



Strasbourg, 14 July 2023

T-PVS/PA(2023)03

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

43rd meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November – 1st December 2023

Third *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting

27 June 2023, 10.00 – 15.00 (CEST)

-MEETING REPORT-

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair

Mr James Williams, Chair of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting opened the meeting and welcomed the participants (see Appendix 2).

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without change (see Appendix 1)

3. Conclusions of the second meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting and objectives of the third meeting

The Chair recalled the outcomes of the second meeting of the Working Group and in particular that:

- The reporting process should seek information on species and habitats both within Emerald Network sites and in the broader countryside.
- Reporting needs to be useful to Parties.
- Reporting should be complementary to other MEA reporting exercises.
- Data reported should be ‘fresh’ if possible, and therefore ideally should be provided within one year after the closure of the reporting period.
- Reporting should be on a subset of species and habitats which could grow over time as experience and capacity of Parties increases.
- Criteria should be defined to identify the features to be reported on.
- Vagrant species would be excluded from the features to be reported on.
- Parties were looking for simplifications of the reporting
- There were advantages in trying to maintain the compatibility of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) with the reporting under Articles 12 and 17 of the Nature Directives.

The Chair also recalled the request of the Standing Committee to urgently progress on the checklists of features to be reported on, on the reporting format and on the tool needed for reporting.

4. Second reporting cycle: options of simplification

In his introduction, the Chair reminded the Working Group that the objective of the discussion was – if possible – to reach a clear consensus on an option of simplification to be taken forward and to look into the implications of this option. He added that the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) should, to the extent possible, be combined with other data collection exercises by other MEAs. Contracting Parties should not be asked to duplicate work.

The Working Group examined four options of simplification detailed in document T-PVS/PA(2023)01.

Option 1: Report on all features and in the full format

- Reporting integrity is maintained
- Full compatibility with the EU reporting under Articles 12 and 17
- A pan-European analysis of the Conservation Status was still possible
- Despite many features will be reported as data deficient with an “unknown” conservation status, various analysis remained possible and Parties would identify knowledge gaps
- Parties might be frightened from starting the reporting exercise

Option 2: Report on a reduced number of features, full format

- Despite entire taxonomic groups would be left out, meaningful analysis could be carried out on the remaining ones

- Data remained comparable with the EU reporting under Articles 12 and 17
- Some countries would have more work than others
- If the habitats for which there was not a 1:1 correspondence with the Habitats Directive as well as birds would be left out, no need to resolve discrepancies with the EU reporting under Articles 12 and 17

Option 3: Report on the same selection of features as in 2019 and full format

- The reporting would focus on the same features as in 2019
- The experience showed that there were limitations in data analysis and use
- Parties could assess the evolvement of the conservation status
- Parties could improve the quality of the reports by filling in all mandatory fields and increase the number of reporting parties
- The criteria for selecting the 46 features considered did not reflect the actual reality for some countries

Option 4: Report on all features but revise the reporting format

- Despite deviating from the reporting on the conservation status as defined in the EU, some indicative overview of elements of the conservation status could be produced. A new definition of the conservation status should be agreed on.
- Data would not be comparable with the EU reporting under Articles 12 and 17
- A new reporting tool would be needed
- The support of the European Environment Agency would be lost

In the subsequent discussion, representatives of Contracting Parties had different opinions. Despite the considerable work it would entail, a number of representatives of Parties supported option 1 as it would show the capacity of the countries to deliver reports but were prepared to consider option 2 as a compromise. Another group of representatives preferred option 3 as it would enable to measure progress and pursue the capacity building started in 2019. Option 4 received less support as it raised technical questions, in particular the compatibility with the EU reporting and the possibility to use the IT infrastructure of the European Environment Agency (EEA) for delivering and processing the reports.

The representative of the EEA informed participants that the format of the forthcoming reporting under Articles 12 and 17 was slightly amended and that it would abandon the “old” reporting tool. A new way for delivering the reports using the Reportnet 3 dataflow would be introduced. She also confirmed that the EEA had not resources for developing a specific tool for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) but could under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EEA provide support through the EEA IT infrastructure to the needs of the Bern Convention if the reporting format remains similar to the reporting formats of the EU.

After in-depth consideration of each of the options, the Working Group reached a consensus on option 2.

Based on consideration of the tables below, it was agreed that:

- birds should be excluded as it would be possible to obtain information from other sources such as the Pan European Common Birds Monitoring Scheme.
- the habitats to be reported on should be limited to those where there is a 1:1 correspondence between Annex I in the Habitats Directive and Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Bern Convention.

Focussing the reporting exercise to a restricted set of species and habitats represents a significant reduction of the reporting workload.

