

Strasbourg, 6 August 2020
[pa04e_2021.doc]

T-PVS/PA (2020) 04

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks

12th meeting (virtual)
5-6 October 2021

**Opinions about the reporting under the Resolution No. 8 (2012):
assessment of the past reporting exercise and pointers
for the future**

Outcomes from an enquiry

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Introduction

Reporting on conservation status of species and habitats (point 4.1 of the Bern Convention Resolution No. 8 (2012)) is one of the modern tools to gather information about the state of nature at national and international levels. Since 2010 the Bern Convention has been working towards establishing a reporting system in the non-EU Contracting Parties. This resulted in the first (trial) reporting round in 2019 when 8 countries tested the process and submitted their databases in the required format.

Submitted databases were analysed and a special report on key findings, both methodological and scientific, was prepared and presented at the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks (GoEPAEN) and the Bern Convention Standing Committee in 2020¹. Yet this assessment was based only on what could be learned from the submitted databases. In addition, a need for a further study was identified in order to unravel possible problems behind submitted (and expected but not submitted) databases. The second objective was that such a study, in the form of an enquiry among Contracting Parties, should help to define pointers for the future development of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

The reporting on the conservation status of species and habitats also helps Contracting Parties to assess how well their conservation efforts are efficient. Understanding how to facilitate this huge exercise and how to make it more relevant for participant countries is essential for improving the data quantity and quality. The Secretariat of the Bern Convention is committed to draw the lessons of the first reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and to make the necessary adjustment in order to meet the needs of Contracting Parties in terms of reporting process and outcomes.

The aim of this report is to reflect the outcomes of this enquiry, to provide general statistics about country preferences with minimal interpretation so that readers can objectively assess the situation. It is hoped that this report will be used as a basis for future work and will guide decisions on the next reporting round.

History of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) of the Bern Convention

First considerations for the establishment of a reporting system on the conservation status of species and habitats in non-EU Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention date back more than ten years ago. Thus it seemed useful to prepare a short overview about the main events, important decisions and discussions during the last decade.

This chapter describes the development activities and decisions taken by the GoEPAEN regarding the reporting. Appendix I presents a detailed summary of the concrete milestones in chronological order.

In 2010 the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted the calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. The calendar included a task under the strategic issues to develop guidelines on management, monitoring and reporting in line with existing Natura 2000 tools in the European Union.

In 2011, the GoEPAEN decided to initiate the work on this strategic issue and mandated the Secretariat to present the first results at the meeting of the group in 2012. During the meeting of 2012, the proposed draft Resolution on “the national designation of adopted Emerald sites, management, reporting and monitoring measures” was discussed and subsequently adopted by the Standing Committee as the “Resolution No. 8 (2012)” in December 2012.

Paragraph 4 of the resolution indicates that the reporting will take place every six years after adoption of the resolution. Parties would report on the Conservation Status of the species and habitats listed in Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996) and the GoEPAEN was mandated to prepare a reporting format.

Following this mandate, the GoEPAEN during its meetings of 2013, 2014 and 2015 elaborated on different versions of the reporting format. In 2015 the group concluded that a dedicated ad-hoc working group should be established not only to finalise the reporting format but also to discuss the extent of the first reporting round, the IT-tool to be used for the harvesting of the data and the development of guidelines on reporting.

¹ <https://rm.coe.int/reporting-under-resolution-no-8-2012-period-2013-2018-final-report/16809fad04>

This “restricted group of experts on the reporting format” was able to finalise all the discussion within two meetings (2016-2017), followed by the adoption of the reporting format and the subset of features to report on for the first reporting cycle by the Standing Committee during its meeting in 2017. At the same time the Standing Committee set the deadline for final submission of the first report by 31 December 2019.

Thanks to collaboration with the European Environment Agency under the ENI SEIS East II project, the Secretariat was able to organise 3 specific seminars on reporting in 2018 and 2019. The participating countries were not only informed about the format and IT-tools, but were also requested to prepare trial reports and present the results in the subsequent workshop meetings.

Main facts about the first reporting (2019)

The first reporting covered the period 2013-2018 and was prepared by Contracting Parties in 2018-2019. Later in this document we shall refer to it as “reporting 2019” which marks the deadline of submission by the end of 2019. The reporting format and the database structure was adapted from the reporting on conservation status under the Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, but with some adjustments acknowledging specific differences, i.e. that under Resolution No. 8 (2012) bird species are reported together with all other species and the differences in the habitat classifications in the Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive and the Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Bern Convention.

Unlike in the EU, where its Member States reported on all features of Community concern, the reporting 2019 covered an agreed preselection of 46 features: 12 bird species, 25 non-avian species and 9 habitats. The main reasons for considering a sample of features were to reduce the reporting burden and also that this first reporting round was considered as a capacity building exercise.

Eight countries (out of approximately 15 possible countries) submitted databases within the reporting 2019. Overall, 71% of the features were reported on according to the initial checklist. The territorial unit for reporting was the biogeographical region for non-avian species and habitats and the country for birds. The presence of the features within each of the geographical units, was agreed and summarised in the so-called “checklist”. For the period 2013-2018 the creation of the checklist was entirely based on the Reference Lists resulting from the biogeographical evaluation seminars under the development of the Emerald Network. It is anticipated that this reporting checklist needs to be revisited, thus the rate of over 70% coverage for the first reporting round should be considered approximate.

The main findings about the reporting 2019 were presented in a separate report². This report covered the details of the submissions and analysed opportunities and limitations of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) based on concrete examples from this first reporting exercise. Here below only the main recommendations from this report which are directly related to the subjects covered in this paper are discussed.

The 2020 report recognised the value of presenting the data delivered under Resolution No. 8 (2012) by non-EU Contracting Parties together with the data delivered under Art. 17 and Art. 12 by EU Contracting Parties. Only data presented together can provide a complete overview on the conservation status of species and habitats at pan-European level. It was also obvious that the opportunities for various analysis and data presentations would increase with a higher number of countries participating in the reporting and a higher number of features actually reported.

Assessing the conservation status and the scientific evaluation of the delivered data is in high demand of external expertise which is presently very limited for the Resolution No. 8 (2012). It was suggested to explore possibilities of collaboration with other institutions such as the European Environment Agency and its Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, and BirdLife International with a view to broaden the international expertise. This collaboration should also lead to harmonised procedures for the analysis and the presentation of results, such as common data formats with a view to possible use in the same presentation environments (web-tools).

The 2020 report recommended that the coming few years should be used to evaluate the first reporting round and to negotiate the scope, contents and timing of the next reporting round. Also in the framework of the meetings of the GoEPAEN, an enquiry to parties who submitted databases should be developed to identify difficulties encountered and the needs for further assistance. In the same way, it could be worthwhile to ask

² <https://rm.coe.int/reporting-under-resolution-no-8-2012-period-2013-2018-final-report/16809fad04>

countries about their needs and ideas about the future reporting. This paper is an implementation of this recommendation.

The reporting 2019 showed that the reporting itself is a major exercise in every country and requires timely resource mobilisation towards the planned submission deadlines. It is also important to analyse and anticipate any problems some time ahead, so it is possible to address them to a maximum extent. In this way the first reporting round contributed to build up capacity for such reporting exercises.

Method of work

The proposal to implement an enquiry among Parties to the Bern Convention to better understand difficulties faced during the past reporting trial and to plan the next reporting round was supported by the GoEPAEN and the Standing Committee

However, it was also realised that the distribution of a questionnaire is not the only possible tool to gather information. Judging from previous experiences, due to different reasons, a questionnaire sent to “everybody” would not guarantee a good response rate within the expected time. Therefore, it was decided to use a questionnaire in combination with a structured interview in an online meeting, i.e. so that the questionnaire is jointly filled in during a discussion between country authorities and stakeholders on one side and the Bern Convention Secretariat and experts on the other side. Such method also enables to clarify questions and possible responses, as well as various other issues related to the reporting. Since the questionnaires were sent to countries at least one week ahead of the online meeting, this allowed also to discuss questions internally and prepare clearer opinions before the meeting.

While the initial idea was to interview only countries which had submitted databases within the reporting trial in 2019, the enquiry was extended to all non-EU Contracting Parties in order to analyse not only difficulties encountered but also reasons behind not participating in the reporting and to take into consideration the expectations for the upcoming reporting round of both groups of Parties. This is a very important aspect, because the global aim of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) in the future is to achieve as broad country participation as possible.

The general structure of the questionnaire is presented in Figure 1. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part I focusing on the lessons learnt from the first reporting (covering period 2013-2018) and Part II scoping the next reporting round (presumably covering period 2019-2024).

For the Part I, different questions were prepared for countries which participated in the past reporting trial (11 questions, A) and for countries which did not submit any reports (6 questions, B). This part covered topics such as the general situation of biodiversity reporting in countries, motivations for action (participation) or inaction, usefulness of preparatory seminars, organisation of the reporting process and resources spent, technical difficulties in data collection and preparation, and benefits from the first reporting trial (see Appendix II for the full outline of the questionnaire).

Part II contained 10 questions and focused on future issues such as: the challenges related to harmonising the reporting process with the reporting under European Union Nature Directives, possible ways for reducing the reporting format or the list of features to be reported on, the assessment of the capacity to perform the reporting, the possible assistance from the Bern Convention Secretariat and the presentation and visibility of the results (see Appendix II for the full outline of the questionnaire). The high number of questions related to the scope of reporting format and the list of features was due to many complaints from Parties to the Bern Convention about the “reporting burden” and presumably an interest to consider possible reductions of reporting amount.

Part I: lessons from the first reporting (2013-2018)	Separate sets of questions (A) for countries which submitted reports under Resolution No. 8 (2012) in 2019 and (B) for countries which did not submit reports in 2019 (B) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px;">11 questions</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px;">6 questions</div> </div>
Part II: scoping the next reporting round (2019-2024)	One set of questions for all Convention Contracting Parties (and Observer States) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px; margin: 0 auto;">10 questions</div>

Figure 1. General structure of the questionnaire.

For all questions (except one, Part I. A question 5) a number of possible answers were offered or, if none considered appropriate, respondents could select the “other” category and add a description to characterise the alternative answer. However, there were two types of replies. For some questions (Part I. A 1, 4; I. B 2-5; Part II 1-8, 10) respondents could choose only one answer (single choice, answers were mutually exclusive), for other questions (Part I. A 2-3, 6-11; I. B 1, 6; Part II 9) respondents could choose up to 3 answers and score them from 3 to 1. The scores were used to better assess the main priorities as for some questions theoretically all answers could be acceptable. The exceptional Part I. A question 5 required numeric and yes-no responses.

Following the online meetings, draft filled in questionnaires were sent to countries for final check. After that they were supposed to be returned back to the Secretariat. If draft questionnaires were not returned by the deadline (20 June) they were considered final.

A simple data analysis was performed by recording the frequencies of chosen answers for each question or by summing up the ranking scores of particular answers. Priority was given to identifying general trends in opinions rather than analysing specific views of individual countries in detail.

Results and discussion

Participation

Altogether 17 countries participated in this survey (Table 1, Figure 2). Fifteen countries filled in the questionnaire during the online meeting and two countries submitted completed questionnaires by e-mail. The response rate can be considered as good, or at least sufficient for the purpose, as it represents 81% of all countries approached by the Secretariat. Indicatively this suggests that the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is a topic that raises interest among Contracting Parties and merits further discussions.

Online meetings were held from 20 April till 8 June. Each meeting lasted from 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how well countries had prepared their answers in advance and the extent to which clarifications to the questionnaire were necessary. Overall, this method seemed to be useful and could be applied for similar tasks in the future.

Table 1. Details of questionnaire completion by the Parties to the Bern Convention participating in the enquiry.

