



Strasbourg, 12 November 2023

T-PVS/PA(2023)06

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

43<sup>rd</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 28 November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**Fourth *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting**

**9 November 2023, 10.00 – 15.00 (CEST)**

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**-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 third meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting and objectives of the fourth meeting**

The Chair recalled the outcomes of the third meeting of the Working Group which took place on 27 June 2023. The Working Group had examined 4 options for reducing the reporting workload and agreed to proceed with a full reporting format aligned with the EU reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive but to report on a reduced number of features.

The Group supported 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 of the Habitats Directive and Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Bern Convention. The Working Group will still have to agree on whether or not to consider marine habitats.

The chair also informed that the expected outcomes of the meeting were to examine and reach a consensus on a way forward for the checklists of species and habitats as well as for the reporting format.

Last but not least, the Working Group would also be invited to elect a new Chair.

### **4. Checklists of species and habitats**

The consultant, Mr Marc Roekaerts, reminded members of the Working Group that the draft checklists were based on the Emerald Network Reference Lists. He presented an Excel file shared with participants ahead of the meeting containing the draft checklists for all the non-EU Contracting Parties having Emerald Network sites. Therefore, Parties such as Monaco which have not submitted Emerald Network sites are not yet included.

He stressed that the checklists will be used to assess the completeness of the reporting and that Parties should therefore carefully review them to ensure they only include features which occur on their respective territories.

Based on the draft checklists presented, 1962 reports on species and approximately 230 reports on habitats would be expected. The breakdown of the reports per species group and per country can be seen in the tables below.

The members of the Working Group acknowledged that the size of countries, and the number of biogeographical regions within countries significantly influence the number of reports. There are considerable differences between Parties and the capacity of the most impacted Parties needs to be taken into consideration. To reduce the reporting burden, these Parties might report a deficiency of data for a number of features.

The Working Group requested Contracting Parties to review their draft checklists by the end of January 2024.

**Table 1: Number of species reports expected according to the draft checklist per Contracting Party**

country	Amphibians	Fish	Invertebrates	Mammals	Plants	Reptiles	Total
AD			3	6	1	1	11
AL	6	28	38	30	10	14	126
AM		8	13	31	12	9	73
AZ	2	10	19	42	22	15	110
BA	11	42	58	43	25	10	189
CH	6	17	24	11	16	1	75
GE	2	12	24	46	22	11	117
IS		1		6	3		10
LI	2	2	10	9	7		30
MD	5	31	40	25	24	5	130
ME	4	31	29	32	19	10	125
MK	5	27	42	29	10	12	125
NO	2	15	30	27	89		163
RS	10	51	89	40	54	7	251
UA	17	79	122	63	92	7	380
UK	1	8	12	11	14	1	47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>1962</b>

**Table 2: Number of habitat reports expected according to the draft checklist per Contracting Party**

country	BC-EU	Habitats Number of Records	BC Habitats 1:1 Number of Reports	EU Habitats 1:1 Number of Reports
AD	BC	31	2	
AL	BC	108	15	
AM	BC	111	13	
AZ	BC	150	17	
BA	BC	152	23	
BA	EU	133		20
CH	BC	76	4	
GE	BC	157	22	
IS	BC	37	6	
LI	BC	54	4	
MD	BC	68	8	
ME	BC	146	25	
ME	EU	128		21
MK	BC	107	15	
NO	BC	85	21	
RS	EU	105		15
UA	BC	256	21	
UK	BC	85	13	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>209</b>	<b>56</b>

The subsequent discussion was structured along the following headings:

➤ **Marine regions, species and habitats**

In principle, reports on features present in the Marine Regions as adopted by 38<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee (see the [map of Marine Regions](#)) are expected to be submitted. The UK and Norway are however the only Parties with features listed against marine biogeographic regions, although some other Parties have marine species listed against their terrestrial regions.

Because Parties are reporting on marine features within the frame of other Conventions or because data on marine features are the responsibility of other departments than the ministry in charge of environmental matters, members of the Working Group were overall in favour of excluding marine species and habitats from the checklists. Nevertheless, some Parties such as Monaco, might have significantly more data available for marine than for terrestrial features. Furthermore, considering that EU Member States surrounding Monaco would report on marine features, there could be some benefit from Monaco including marine features in its checklists.