FEATURE GROUP	Number of features in the Resolution 4 and 6 (as published)	Number of Features in the Emerald Network Reference Database	Percentage of reduction if this group is omitted
Amphibians	29	10	-1.4
Birds	207	167	-25.0
Fish	84	62	-9.2
Habitats **	213	114	-17.0
Invertebrates	136	91	-13.6
Mammals	65	46	-6.9
Plants *	563	163	-24.4
Reptiles	31	14	-2.0
Total	1328	667	

* excluding 121 plant species of Macaronesia

** from the 114 habitats present in the Emerald Network, 28 habitats have a 1:1 relationship with the Annex I of the Habitats Directive

Country	Amphibians	Birds	Fish	Habitats	Invertebrates	Mammals	Plants	Reptiles	Total
AD		25		31	3	6	1	1	67
AL	3	101	19	69	20	17	9	9	247
AM		108	4	64	9	16	8	5	214
AZ	1	116	6	75	12	18	14	5	247
BA	5	85	28	77	20	18	15	5	253
BY	2	74	14	60	31	11	21	1	214
CH	4	49	13	41	19	8	11	1	146
GE	1	119	8	84	10	21	14	5	262
IS		22	1	37		6	3		69
LI	2	20	2	54	10	9	7		104
MD	3	86	20	38	26	14	17	3	207
ME	2	86	26	97	15	18	15	6	265
MK	3	96	17	57	22	17	9	7	228
NO	1	56	6	27	16	10	46		162
RS	6	79	30	74	53	24	41	5	312
RU	3	137	20	122	54	35	81	7	459
UA	6	115	27	118	50	25	59	4	404
Total	48	1466	260	1207	390	293	386	69	4119

country	Habitats (Res. 4)	Habitats 1:1 to HD
AD	31	2
AL	69	11
AM	64	8
AZ	75	8
BA **	77	12

BY	60	5
CH	41	2
GE	84	11
IS	37	6
LI	54	4
MD	38	4
ME **	97	17
MK	57	8
NO *	27	7
RS **	74	12
RU	122	13
UA	118	12
total	1043	134

* for NO only counting habitats using the EUNIS habitat code

** for BA, ME and RS calculated according to HD Annex I codes

Consideration was given to excluding invertebrates and/or plants, but on balance it was felt that there were less clear reasons for excluding these taxa, though the conservation status for many of these species might be assessed as “Unknown”. For marine mammal species further consideration is needed to avoid duplication of work – for example under the OSPAR Convention reporting. It was not clear to participants if there was species-based reporting under the Barcelona and Black Sea Conventions, and further investigation would be needed to find this out.

5. Next steps

The discussion focused on the documentation accompanying the reporting, the deadline for submitting the reports and the assistance provided to Parties before and during the reporting process.

Documentation of the reporting

The Chair informed the Working Group that the resources available from the Reporting Reference Portal would be updated and that guidance reflecting the specificities and technicalities of the reporting option 2 supported by the Working Group would be developed.

The Secretariat would liaise with the European Environment Agency and in consultation with the consultants assess which resources could be updated and/or developed for the fourth meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting.

Deadline for submitting the reports

While the Working Group already agreed that the reporting would consider the period 2019 – 2024, a consensus of the Working Group was still pending on whether reports should be submitted in 2025 or whether more time would be needed. In the following discussion, the Working Group agreed that a deadline set at the end of January 2026 could be a good compromise.

Assistance to Contracting Parties

The Secretariat informed the Working Group that like for the preparation of the first trial reporting, it would look into the possibility to organise training workshops and hold regular stock taking meetings to enable Parties to share their concerns and learn from the experience of others.

A roadmap listing deliverables together with a timeline would be prepared to help Parties plan their work.

6. Date of the next meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Reporting

The Working Group decided to hold its fourth meeting online on **9 November 2023**.

Considering that according to the Rules of Procedures of the Standing Committee, working documents should be shared with Parties at least one month ahead of the 43rd Standing Committee, the Working Group decided to focus at its forthcoming meeting on technical aspects of the reporting which would not require to be endorsed by the Standing Committee.

7. Any other business

The representative of Norway, Mr Tore OPDAHL, also Chair of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, informed the Working Group that he would change job as from September 2023 and that this was his last participation in a meeting of the Bern Convention. Participants thanked Mr OPDAHL for his dedicated work and support to the Bern Convention.

8. Conclusions of the meeting

The Chair thanked participants for their contribution to the discussion and closed the meeting.