Country	Part I filled*	Questionnaire filling	Revision
Albania	B	On-line meeting	Yes
Andorra	B	On-line meeting	No
Armenia	A	On-line meeting	No
Azerbaijan	B	On-line meeting	No
Belarus	A	On-line meeting	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	B	On-line meeting	Yes
Georgia	A	On-line meeting	No
Iceland	B	On-line meeting	Yes
Lichtenstein	B	Written submission	-
Republic of Moldova	A	On-line meeting	No
Monaco	B	On-line meeting	Yes
Norway	A	On-line meeting	Yes
Russian Federation	A	On-line meeting	No
Serbia	A	On-line meeting	Yes
Switzerland	A	On-line meeting	No
Turkey	B	On-line meeting	Yes
United Kingdom	Only part II	Written submission	-

* Part I A: country submitted trial report in 2019; Part I B: country did not participate in trial report in 2019

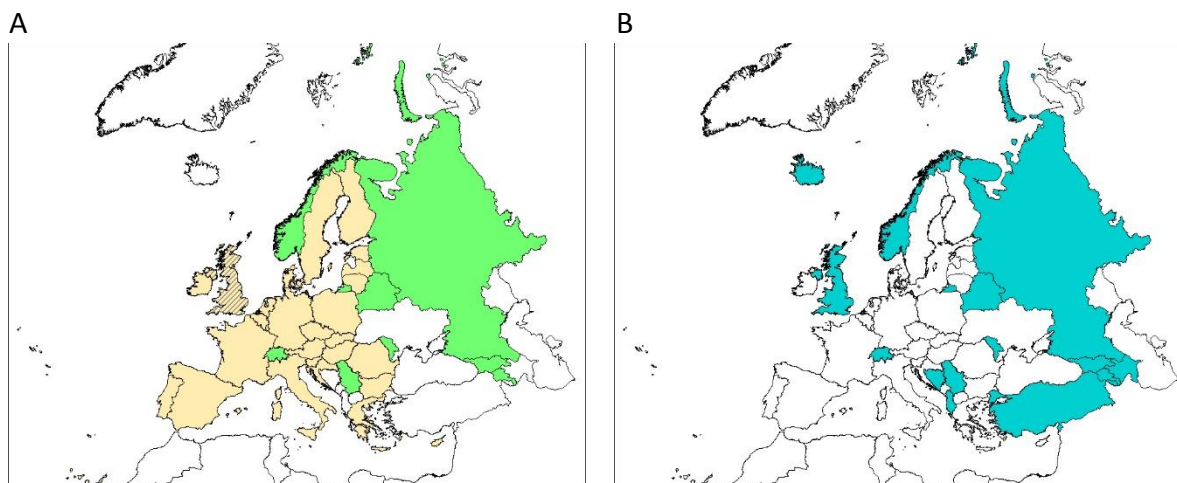


Figure 2. A. Distribution of non-EU Contracting Parties (green) which participated in the reporting trial in 2019; B. Distribution of non-EU Contracting Parties which participated in current survey.

Experience from the reporting trial

Results from the Part I of the questionnaire are provided in Box 1 (Part A: countries which participated in the reporting trial) and in Box 2 (Part B: countries which did not participate in the reporting trial). The Box 1 does not include Part I. A question 5 which was in some aspects different. The aim of this question was to assess the resources spent to prepare the reports in 2018 and 2019. Regarding the number of experts involved, it appears that countries had quite different reporting team sizes. On average 17 persons were involved, but the difference between minimum and maximum was quite substantial, i.e. from 5 to 25. Yet it was also noted that not all counted experts had the same level of involvement.

All countries, except two, started the work immediately after the first workshop on reporting, i.e. in April 2018, and finished by the deadline in December 2019 or with some delay in January 2020. This means that countries had approximately 20 months at their disposal to mobilise experts, collect data and prepare the reports.

Three countries (out of 8) considered that financial and human resources were sufficient for this task. And 6 countries (out of 8) considered that the 20 months available for this work were sufficient.

Boxes I and II include horizontal bar-charts reflecting how often each answer was chosen and, for questions requiring multiple answers, the sum of the scores. Twenty percent of all answers fell into the “other” category (Part I. A: 15.8%, I. B: 23.9%, Part II: 23.2%). Explanations of “other” were extracted from the questionnaires and their summary is reflected in the boxes under the main charts.

In this chapter only the main findings for each question are reflected. Abbreviations refer to particular questions. For example, “IAQ1” means Part I. A, question one.

In none of the countries which did participate in the reporting 2019, similar reporting schemes were in place (IAQ1) before doing this first exercise. It should be noted that only reporting at the individual feature level (i.e. each protected species and habitat) was considered. For, example, many countries are reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), but the content of this reporting is very different. For a half of the countries the “feature-level reporting” existed for a few selected features. Most often, according to the interviews, it concerned species attracting special attention for various reasons (for example very threatened, nationally charismatic or important harvest object).

The Bern Convention requests were considered important for participating in the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) by all but one participating country (IAQ2). The second most important motivation was

understanding that biodiversity should be assessed beyond national borders and therefore international cooperation was considered important.

Returning to the training workshops organised ahead of the trial reporting exercise (IAQ3), the most useful outcome was understanding the general process of reporting and technical advice, and less so an opportunity to exchange views and discussions with other countries.

In the past reporting trial country authorities either organised ad hoc working groups of experts to perform the necessary tasks or outsourced the data collection and interpretation to scientific institutions (IAQ4).

Two most important sources of information for the preparation of reports were existing databases and literature data (IAQ6). Only 3 countries attempted to collect new information in the field.

Among the most difficult parts of the reporting work respondents provided in similar proportions of the following answers: technical data transfer from stakeholders to the required format (presumably including interpretation), preparation of spatial dataset (mentioned also in other questions), and collection of data in general (IAQ7).

IAQ8 and IAQ9 addressed reasons for incomplete submissions (i.e. some important fields were left blank) or the absence of reports on some features. Before the interview, such existing gaps were identified for each individual country. Regarding incomplete data fields the most common reason provided was that data were simply not available; second most important reason was data input errors. Regarding missing features, all possible listed problems were mentioned in about equal proportions. In addition, the “other” category confirmed another problem which was highlighted in the 2020 report. The completeness of the reporting is assessed by comparing actually reported features with features listed in the document named “Resolution No. 8 (2012) checklist” (similar to Art. 17 and 12 Checklists in the EU). The Resolution No. 8 (2012) checklists were prepared on the basis of the Emerald Network Reference Lists prepared for bio-geographical sufficiency evaluation seminars to evaluate the network sufficiency. Several cases show that the existing checklist does not correspond to the latest data (the problem occurred in at least in 3 countries) and it is obvious that it needs to be carefully reviewed before launching the next reporting round.

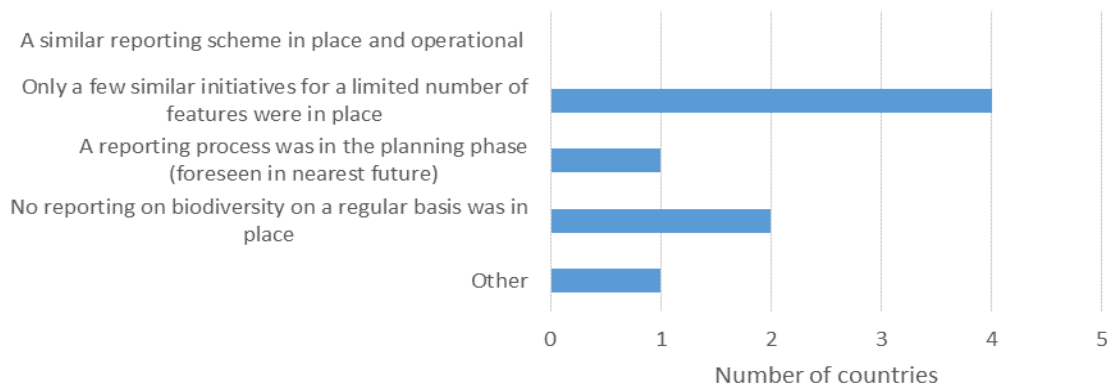
Gathering the information on trends and area for habitats was mentioned as most challenging (IAQ10). This can probably be explained by the lack of long-term monitoring (in case of trends) and systematic habitat mapping (in case of area for habitats). It is surprising, however, that no country mentioned typical habitats for species and characteristic species for habitats among the top 3 difficulties. We can wonder whether this is all well-known and understood?

The most important benefits (IAQ11) from the reporting exercise in 2019 reported were that it helped to (1) assess existing data, their sources and identify gaps to be solved in the future, (2) understand the necessary capacity requirements for reporting and also (3) demonstrate the value of conservation status assessments internationally (although, in fact, no international assessments using data from this trial were performed; only the statuses could have been compared with other countries).

BOX 1. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part I.A

1. When starting the reporting exercise under Resolution No. 8 (2012) over the period 2013-2018, what was the situation regarding biodiversity reporting in your country?

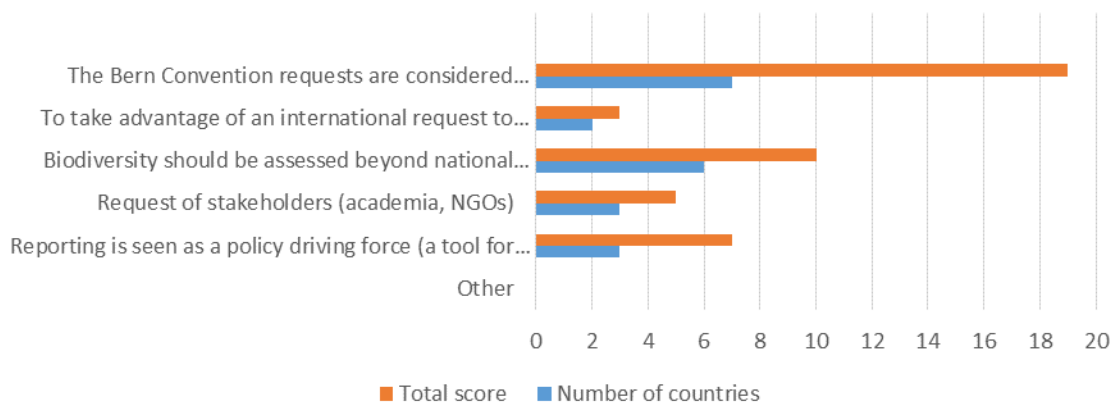
Method: single choice



Other include: National scheme under development, comparable to WFD, good ecological condition by ecosystem type

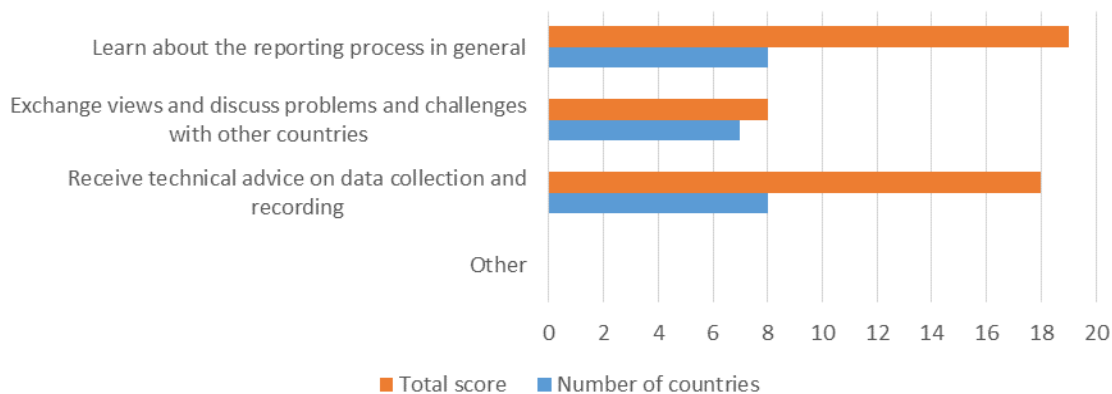
2. What was the main reason or interest for participating to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)?

Method: up to 3 ranked answers



3. Which topics covered by the preparatory workshops organised by the EEA in 2017-2018 were the most useful for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)?

