, 2021, is asked to:

- 1) Agree on the suggested scale of voluntary contributions as suggested in the annex to Resolution No. 9 (2019)
- 2) Look at the draft Enlarged Partial Agreement elaborated by the working group and the GR-C, (the Committee of Minister's rapporteur group on education, culture, sport, youth and environment)
- 3) Mandate the working group on finance to pursue the further elaboration of the draft amendment for consideration by the 42nd Standing Committee (Nov/Dec 2022) – the WG already produced a draft for an Art. 14 bis which refers the modalities of identifying the scale of financial contributions into an annex.

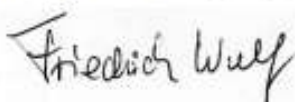
NGO demands

The improvement of the financial situation is an issue of key importance. In order to give the Convention a sufficient, stable and reliable basis and to enable its work, the undersigned Nature Conservation NGOs and Observers to the Bern Convention kindly ask your country to:

- A) As an immediate measure, **pay your voluntary contributions as assigned** in the suggested scale of contributions if you have not yet done so
- B) **Adopt and follow the recommendations proposed in the draft annotated agenda** (T-PVS/Agenda(2021)24), see paragraph above
- C) **Support the proposed Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA)** at the SC Meeting
- D) **Join the Enlarged Partial Agreement.**

We feel the sums that are at stake are comparatively small compared to other budgets - even more so if you take the huge benefits and technical support the secretariat and the convention deliver for saving biodiversity in Europe and North Africa. Your support, in the interest of our common cause, would be very much appreciated.

Thank you and best regards,



Friedrich Wulf
International Biodiversity Campaigner
Friends of the Earth Europe

On behalf of the following 15 networks and organisations:



ANNEX 4

EN Version

To the members new federal government

Call for the signing of the European Landscape Convention

The undersigned institutions and persons call upon the new Federal Government to sign the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (Florence Convention).

Justification:

The upcoming federal government has a tremendous task ahead of it in managing the transformation of energy production, the economy, and society in light of climate change and sustainability. This transformation will have enormous implications for landscape planning and will undoubtedly lead to many conflicting goals as well as conflicts within society.

Our current planning instruments, such as the environmental impact assessment, are intended to help moderate such conflicts, to identify them at an early stage and to eliminate them as far as possible. This often succeeds only to a very limited extent. The European Landscape Convention with its holistic approach can make an important contribution to this. This has already been recognized by the European Parliament, which in its resolution called on the EU member states to accede to the Landscape Convention and to use it as an instrument for landscape, land, construction planning and land development.

In its last amendment of the regulations on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental impact assessment, the European Union included the Landscape Convention as an instrument of implementation with the consent of the Council of Europe. It is therefore already part of the most important instrument of landscape and regional planning. (insert citation)

All member states of the EU with the exception of Austria and Germany have acceded to the Landscape Convention. It would therefore also serve legal equality and legal certainty within the EU if Germany would now catch up with this step.

The fact that this has not happened so far is all the more incomprehensible as the formulation of the Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe took into account essential preparatory work which was created under the German EU Council Presidency with regard to spatial planning. The recommendations on spatial planning elaborated at that time had an important influence on the formulation of the convention.

In view of the challenges facing the future German government, it would be high time to finally accede to the Landscape Convention. It offers a unique instrument to pacify the different interests of citizen participation, environmental protection, cultural protection, economy and social cohesion - a mammoth task in view of the expected upheavals in our society with regard to the transformation to a climate-neutral, sustainable economy.

Added Sources:

Bruns, D., Kühne, O., Leconte, L. & C. Jenal. Landschaftshandeln. Grundzüge, Potenziale und Zukunft der Europäischen Landschaftskonvention. Springer 2021. <https://www.springer.com/de/book/9783658014704>

Examples from other countries:

Switzerland:

2020: <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/landschaft/fachinformationen/landschaftsqualitaet-erhalten-und-entwickeln/nachhaltige-nutzung-der-landschaft/kohaerente-landschaftspolitik/landschaftskonzept-schweiz-lks.html>

The Fundaments of a Mallorcan Landscape Strategy 2009:

<https://web.conselldemallorca.cat/documents/774813/882858/20210930->

BASESpaisatgeENG_Web_RECEP_reduit.pdf/9180b85f-0a77-2992-2bf5-1d9a956317e1?t=1633004672288