Appendix 1 – Agenda

		Documents	Expected results
Tuesday 27 June 2023			
10.00	1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair		
	2. Adoption of the agenda	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2023)11 For adoption	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	3. Conclusions of the second meeting of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting and objectives of the third meeting <i>Presentation by the Chair</i> <i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are reminded of the state of play of the discussions regarding the objectives of the reporting and informed of the expected outcomes of the meeting.</i>	Report of the 2 nd meeting of the Ad - hoc Working Group on Reporting T-PVS/PA(2022)12 Extract from the list of decisions and adopted texts on the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012), at the 42 nd meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention <u>T-PVS/PA(2023)02</u> For information	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group take note of the state of play of the discussions and of the expected outcomes of the meeting.
	4. Second reporting cycle: options of simplification <i>Presentation by Otars Opermanis / Marc Roekaerts</i> <i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are informed of options of simplification of the second</i>	Options for the second reporting cycle T-PVS/PA(2023)01	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group take note of the possible options of simplification of the reporting and provide the Secretariat with guidance for framing the format of the second reporting cycle.

	<i>reporting cycle, their strength and weakness and their impact on the final outcome of the reporting and are invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.</i>	For discussion and decision	
	<p>5. Next steps</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Chair</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are invited to exchange views on a timeline for the preparation of the second reporting cycle and on the expectations of the forthcoming meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting.</i></p>	<p>Reference Portal of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting agree on the objectives and content of the fourth meeting of <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting.
	6. Date of the fourth meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting	For decision	The provisional date of the fourth meeting is agreed on.
	7. Any other business		
	8. Conclusions of the meeting		
15.00	Tuesday 27 June 2023 End of the meeting		

Appendix 2 – List of participants

CONTRACTING PARTIES	
ALBANIA / ALBANIE	Ms Klodiana MARIKA Directorate of Development Programs on Environment Ministry of Tourism and Environment Boulevard "Deshmoret e Kornbit", No.1 100 I Tirana, Albania
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE & HERZEGOVINE	Mr Dejan RADOSEVIC Department for Biodiversity Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage 6. sprat, Vuka Karadžića 4, Banja Luka 78000, Bosnia & Herzegovina
GEORGIA / GÉORGIE	Ms Salome NOZADZE Third Category Senior Specialist Biodiversity and Forest Department Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture 6 Marshal Gelovani avenue 0159 Tbilisi / Georgia Mr Merab MOSIDZE GIS expert Biodiversity and Forest Department Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture 6 Marshal Gelovani avenue 0159 Tbilisi / Georgia
HUNGARY / HONGRIE	Ms Éva FEJES Biodiversity advisor Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary
MALTA / MALTE	Mr Kristian PULIS Senior officer Environment and Resources Authority
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA	Ms Veronica JOSU Focal Point to the Bern Convention Ms Angela LOZAN Biodiversity expert
MONACO / MONACO	Mrs Astrid CLAUDEL-RUSOIN Head of section at the Environment Office
NORWAY / NORVÈGE	Mr Endre GRÜNER OFSTAD Norwegian Environment Agency Nature Management Department (LAL) Threatened Biodiversity Section (LTR) Mr Tore OPDAHL Norwegian Environment Agency Nature Management Department (LAL) Protected Areas Section (LVE)

<p>SERBIA / SERBIE</p>	<p>Ms Snezana PROKIC Ministry for Environmental Protection Omladinskih brigada 1, SIV III 11070 New Belgrade / Serbia</p> <p>Mr Ivan MEDENICA Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia</p>
<p>SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUIE</p>	<p>Mr Ján ČERNECKÝ Nature Protection Department Nature and Biodiversity Protection Directorate Ministry of the Environment Námestie Ľ. Štúra 1 SK-812 35 Bratislava / Slovak Republic</p>
<p>SWITZERLAND / SUISSE</p>	<p>Ms Danielle HOFMANN Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) Species, Ecosystems, Landscapes Division Worblentalstrasse 68, CH-3063 Ittigen, Berne / Switzerland</p>
<p>UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI</p>	<p>Ms Sarah SCOTT Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2 East Station Road, Fletton Quays, Peterborough, PE2 8YY United Kingdom</p> <p>Ms Kerry VITALIS Protected Sites Team Natural Environment, Trees & Landscape (NETL) Directorate Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2 Marsham Street London SW1P 4DF</p> <p>Mr James WILLIAMS Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2 East Station Road, Fletton Quays, Peterborough, PE2 8YY United Kingdom</p>
<p>OBSERVERS</p>	

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY	Ms Eleni TRYPHON
FACE	Ms Sabrina DIETZ
INFRASTRUCTURE & ECOLOGY NETWORK EUROPE (IENE)	<p>Mr Radu MOT IENE 2022 International Conference Organiser and representative of the Zarand association in Romania</p> <p>Mr Lazaros GEORGIADIS IENE GB member and biologist and environmentalist freelance</p>
MARTIN LUTHER UNIVERSITY OF HALLE / IDIV CENTRE	Ms Raffaella CANESSA
Experts	
	<p>Mr Otars OPERMANIS</p> <p>Mr Marc ROEKAERTS</p>
Secretariat	
	<p>Mr Mikaël POUTIERS</p> <p>Mr Marc HORY</p>