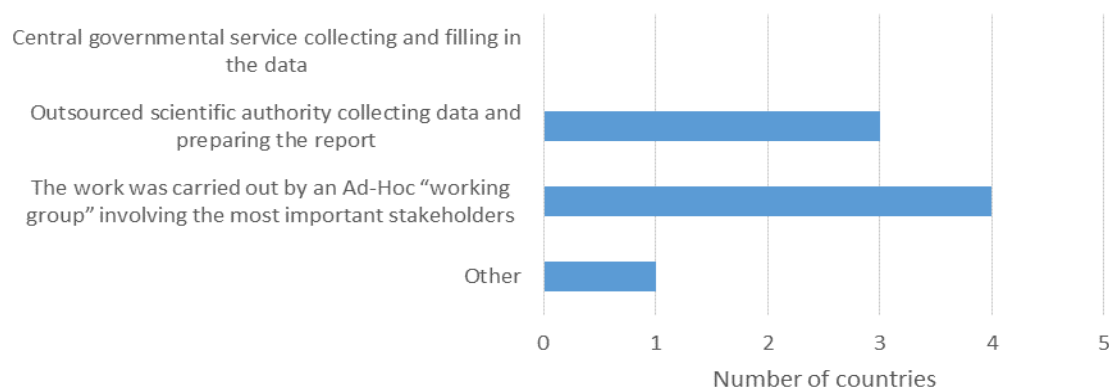
Method: up to 3 ranked answers



BOX 1. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part I.A

4. How was the reporting process organised in your country?

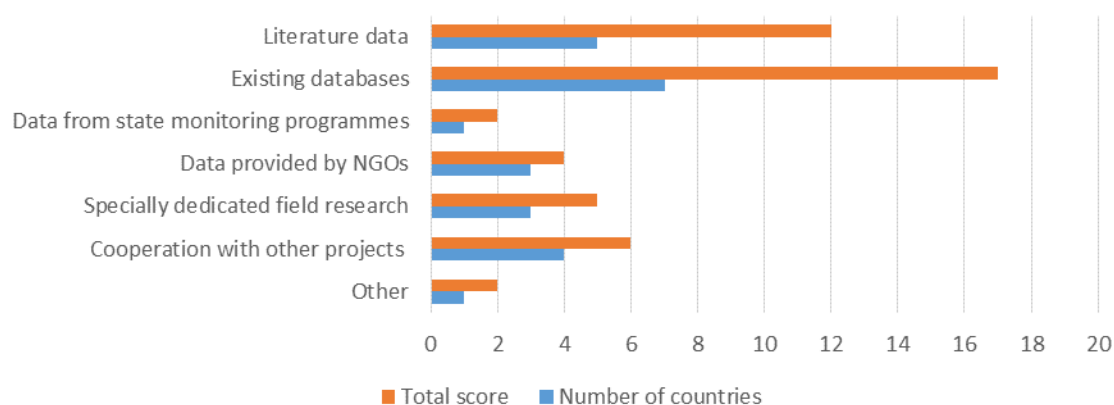
Method: singlechoice



Other include: no comment

5. Which were the main sources of information during the preparation the report 2013-2018?

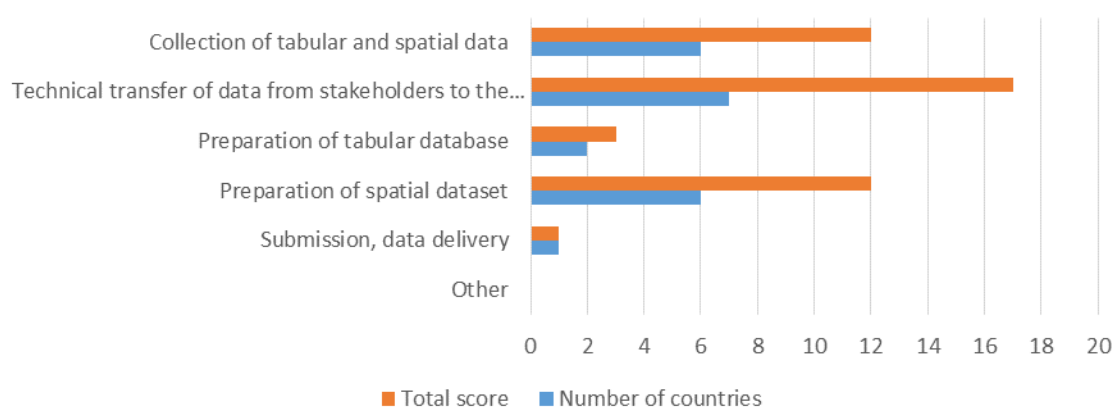
Method: up to 3 ranked answers



Other include: personal communication with individual experts

6. Which was the most difficult part of the report preparation?

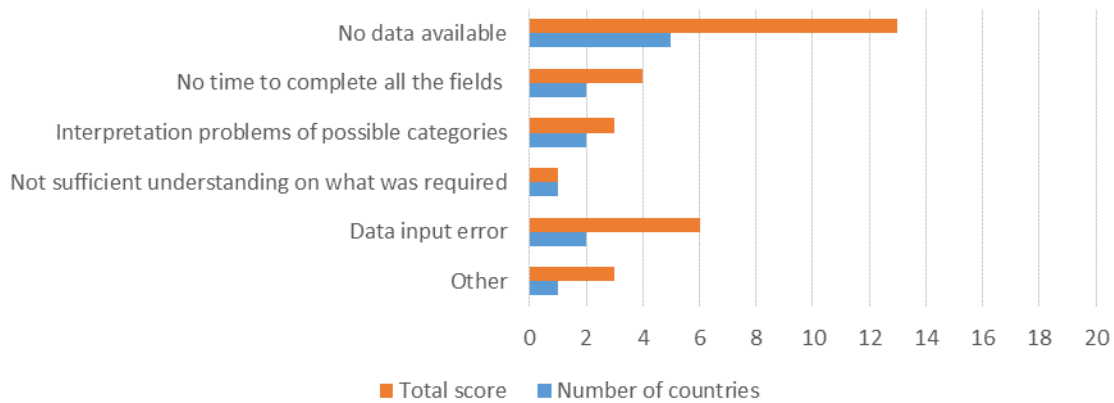
Method: up to 3 ranked answers



BOX 1. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part I.A

7. Reasons for incomplete fields

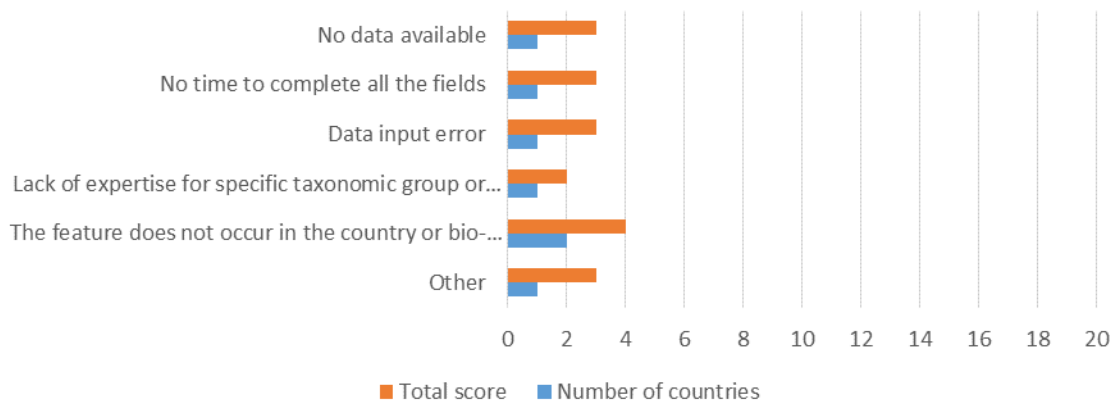
Method: up to 3 ranked answers



Other include: range trend analysis complicated, Range Tool did not work until very late in the process

8. Reasons for not reporting certain features

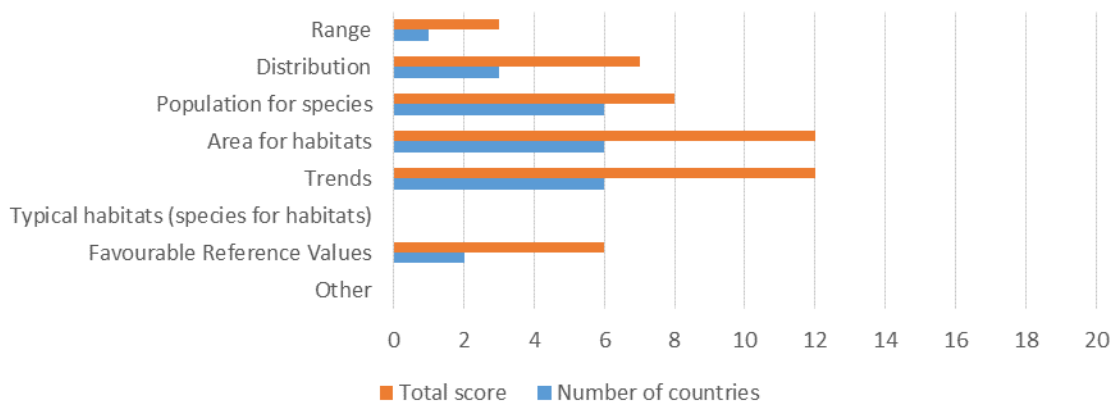
Method: up to 3 ranked answers

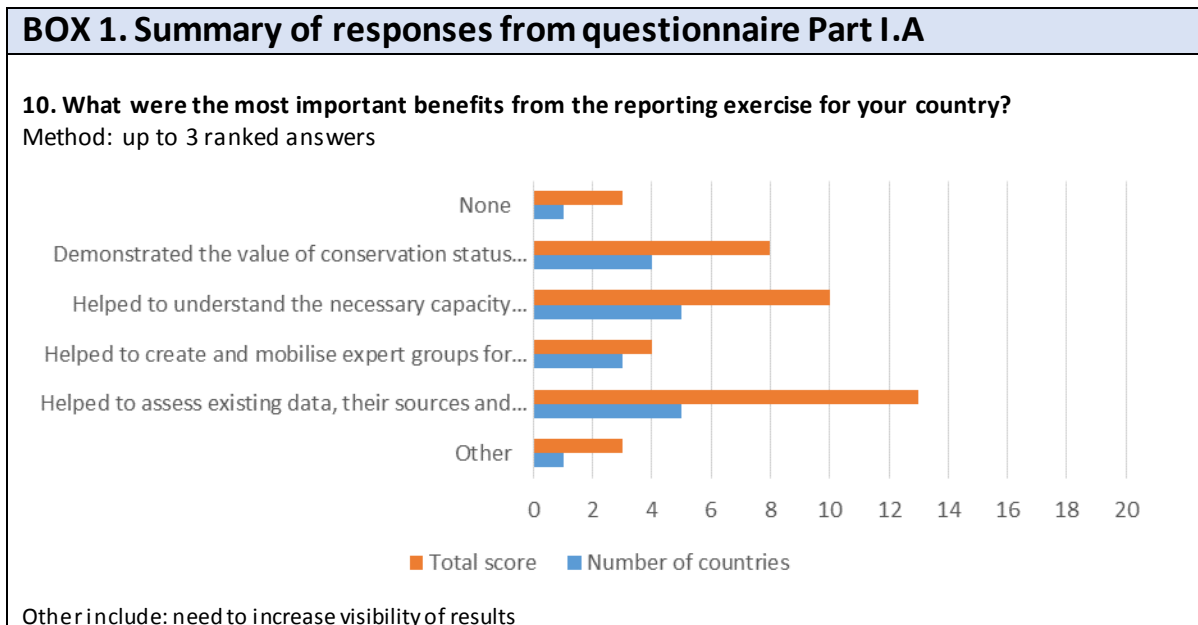


Other include: issues with the Reference List, currently based on Emerald conclusions

9. For which subject(s) was it the most challenging to collect information?

Method: up to 3 ranked answers





Box 2 covers the results of Part I. B of the questionnaire. It was dedicated to countries which did not participate in the reporting 2019. The main reasons for not participating in the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) (IBQ1) were the lack of scientific expertise and of available budget for this task. The study revealed that among “other reasons” there are organisational issues in responsible institutions: change of staff in critical moments and (temporary?) absence of the focal point to the Bern Convention, i.e. the person who should coordinate the exercise. It should be also added that “other competing priorities” (4th response from the top), as clarified during the interviews, most often included the development of the Emerald Network, and no doubt that authorities with budget constraints needed to choose between the two.

In few cases, however, it became apparent that there is some misunderstanding regarding the relationship between the reporting under the Resolution No. 8 (2012) and the development of the Emerald Network, i.e. it is not clearly understood that these are two separate processes. Possibly this is a legacy of the beginning of the process (see Appendix I) when the two processes were not clearly separated. Even the current presentation of the text about reporting in the Resolution No. 8 (2012)³ (Point 4) may leave unexperienced readers wondering whether “reporting” applies to the whole country or only to the Emerald Network, and whether just filling in the Emerald Network database means also “reporting”.

Regarding the participation in preparatory workshops (IBQ2), the “other” category was more often chosen by countries, and the reasons were as described above: misunderstanding regarding relationship with the Emerald Network and the staff turnover. In one case a person actually participated in the workshop, but changed position afterwards that eventually resulted in no action. Two countries were not aware that such workshops were planned, but this could also be explained either by the absence or change of responsible staff.

From the previous work we can only see if a country has or has not submitted a database under Resolution No. 8 (2012). Thus it was interesting to understand if countries actually tried to start the process or gave up this idea at the very beginning (BIQ3). Half of the countries did not even discuss the participation, and the other half started but stopped due to unforeseen difficulties.

The replies regarding the situation with biodiversity reporting in countries which did not participate in 2019 reporting can be analysed together with the participating countries (Figure 3; IAQ1 and IBQ4). The only difference was that the development of a reporting system was foreseen in the near future in more non-participating countries, but overall replies are quite similar. No country in either groups had or has similar reporting system in place and operational.

³ <https://rm.coe.int/1680746515>

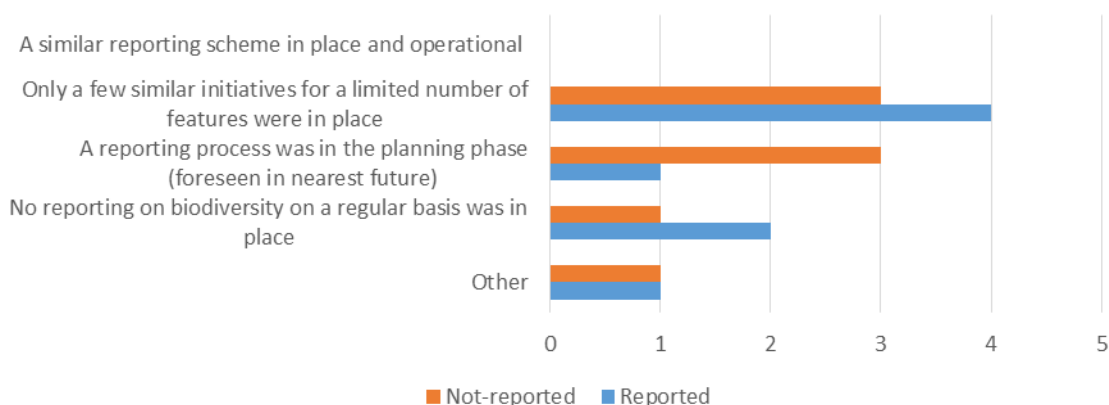


Figure 3. Situation with biodiversity reporting in countries which reported (blue) and did not report (orange) in 2019. Synthesis of replies on Part I. A question 1 and Part I. B question 4.

It was important to know if countries which did not participate in the trial were interested to look at the results of the work done by participating countries (IBQ5). Three countries did not check the report. But from those which did, three countries seemed to be convinced to join the reporting in the future. The other two countries came to an opposite conclusion and saw more problems than benefits.

Continuing on the question regarding the participation in the reporting in the future (IBQ6), and particularly factors that would most likely influence country's decision, all offered responses scored similar numbers: optimal amount of information requested, better visibility of results, knowing that other countries will also participate, and the "other" category. The latter included issues that are shared by most countries: budget, assistance, better understanding of the process. The added value of reporting information from very small countries in the pan-European context was also questioned. This apparently needs some clarification in the future.

BOX 2. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part I.B

1. Which was the main reason for your country for not participating in the reporting exercise?

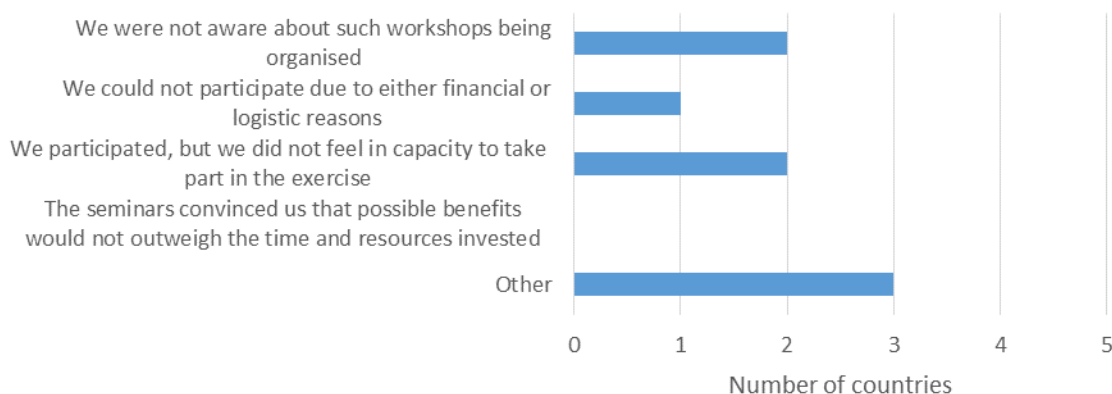
Method: up to 3 ranked answers



Others include: change of staff, missing focal point for the Bern Convention, misunderstanding about Res 8 relationship to Emera

2. What was the role of the two preparatory workshops organised by the EEA in 2017-2018?

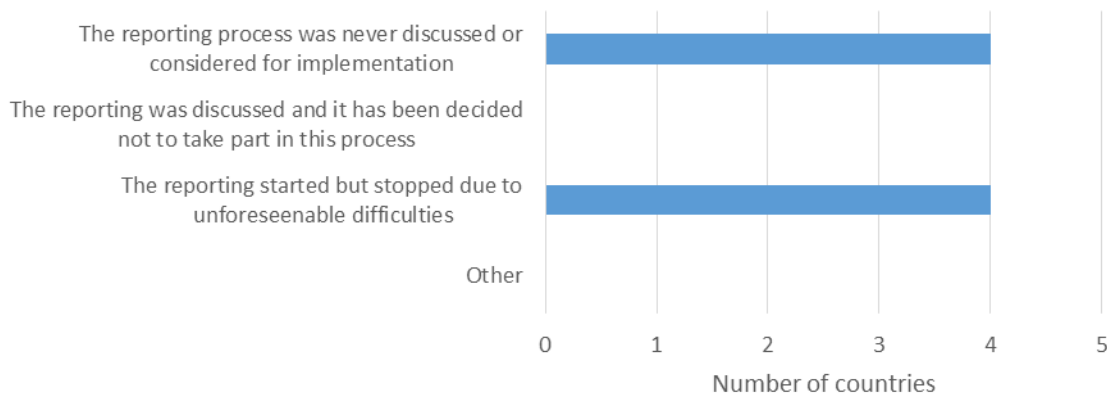
Method: single choice



Others include: someone participated but left the position afterwards, misunderstanding about Res 8 relationship to Emerald

3. Did you start the reporting process and stopped in "a midway" or not even start?

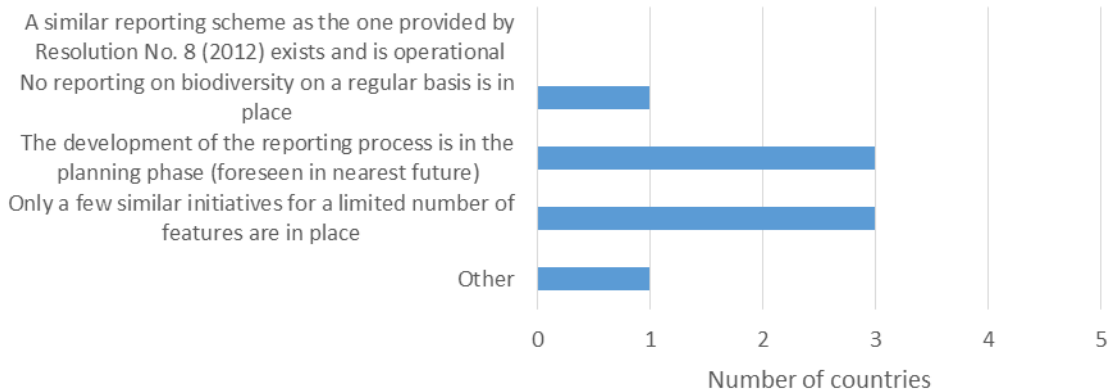
Method: single choice



BOX 2. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part I.B

4. What is the situation concerning biodiversity reporting in your country?

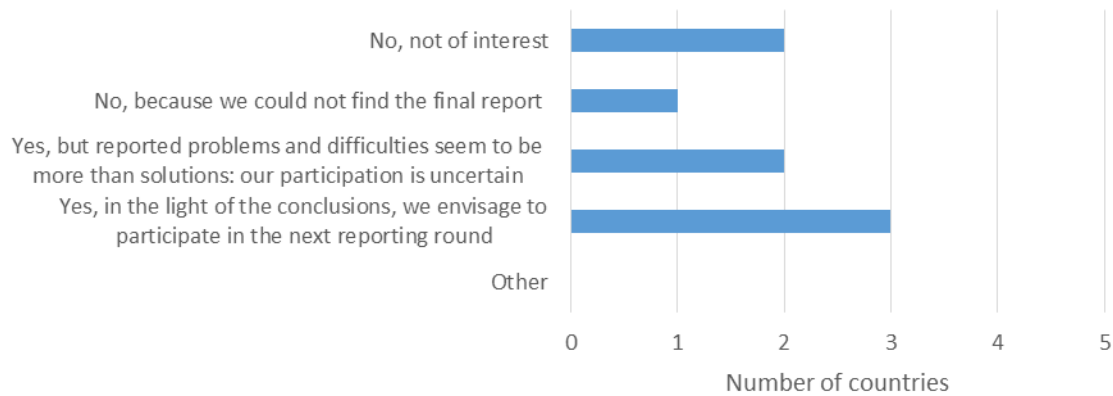
Method: singlechoice



Others include: national monitoring for selected species and habitats

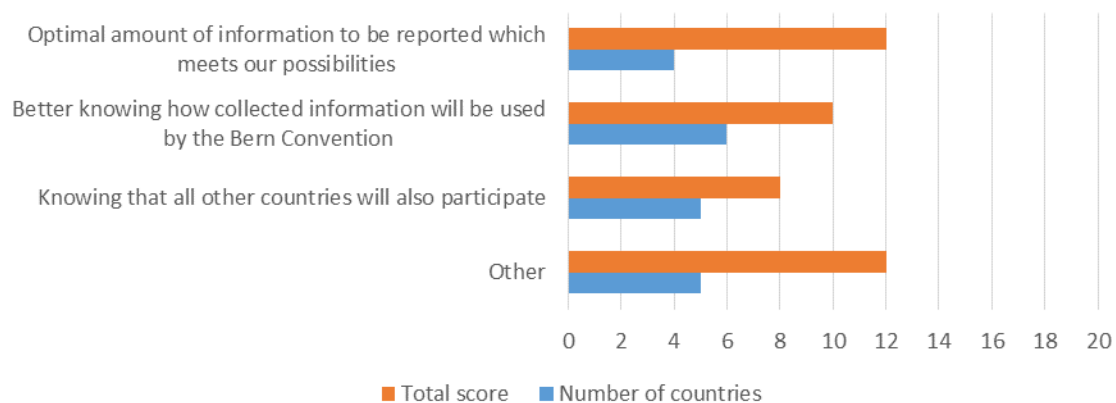
5. Have you looked at (are you familiar with) the conclusions of the reporting exercise (2013-2018)?

Method: singlechoice



6. What could guarantee your participation in the next reporting cycle?

Method: up to 3 ranked answers



Others include: will need additional help/assistance (various) to guarantee participation ; participation will be budget-dependent, need focal point for the Bern Convention; problem with interpretation of data from small countries: need to see the value; better information about the whole process

Expectations for the upcoming reporting round (2019-2024)

The Part II of the questionnaire starts with the questions related to the scope and the timing of the next reporting round (Box 3). Historically the reporting format under the Resolution No. 8 (2012) of the Bern Convention was developed on the basis of the reporting format under the Articles 17 and 12 of the EU Nature Directives. To the general question if the reporting format of Resolution No. 8 (2012) format should be kept harmonised with the EU (IIQ1), nine out of 17 countries prefer to maintain the harmonisation, but there should be less mandatory fields for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012). Overall, 14 countries supported the principle of the harmonisation with the EU. Under “other” category, one country suggested a pragmatic assessment of the usefulness of each part of the existing (EU) reporting format and to maintain only those which are necessary for the purpose. Another country suggested a more radical approach – not to look at the EU reporting format but start with revisiting the definition of the purpose of reporting and then build the format on these grounds. The format should also be based on a costs and benefits analysis.

It was also noted that a full harmonisation with the EU system is not possible because of the difference in the habitat classifications used in the EU Habitats Directive and the Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Bern Convention. In the reporting 2019, only habitats where the relationship between both classifications was 1:1 were considered.

For this question, and for several other questions below, it was obvious that countries which did not participate in the past reporting trial, simply had no opinion, because they lacked on any experience with reporting and, probably, they had not studied the reporting format in detail or at all. Indeed, without having tried the process, it is very difficult to anticipate possible difficulties. But, in fact, the learning and gain of experience was one of the purposes of the reporting 2019.

Regarding the need to synchronise the reporting cycles between the EU and non-EU Contracting Parties (IIQ2) a vast majority of countries supported to use the same reporting periods, but 11 countries also supported that the data delivery could be shifted to a later date than immediately after the reporting period. This would enable countries to benefit from more time for the preparation of the reports and external assistance for processing and analysing the reports could be available to a greater extent (i.e., would not be any longer occupied with the analysis of the EU reporting).

Countries had different opinions on whether the amount of information reported correlates to the quality of the reports (IIQ3); at least we can conclude that the relationship between the two is not straightforward.

The next questions explored various possible scenarios in the case either the list of features to be reported on, or the reporting format, or both would be reduced. Regarding the question how the amount of reported information could be reduced in general (IIQ4), all proposed answers were chosen by at least some countries, but the highest number of countries (7) chose the “other” category. Apart from the issues mentioned above, most proposals were just a combination of already offered answers, for example, to reduce the mandatory content of the format and minimize some aspects of cartographic information.

Regarding the list of features (species and habitats) to be reported on (IIQ5), most countries supported either various combinations of already offered answers (“other” category) or to maintain the same principle as for the reporting 2019: to select features from the Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) of the Bern Convention with broad distribution at pan-European level. Regarding the latter, it should be noted that even in the case of selecting widespread features like in the past reporting trial, some geographically outlying countries (e.g. Iceland) had a very short list of features that occurred in their territory.

Looking at the possible ways to reduce the reporting format (or to reduce the mandatory parts, IIQ6) countries were divided in giving possible solutions. Seven countries chose the “other category” which included to omit or minimize cartographic information (difficulties with spatial data were also often referred to by countries which participated in the reporting, see Part I. A), a need for careful analysis of the usefulness of each part of the existing reporting format, and to maintain all sections of the reporting format but simplify them.

To conclude on the above, countries had a great disparity of views on how to reduce the reporting burden if this would be decided so. This questionnaire served as a brainstorming to identify possible solutions, and at some point in the future, there will be a need for consensus.

Regarding the question if the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is of use to improve national nature conservation planning policies (IIQ7), more than half of the countries informed that it is “not at the moment, but it is currently being considered”. There was a smaller number of countries where the procedures of using reporting data are currently being developed (4) and also some countries (3) where this has not yet been considered.

The self-assessment of capacity to undertake reporting tasks (IIQ2) showed that a majority of countries (10) has assessed the needs but that the current capacity is not sufficient. Few countries are still considering going through the assessment and other few have not yet started. Although the graph shows no answer for the first option (capacity in place), it can be seen that at least one such answer was put under the “other” category.

All offered responses to the question how the Bern Convention Secretariat could assist countries to facilitate the reporting tasks in the future (IIQ9) were scored similarly. The “Other” category also added some ideas, such as to establish a dedicated web-portal on the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) with examples and solutions to problems (but some elements of it already exist⁴), and to promote twinning projects between non-EU Contracting Parties. It can be added, that a need for an expert group dealing with issues related to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) (IIQ9, option 1) is very clear and a number of problems already highlighted in various points of this questionnaire (e.g. seek ways to reduce the reporting amount, etc.) could feed into the terms of reference for such a group.

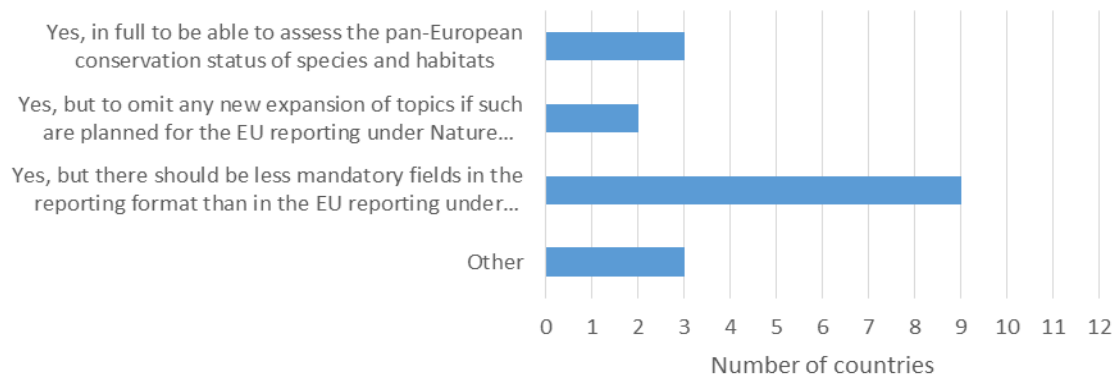
A majority of countries would prefer the results of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) to be analysed and presented at all levels: from the national to the pan-European level (IIQ10). During the interviews, it was also understood that the visibility of the reporting results is a very important factor that can influence the willingness of countries to participate in the process and to provide the highest possible data quality. Some steps towards it are already undertaken.

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/reporting-res.-8-2012->

BOX 3. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part II

1. Should the format of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) be kept harmonised with the EU (Art. 17 and Art.12 reporting under the Nature Directives) for the next reporting round?

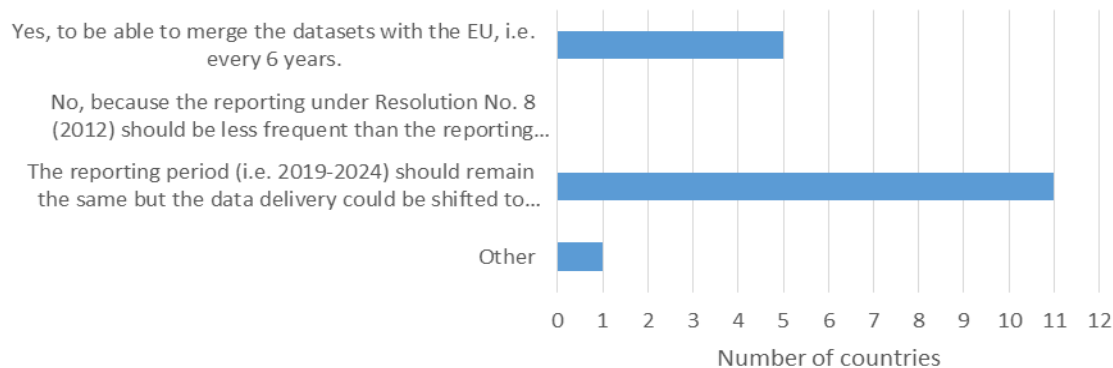
Method: single choice



Others include: "the least common multiple" to assess CS at "useful level" should be investigated, e.g. to omit the whole Range part (?); no answer because of lack of experience

2. Should the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) remain synchronised timewise with the EU reporting in the future?

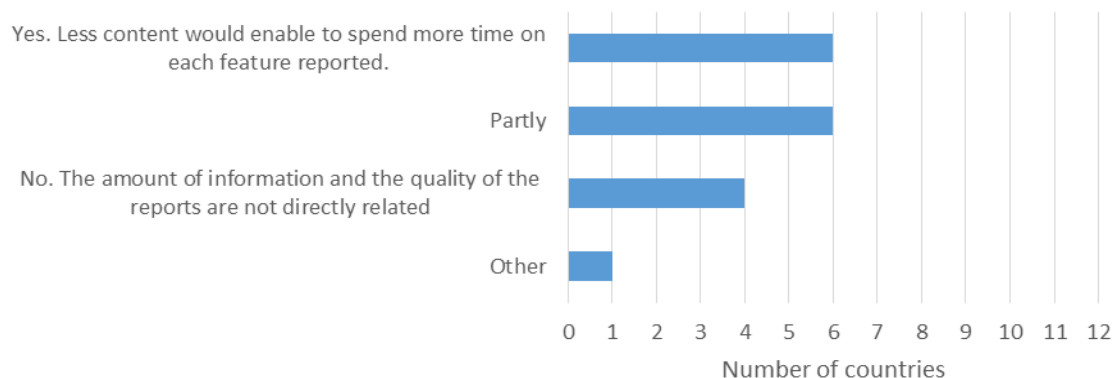
Method: single choice



Others include: no comment

3. Do you think that by reducing the amount of information to be reported the quality and completeness of deliveries will improve?

Method: single choice

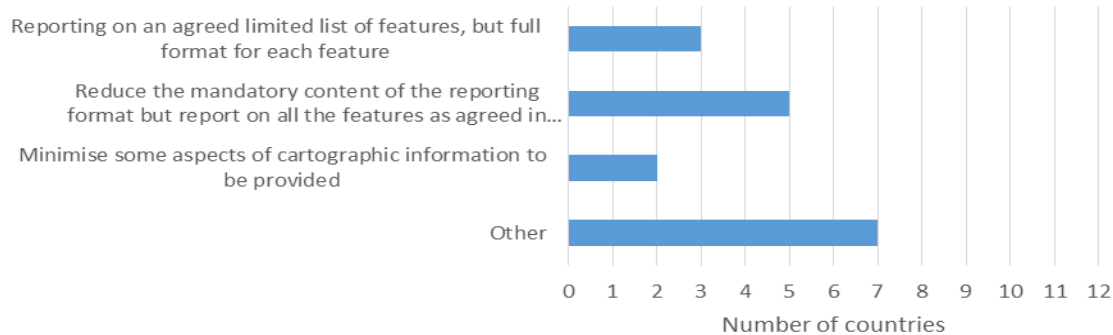


Others include: no comment

BOX 3. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part II

4. If the general amount of required information would be reduced (refer to question 3, first possible answer) for the next reporting round, how it could be reduced?

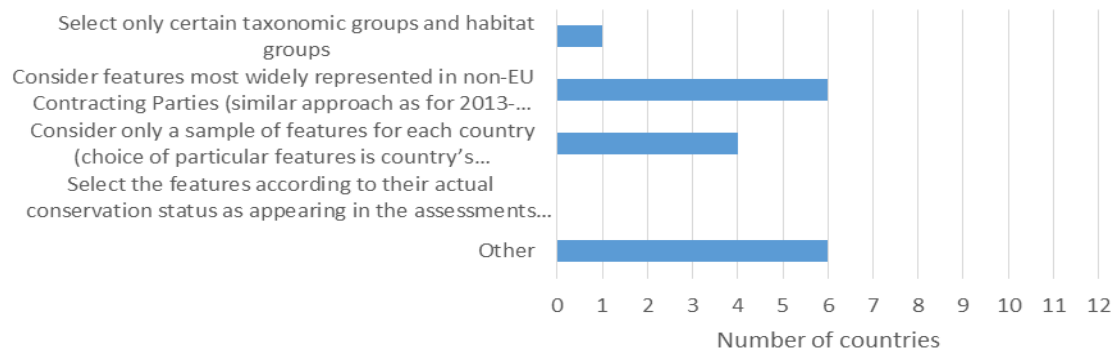
Method: single choice



Others include: a combination: to reduce mandatory content and minimise some aspects of cartographic information; no opinion because of lack of experience; in any case burden needs to be reduced for small countries

5. If for the next reporting round the number of features to be reported on would be reduced (refer to question 4, first possible answer), which criteria should be considered to create the shortlist of features?

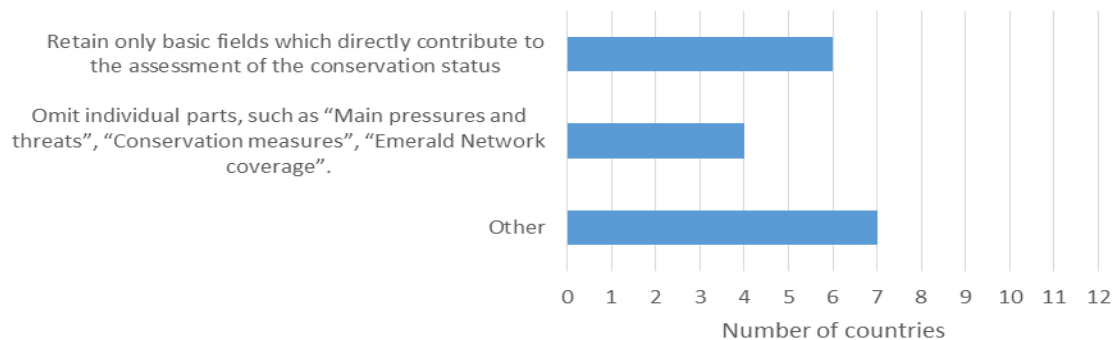
Method: single choice



Others include: good taxonomic representation + additional features chosen by each country; conservation status in combination with most represented species in different countries; a combination between most widely represented features and country choice (opt. 2 and 3); keep full list of features, but if reduced, same selection as for the previous period; no opinion because of lack of experience

6. If for the next reporting round, the reporting format would be reduced (refer to question 4, second possible answer), which parts of the existing reporting format should be reviewed?

Method: single choice

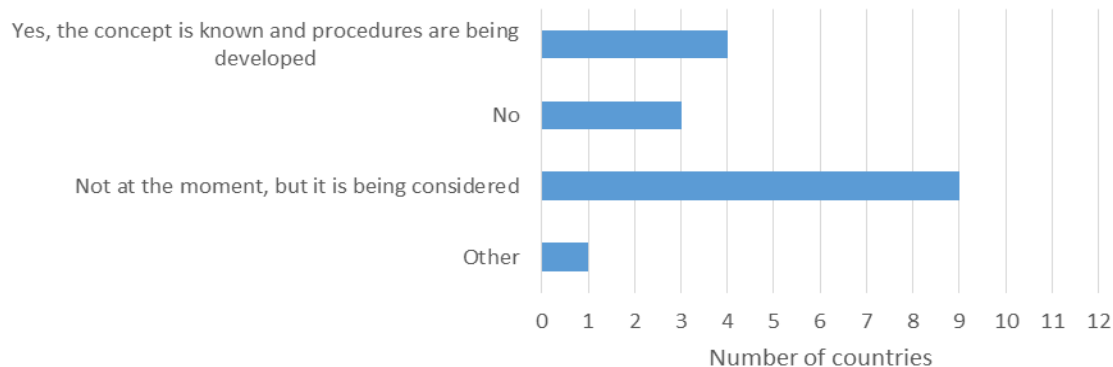


Others include: omit or minimise cartographic information; need analysis of benefits from individual parts & omit insignificant; no opinion because preference goes to full format; no opinion because of lack of experience; maintain all sections but simplify (e.g. omit redundant categories)

BOX 3. Summary of responses from questionnaire Part II

7. Is the reporting under Resolution No 8 (2012) of use to improve nature conservation planning policy in your country?

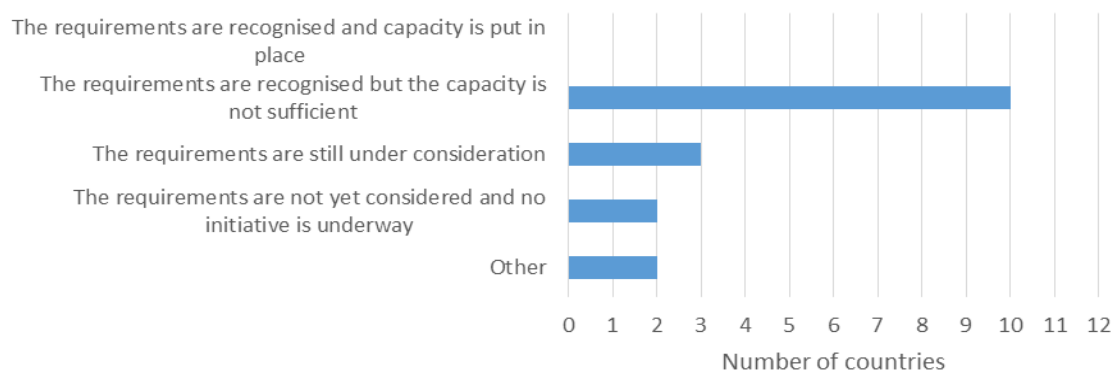
Method: singlechoice



Others include: the reporting will be investigated to study possible support for future nature conservation and management

8. How would you estimate the capacity of your country to respond to the requirements of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)?

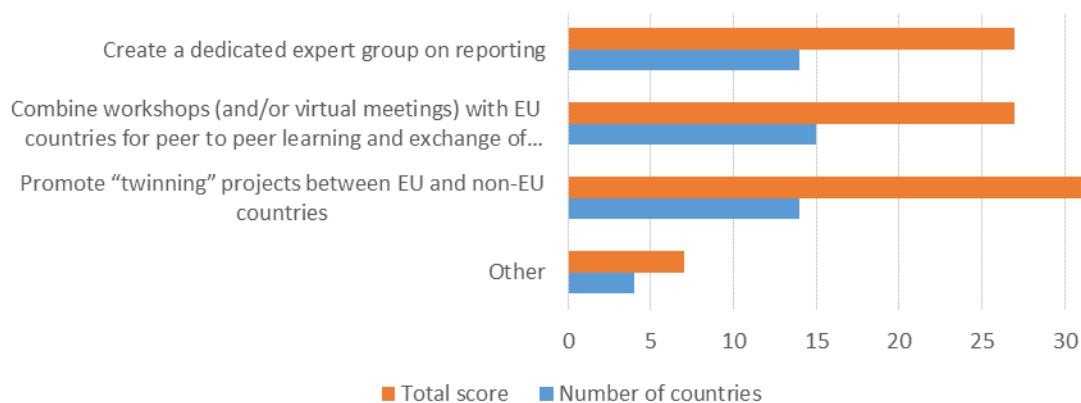
Method: singlechoice



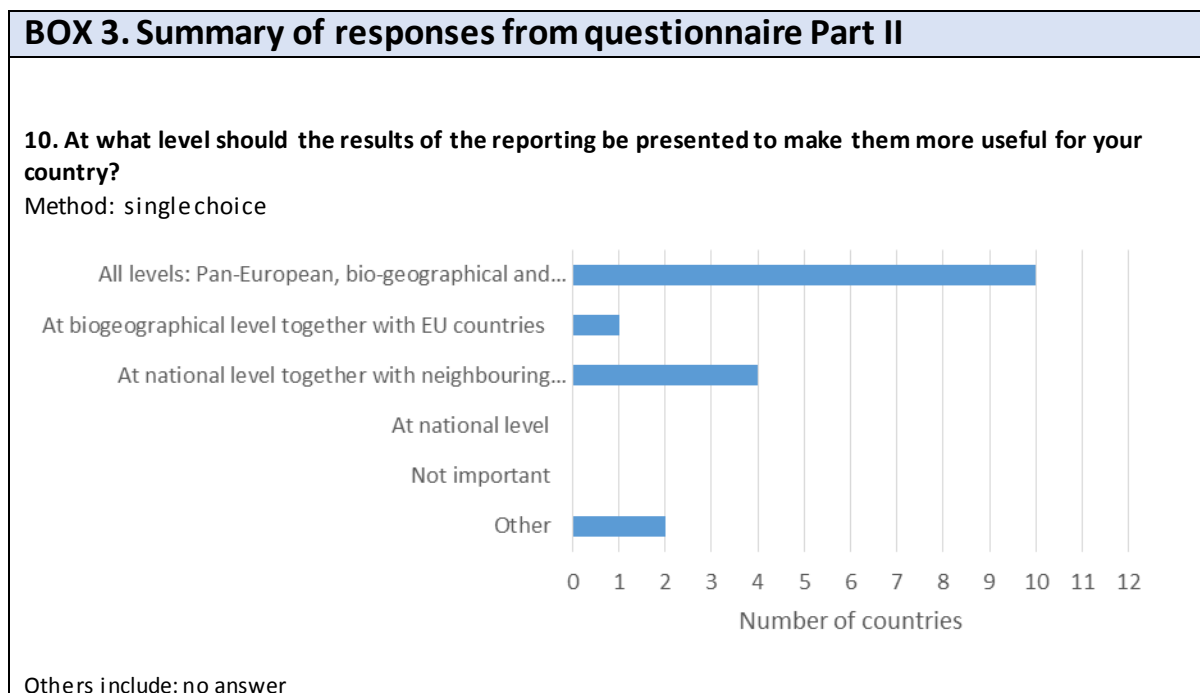
Others include: not yet considered because of insufficient visibility; capacity in place

9. How can the Bern Convention Secretariat assist in achieving better reporting results?

Method: up to 3 ranked answers



Others include: establish a dedicated portal with easy access to QA with examples and solutions; need to attract additional finances; twinning between 2 non-EU countries



Concluding remarks

The future of reporting under the Resolution No. 8 (2012) should be built on country needs and capacities and the experience from the past: lessons from the reporting 2019 and, as far as possible, the experience of the EU. Previous chapters summarised the responses from the Contracting Parties by each question in the questionnaire. Outcomes are further synthesised in the Box 4 to provide a kind of conclusions, however, they are not very clear and straightforward for all topics due to a relatively small sample size. In this closing chapter we also comment on a few important issues that emerged from this enquiry, most often mentioned under the “other” category.

From the reporting 2019 we can learn that there is a need to improve the existing checklist of species and habitats that indicates which feature occurs in which country and bio-geographical region. This should be done in a systematic way and not rely only on the conclusions done during the Emerald Network bio-geographical evaluation seminars. Possibly this will require a special consultation among Contracting Parties. Moreover, the checklist should be expanded to all possible reporting countries, also to countries which did not start the development of the Emerald Network. It should be done as soon as possible because the checklist will most probably be used to decide upon the list of features to be reported on.

Even if the reporting 2019 was not always called “a test” or “a trial”, by its nature it was an exercise with a primary aim to understand the requirements of such an exercise, build the procedure, identify gaps, draw lessons, analyse the first results and identify measures and actions to be implemented in the future. Given that it was based on a limited number of features, not much else could have been expected. Countries need to be aware that a reduction of either the format or in the list of features to be reported on, will in turn impose limitations on what can be done with the data.

When discussing the ways to minimize the reporting burden, it should be recalled that it is very difficult to assess the overall state of nature at national and international levels from a very short list of features reported. Within the reporting 2019 each country had to report on an average of 36 features while each EU Member State had to report on hundreds of features under Art. 17 and Art. 12. In the EU this offers a possibility to perform various analyses, i.e. by systematic groups, bio-geographical regions, main ecosystem types, etc. Thus, presumably, at least the list of features should be rather expanded than reduced in the future.

The future participation of countries depends to a large extent on a good understanding of the objectives of the reporting process. Although not widespread (noted only in a few countries in Part I. B), there is still a confusion

regarding the relationship between the Emerald Network and the reporting on the conservation status under the Resolution No. 8 (2012) which cannot be ignored. It seems that some countries may have not participated in the reporting 2019 only because they considered it a part of the Emerald Network development. It should be made clear that these are two separate processes, two different levels of reporting (Emerald Network: sites and network of protected areas; Reporting: country-level, bio-geographical level, irrespectively of the land protection status) and two different databases and formats. Also, in the past, the reporting was included under the Emerald Network work-plan 2011-2020 (calendar) despite the fact that they are separate processes. In the new proposal of post-2020 Emerald Network work-plan the reporting was not included and a similar work-plan might be drawn specifically for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

In a number of questions, particularly in the Part I. B of the questionnaire, it was mentioned that the tasks related to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) often compete with the Emerald Network development. This is not a surprise, because both are major multi-annual processes which require substantial resources. In most countries the same people are probably involved in both processes. Most biodiversity data are season-dependent and many features can be surveyed only during a specific, sometimes very short, period of the year. Thus, in certain situations authorities may be in front of a dilemma: either to try to achieve progress towards completion of the Emerald Network, or to engage into another huge task, i.e. reporting. It could be helpful, if the Bern Convention Secretariat could provide some advice and guidance on how to balance these two priorities in a most efficient way.

No doubt, the debate about the extent to which the format of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) should follow the EU reporting formats and timing should be continued. However, even today from past experience it is quite predictable that moving significantly away from the EU formats and procedures would not favour cost-effectiveness, broad participation, data quality and data applications. A few arguments against divergence:

- It is more expensive and time consuming to build something new (formats, procedures etc.).
- If the EU reporting format is abandoned, we can assume that the EEA will not continue to support non-EU Contracting Parties on reporting.
- Several if not many Contracting Parties in the EU accession process are naturally interested in following the EU reporting format as much as possible.
- It would not be wise not to benefit and learn from the EU's experience on the reporting on the conservation status, even if it is not always positive.
- Different data principles and formats will hamper substantially any attempt to assess a conservation status at the pan-European level.

It is unlikely that many of the tasks emerging from this survey can be implemented without a "technical working group" with broad participation from all Contracting Parties. Broad participation is necessary, because Contracting Parties are in different situations with respect to their experience with reporting, their expert resources and the progress with the Emerald Network establishment. The working group should cover questions regarding the scope, format and frequency of the future reporting and possibly coordinate the review the checklists of species and habitats.

BOX 4. Key findings from the enquiry in one sentence

Experience from the reporting trial in 2019

- In none of countries, either participating and non-participating, similar reporting schemes were in place.
- The Bern Convention requests and the need to assess the state of biodiversity internationally were two main reasons for participation.
- Understanding the reporting process and technical advice were most important benefits from the preparatory training workshops.
- National authorities either organised ad-hoc working groups or outsourced work to scientific institutions for the reporting task.
- On average 17 experts were involved (5-25) but all not at the same level.
- Six out of 8 countries considered that 20 months (as in reporting 2019) were sufficient for the task
- Most important sources of information were existing databases and literature data.
- Most difficult parts of the work were data collection, data transfer from stakeholders to the required format and preparation of spatial dataset.
- Most common reasons for information gaps in the reports were the fact that information was not available and data input errors.
- Most challenging information to gather were trends and area for habitats.
- Most important benefits from the reporting exercise were that it helped to assess existing data and identify gaps and to understand the necessary capacity requirements.
- The main reasons for not-participating were lack of scientific expertise and budget.
- Turnover in the staff and lack of coordinating person apparently affected awareness about and participation in preparatory workshops.
- A half of countries did not even discuss internally their participation in the reporting 2019, the other half started the exercise but stopped due to unforeseen difficulties.
- The 2020 study on the results of first reporting exercise lead to different responses: three countries seemed to be convinced to take part in the next round, but other two saw more problems than benefits and their participation is doubtful.
- Various factors could stimulate country participation in future, probably they are country-specific.

Expectations for the upcoming reporting round

- In general, fourteen countries supported the harmonisation of the reporting with the EU in principle.
- A vast majority of countries supported the use of the same reporting period as in the EU, but 11 countries also suggested that the data delivery could be later.
- The relationship between the amount of information and the quality of reports is not straightforward.
- Regarding the possible approaches to reduce the amount of information, countries demonstrated a large disparity of views and proposed various solutions under the “other” category.
- In many cases various combinations of items that could be reduced were proposed, rather than focusing only on the format or the list of features to be reported on.
- For the format, several countries suggested to carefully assess the usefulness of each data field
- In most countries reporting data are not used for national policy-making but it is currently being considered.

BOX 4. Key findings from the enquiry in one sentence

- A majority of countries have assessed the capacity needs for future reporting and have concluded that the current capacity is not sufficient; yet it could also depend on the scope of the information required.
- Countries have indicated various needs for the Secretariat's assistance. Among other, there is a need to establish a technical working group dealing with reporting issues.
- In the future the results of the reporting should be presented at all levels, from the national to pan-European, and sufficient visibility should be ensured as well.

Appendix I. Summary of decisions concerning the development of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

Date	Meeting	Description - Decision
2010	Standing Committee	<p>Adoption of the Calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest</p> <p>This calendar includes a task on “the Development of guidelines on management, monitoring and reporting tools in line with existing Natura 2000’s tools”</p>
2011	GoEPAEN	<p>Decision to develop the guidelines on Management plans and reporting for Emerald Network sites, draft proposal to be presented at the next GoEPAEN</p> <p><i>Remark: at that moment the reporting was still completely linked with the Emerald Network. During the process described below, it became gradually clear that the reporting would be performed at the level of the species of Resolution No. 6 (1998) and the habitats of Resolution No. 4 (1996) and aim at defining a Conservation Status as defined under the EU Nature directives.</i></p>
2011	Standing Committee	Takes note of the conclusions of the GoEPAEN
2012 September	GoEPAEN	Discussion on the “Revised draft Resolution on the national designation of adopted Emerald sites, management, reporting and monitoring measures” – comments to be sent before 26/10/2012
2012 November	Standing Committee	Adoption of Resolution No. 8 (2012) of the Standing Committee on the national designation of adopted Emerald sites and the implementation of management, monitoring and reporting measures.
2013 September	GoEPAEN	<p>Discussion on the objectives of the first reporting format and a draft list of reporting topics. First reference to the idea of creating a pre-selection of features to report on.</p> <p>Conclusions as taken from the meeting report:</p> <p><i>“As foreseen in Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the national designation of adopted Emerald sites and the implementation of management, monitoring and reporting measures, the Group of Experts was charged to discuss a Reporting form for the first reporting exercise of 2018 to which Contracting Parties working on the Emerald Network will be submitted in 2018. A draft list of topics to be included in the reporting format (T-PVS/PA(2013)11) was presented to the Group. In a following discussion, delegates expressed their fear that countries may be busy with the adoption and implementation of management measures for their adopted Emerald sites and may not be ready to correctly implement monitoring measures in order to report on the conservation status of species and habitats. The delegate from the Russian Federation pointed out that it might be useful to make a very small selection of species and habitats from the Resolutions No. 4 and No.6, which are indicators of the state of biodiversity in the country and which might be particularly endangered. Other delegations pointed out that the reporting on conservation status of a selection of species should remain an option in the future form. If a selection of species is made, they must be the same for all countries, in order to allow for a pan-European analysis. The Secretariat was charged with preparing a complete form and to submit it for discussion to the next meeting of the Group of Experts in 2014”.</i></p>
2013 December	Standing Committee	Takes note of the conclusions of the GoEPAEN
2014	GoEPAEN	<p>Discussion on the goals and extent of the reporting format. Concrete suggestion to develop a pre-selection of features to report on.</p> <p>Conclusions as taken from the meeting report:</p> <p><i>“The Secretariat reminded that the delegate’s opinions expressed on this agenda item back in 2013 were at times opposite. While some countries were in favor of a simplified exercise of reporting on solely administrative measures for the first round of reporting due in 2018, others were agreeing with the Secretariat’s opinion that the reporting needs to be useful and more developed. Therefore, the first draft reporting form, document T-PVS/PA (2014)9, does not include detailed reporting requirement on the conservation status of individual species or habitats, nor reporting on distribution and population size for species and habitats. After a debate, the Group agreed on the principle that the reporting exercise has to be useful for the countries, but also for a comparison at a pan-European level, using Natura 2000 and Emerald data. In practice the Group agreed that this should result in:</i></p>

Date	Meeting	Description - Decision
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More concrete questions and avoiding open questions; • Report to be requested on subset of species and habitats and not on groups; • Criteria for the choice of the subset of species and habitats to be proposed; • Red List species (national or international) to be prioritized; <p>Finally, the Secretariat clarified that in line with the decision by the Standing Committee to the Convention in December 2013 to adopt the On-line Reporting System (ORS) used by many other MEAs on biodiversity, it is the Secretariat intention to make use of the ORS for this reporting and thus allow Contracting Parties to report on-line with the user-friendly tool. According to the decisions and proposals from the Group, the first draft of the form will be further developed and presented to the meeting of the Group of Experts in 2015”.</p>
2014 December	Standing Committee	Takes note of the conclusions of the GoEPAEN
2015 September	GoEPAEN	<p>Discussion on a fully elaborated reporting format in line with the format as used under the EU Nature Directives (Art. 17 & 12).</p> <p>Proposal to establish a restricted work group on the reporting format for the 1st reporting exercise: Contracting Parties invited to volunteer.</p>
2015 December	Standing Committee	Takes note of the conclusions of the GoEPAEN and endorsed the proposal of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks to set up a restricted ad-hoc group on reporting, which will be charged with the drafting of the form to be used by Parties for reporting on the Emerald Network implementation, as required by Resolution No. 8 (2012). The Committee gave mandate to the Bureau to prepare its Terms of reference and explore funding possibilities where needed.
2016 September	Restricted Group of Experts on the Reporting Format	<p>Detailed discussions on the proposed reporting format</p> <p>Detailed discussion on a proposal to set criteria for the selection of features to report on. The concrete proposal is based on a quantitative analysis of presence of species and habitats in the consolidated conclusions database resulting from the biogeographical seminars for 14 countries.</p> <p>Discussion on which IT-tool should be used for the harvesting of the reporting data: should the ORS (Online Reporting System) be used or should the existing tool under the EU Nature Directives be amended towards the needs under the Bern Convention</p> <p>Conclusions as taken from the meeting report:</p> <p><i>“The Chair claimed that the Emerald Network exists, and that there is now a need to check if it works. He encouraged to not abandoning the new reporting format without trying it, based only on fears that it would be too difficult. In addition, he proposed as well that the Ad-Hoc Restricted Group of Experts uses the possibility to limit the first reporting exercise to a small number of species and habitats. Although expressing fears over the financial and human resources burden such reporting could create, Parties agreed on principle on the reporting format noting the importance of this exercise. This agreement is subject to the limitation of the number of species and habitats to be concerned by the first reporting. The Secretariat shared its satisfaction that the Ad-Hoc Restricted Group reached consensus on the general idea of the reporting and its format and agreed that the Group should work further during 2017 on the selection of the species and habitats and on the preparation of Guidelines to countries on how to fill in the reporting format. The best timeline for the finalization of the format, the selection of species and the Guidelines is by end 2017. Therefore, on-line consultations and a physical meeting of the Group might be needed for 2017. The Group agreed in this.</i></p> <p><i>The Parties approved on principle the reporting format as presented at the meeting and that the first reporting exercise should concern a limited number of species and habitats (25 to 50).</i></p> <p><i>The Group agreed that negotiating the use of the new reporting tool of the EEA developed for the EU countries would be the most straightforward and cost effective solution.”</i></p>
2016 November	Standing Committee	Takes note of the results of the meeting of the Restricted Group and its future work plan.
2017 June Copenhagen, Denmark	EEA – EIONET Workshop	<p>NRC Biodiversity Data & Information Workshop</p> <p>Presentation of the efforts of the Bern Convention: “Streamlining reporting between Nature Directives and Resolution No. 8 (2012) under the Bern Convention”</p>

Date	Meeting	Description - Decision
2017 September Belgrade, Serbia	Restricted Group of Experts on the Reporting Format	<p>The draft reporting format is agreed on by the members of the Ad-Hoc Group and sent for formal agreement by the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks before a possible adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>For the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) purposes, a 10 x 10 km grid map is agreed on by the members of the Ad-Hoc Group and sent for formal agreement by the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks before a possible adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>Supporting documents for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) are agreed on by the members of the Ad-Hoc Group and sent for formal agreement by the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks before a possible adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>An agreement is reached on using the same reporting tool as the one in development for the reporting under the Nature Directives.</p> <p>A selection of species and habitats to be considered for the 1st reporting cycle under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is agreed on by the members of the Ad-Hoc Group and sent for formal agreement by the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks before a possible adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p>
2017 September Belgrade, Serbia	GoEPAEN	<p>The draft format of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) including the 10 x 10 km grid map is agreed on by the members of and observers to the Group of Experts and sent for adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>A selection of species and habitats to be considered for the 1st reporting cycle under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is agreed on by the members of and observers to the Group of Experts and sent for adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>Supporting documents for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) are agreed on by the members of and observers to the Group of Experts.</p> <p>A timetable for the first reporting cycle under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is agreed on by the members of the Ad-Hoc Group and sent for formal agreement by the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks before a possible adoption by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p>
2017	Standing Committee	<p>The Standing Committee took note of the reports of the 2nd meeting of the Ad-Hoc restricted Group on reporting on the Emerald Network and of the 8th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and endorsed the reporting on the conservation status of species and habitats under the Resolution No. 8 (2012) over the period 2013 – 2018.</p> <p>The Standing Committee took note with satisfaction of the finalisation of the reporting format under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and welcomed the alignment with the EU Articles 17 and 12 reporting tools, which will allow to assess the conservation status of species and habitats at Pan-European level.</p> <p>The Standing Committee adopted the Reporting format (appendix II) and endorsed the subset of species (appendix III) the first reporting exercise will focus on. The Standing Committee took also note that the reporting exercise will be launched beginning of 2019 and of the deadline set on 31 December 2019 for the delivery of the national reports.</p>
2018 April Copenhagen, Denmark	First Reporting Workshop under the ENI SEIS East II project	<p>Detailed explanations on the Resolution Nr. 8 (2012) Reporting Format, Data Entry Tool and Guidelines.</p> <p>Exchange of experiences with some EU countries (UK and PL)</p> <p>Defining the homework for the next workshop</p>
2018 November Paris, France	Second Reporting Workshop under the ENI SEIS East II project	<p>Detailed discussions on the experiences of the countries related to the homework given in the first workshop.</p> <p>Presentation of the first draft version of the data entry tool</p>
2019 April		The first version of the operational Data Entry Tool is online available
2019, 31 December		Final delivery date for the reports for the first reporting period under the Resolution Nr. 8 (2012)

Appendix II. Structure of the questionnaire.

Part I A. Questions related to the previous reporting round: only for countries which submitted reports in 2019.

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible responses
1	When starting the reporting exercise under Resolution No. 8 (2012) over the period 2013-2018, what was the situation regarding biodiversity reporting in your country? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		A similar reporting scheme as the one provided by Resolution No. 8 (2012) was in place and operational
			Only a few similar initiatives for a limited number of features were in place
			A reporting process was in the planning phase (foreseen in nearest future)
			No reporting on biodiversity on a regular basis was in place
			Other:
2	What was the main reason or interest for participating to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		The Bern Convention requests are considered important
			To take advantage of an international request to develop a national reporting system on biodiversity
			Biodiversity should be assessed beyond national borders, thus international cooperation is considered important
			Request of stakeholders (academia, NGOs)
			Reporting is seen as a policy driving force (a tool for decision-making)
			Other:
3	Which topics covered by the preparatory workshops organised by the EEA in 2017-2018 were the most useful for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		Learn about the reporting process in general
			Exchange views and discuss problems and challenges with other countries
			Receive technical advice on data collection and recording
			Other:
4	How was the reporting process organised in your country? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		Central governmental service collecting and filling in the data
			Outsourced scientific authority collecting data and preparing the report
			The work was carried out by an Ad-Hoc “working group” involving the most important stakeholders
			Other:

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible responses
5	How many people were involved in the reporting exercise under Resolution No. 8 (2012) over the period 2013-2018? ⁵	Number	Comments:
	When did the work start, including preparations?	Month /year	Comments:
	When did the work finish?	Month /year	Comments:
	According to your experience were the available financial and human resources allocated to the reporting sufficient?	Yes/No	Comments:
	According to your experience was the time allocated to the reporting sufficient?	Yes/No	Comments:
6	Which were the main sources of information during the preparation the report 2013-2018? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		Literature data
			Existing databases
			Data from state monitoring programmes
			Data provided by NGOs
			Specially dedicated field research
			Cooperation with other projects
			Other:
7	Which was the most difficult part of the report preparation? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		Collection of tabular and spatial data
			Technical transfer of data from stakeholders to the required format
			Preparation of tabular database
			Preparation of spatial dataset
			Submission, data delivery
			Other:
8	Some fields in your report were incomplete, for example: TO BE INSERTED What was the main reason? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		No data available
			No time to complete all the fields
			Interpretation problems of possible categories
			Not sufficient understanding on what was required
			Data input error
			Other:

⁵ This question requires a numeric response. At least an approximate figure.

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible responses
9	<p>You did not report on some features, for example:</p> <p>TO BE INSERTED</p> <p>What was the main reason?</p> <p>[Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]</p>		No data available
			No time to complete all the fields
			Data input error
			Lack of expertise for specific taxonomic group or habitat group
			The feature does not occur in the country or bio-geographical region, although indicated in the checklist
			Other:
10	<p>For which subject(s) was it the most challenging to collect information⁶?</p> <p>[Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]</p>		Range
			Distribution
			Population for species
			Area for habitats
			Trends
			Typical habitats (species for habitats)
			Favourable Reference Values
			Other:
11	<p>What were the most important benefits from the reporting exercise for your country?</p> <p>[Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]</p>		None
			Demonstrated the value of conservation status assessments internationally
			Helped to understand the necessary capacity requirements for reporting
			Helped to create and mobilise expert groups for such tasks
			Helped to assess existing data, their sources and identify gaps to be solved in the future
			Other:

⁶ Here we list only those on which the conservation status assessments depends on.

Part I B. Questions related to the previous reporting round: only for countries which did not submit reports in 2019.

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible responses
1	Which was the main reason for your country for not participating in the reporting exercise? [Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]		The key stakeholders were not aware about this reporting exercise
			The reporting initiative was known but there was a lack of interest to participate
			No budget available for this task
			Other priorities were considered more important (such as completing the Emerald Network)
			Lack of sufficient data and scientific expertise
			Other:
2	What was the role of the two preparatory workshops organised by the EEA in 2017-2018? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		We were not aware about such workshops being organised
			We could not participate due to either financial or logistic reasons
			We participated, but we did not feel in capacity to take part in the exercise
			The seminars convinced us that possible benefits from reporting would not outweigh the time and resources invested
			Other:
3	Did you start the reporting process and stopped in “a midway” or not even start? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		The reporting process was never discussed or considered for implementation
			The reporting was discussed and it has been decided not to take part in this process
			The reporting started but stopped due to unforeseeable difficulties
			Other:
4	What is the situation concerning biodiversity reporting in your country? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		A similar reporting scheme as the one provided by Resolution No. 8 (2012) exists and is operational
			No reporting on biodiversity on a regular basis is in place
			The development of the reporting process is in the planning phase (foreseen in nearest future)
			Only a few similar initiatives for a limited number of features are in place
			Other:

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible responses
5	<p>Have you looked at (are you familiar with) the conclusions of the reporting exercise (2013-2018)? For example report: https://rm.coe.int/reporting-under-resolution-no-8-2012-period-2013-2018-final-report/16809fad04</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>No, not of interest</p> <p>No, because we could not find the final report</p> <p>Yes, but reported problems and difficulties seem to be more than solutions: our participation in the next reporting round is uncertain</p> <p>Yes, in the light of the conclusions, we envisage to participate in the next reporting round</p> <p>Other</p>
6	<p>What could guarantee your participation in the next reporting cycle?</p> <p>[Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]</p>		<p>Optimal amount of information to be reported which meets our possibilities</p> <p>Better knowing how collected information will be used by the Bern Convention</p> <p>Knowing that all other countries will also participate</p> <p>Other</p>

Part II. Scoping the next reporting round: all countries.

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible response
1	Should the format of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) be kept harmonised with the EU (Art. 17 and Art.12 reporting under the Nature Directives) for the next reporting round? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		Yes, in full to be able to assess the pan-European conservation status of species and habitats
			Yes, but to omit any new expansion of topics if such are planned for the EU reporting under Nature Directives
			Yes, but there should be less mandatory fields in the reporting format than in the EU reporting under Nature Directives
			Other:
2	Should the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) remain synchronised timewise with the EU reporting in the future? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		Yes, to be able to merge the datasets with the EU, i.e. every 6 years.
			No, because the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) should be less frequent than the reporting under the Nature Directives
			The reporting period (i.e. 2019-2024) should remain the same but the data delivery could be shifted to ensure more time for the preparation of the reports
			Other
3	Do you think that by reducing the amount of information to be reported the quality and completeness of deliveries will improve? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		Yes. Less content would enable to spend more time on each feature reported.
			Partly
			No. The amount of information and the quality of the reports are not directly related
			Other:
4	If the general amount of required information would be reduced (refer to question 3, first possible answer) for the next reporting round, how it could be reduced? [Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]		Reporting on an agreed limited list of features, but full format for each feature
			Reduce the mandatory content of the reporting format but report on all the features as agreed in the check list
			Minimise some aspects of cartographic information to be provided
			Other:

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible response
5	<p>If for the next reporting round the number of features to be reported on would be reduced (refer to question 4, first possible answer), which criteria should be considered to create the shortlist of features?</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>Select only certain taxonomic groups and habitat groups</p> <p>Consider features most widely represented in non-EU Contracting Parties (similar approach as for 2013-2018 reporting trial)</p> <p>Consider only a sample of features for each country (choice of particular features is country's responsibility)</p> <p>Select the features according to their actual conservation status as appearing in the assessments of the reportings under Nature Directives and under Resolution No. 8 (2012) for the period 2013-2018</p> <p>Other:</p>
6.	<p>If for the next reporting round, the reporting format would be reduced (refer to question 4, second possible answer), which parts of the existing reporting format should be reviewed?</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>Retain only basic fields which directly contribute to the assessment of the conservation status</p> <p>Omit individual parts, such as "Main pressures and threats", "Conservation measures", "Emerald Network coverage".</p> <p>Other:</p>
7	<p>Is the reporting under Resolution No 8 (2012) of use to improve nature conservation planning policy in your country?</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>Yes, the concept is known and procedures are being developed</p> <p>No</p> <p>Not at the moment, but it is being considered</p> <p>Other:</p>
8	<p>How would you estimate the capacity of your country to respond to the requirements of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)?</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>The requirements are recognised and capacity is put in place</p> <p>The requirements are recognised but the capacity is not sufficient</p> <p>The requirements are still under consideration</p> <p>The requirements are not yet considered and no initiative is underway</p> <p>Other:</p>

No	Question	Tick/ Rank	Possible response
9	<p>How can the Bern Convention Secretariat assist in achieving better reporting results?</p> <p>[Up to 3 answers are allowed which should be ranked from 1 to 3 (1: moderate relevance, 2: high relevance, 3: very high relevance)]</p>		<p>Create a dedicated expert group on reporting</p> <p>Combine workshops (and/or virtual meetings) with EU countries for peer to peer learning and exchange of experience</p> <p>Promote “twinning” projects between EU and non-EU countries</p> <p>Other:</p>
10	<p>At what level should the results of the reporting be presented to make them more useful for your country?</p> <p>[Please choose one answer option and tick the corresponding box]</p>		<p>All levels: Pan-European, bio-geographical and national levels</p> <p>At biogeographical level together with EU countries</p> <p>At national level together with neighbouring countries (pending the availability of data)</p> <p>At national level</p> <p>Not important</p> <p>Other:</p>