The Working Group supported that, as a principle, marine features would not be included in the checklists but that Parties could decide to report on marine features on a voluntary basis. The checklists would need to be adjusted accordingly.

➤ **Species subject to reservations**

The Working Group acknowledged that when reservations exist, Parties do not have conservation obligations towards the species concerned. Nevertheless, it would be sensible to assess through the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) whether these species require conservation measures to be implemented or not. Therefore, the Working Group supported that Parties are *invited* to report on species subject to reservations.

➤ **Species marked with (#)**

Species marked with (#) in Resolution No. 6 (1998) do not require specific habitat protection measures because they are considered as common in a number of Parties. In other words, Parties having marked species with (#) are not required to designate Emerald Network sites for the species concerned.

The Working Group acknowledged that the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) had a broader scope than the Emerald Network and aimed to assess the national resources. Therefore, the Working Group supported that species marked with (#) should be included in the checklists.

**5. State of preparation of the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and status of ReportNet 3**

The representative of the European Topic Centre for Biodiversity and Ecosystems (ETC/BE), Ms Rafaella Canessa Mesías, informed members of the Working Group of state of play of the preparation of the reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive.

She stressed that the reporting format, the explanatory notes and guidelines, the list of conservation measures and the list of pressures and threats had already been reviewed by EU Member States and were available from the [Reference portal for reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive](#). Further resources were still in preparation such as Population units and Checklists of species and habitats.

The reporting mechanism was also in development. It was expected to be tested, finalised and made available to EU Member States by the end of 2024. The delivery deadline of the reports under Article 17 is set as 31 July 2025.

The representative of the European Environment Agency (EEA), Ms Eleni Tryfon, informed members of the Working Group of the major changes to the reporting format and of the rationale behind the changes. Both are summarised in the table below.

Change	Reason for the change	Nature of the change / intention
General reporting format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Addition of success stories</li> <li>➤ Deletion of the section on Natura 2000</li> <li>➤ Deletion of the section on plans and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Avoid loss of information during the aggregation of data</li> <li>➤ Avoid duplication of reported data</li> <li>➤ Avoid duplication of reported data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Showcase successful conservation efforts</li> <li>➤ Streamline the reporting</li> <li>➤ Streamline the reporting</li> </ul>
Short-term trend magnitude	Harmonisation with the bird populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Measure the extent of change</li> <li>➤ Ranges are provided in case a value is unknown</li> </ul>
Favourable reference values	Lack of accuracy of operators used in the past (>, >>, <)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Important information for the conservation status</li> <li>➤ Ranges are provided in case a precise favourable reference value is unknown</li> </ul>
Population size units of species	The 1x1 km grid used in the past gave limited information on the population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Populations of vertebrates will be measured by individuals.</li> <li>➤ Populations of vascular plants will be measured either by individuals, m<sup>2</sup> or 1x1 km grids.</li> </ul>
Pressures and threats	Difficulty to interpret the ranking in the pressures and threats used in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Important information for the conservation status</li> <li>➤ Report up to 20 pressures as in the past</li> <li>➤ Focus on pressures (not on threats anymore)</li> <li>➤ Assessment of the scope and influence of pressures</li> </ul>

## 6. Reporting format

The consultant, Mr Marc Roekaerts, introduced the draft reporting format (document T-PVS/PA(2023)04). He stressed that the reporting format was grounded on the format used for the 2019 reporting cycle amended so as to reflect the changes in the format of the reporting under Article 17 of EU Habitats Directive. He also stressed that all the sections concerning birds had been deleted.

He drew the attention of the members of Working Group to the simplifications resulting from the revision of the format of the reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive to avoid the duplication of data collection and to some fields such as “change and reason for change” which would not apply to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) as no baseline had yet been set.

The subsequent discussion was structured along the following headings:

➤ **General Reporting format**

The Working Group welcomed the simplifications and changes imported from the revised format of the reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive. Members supported the further deletion of the sections 2.8 to 2.12 as well.

➤ **Favourable Reference Values**

While the Working Group took note of the replacement of the operators by pre-defined ranges to set favourable reference values needed for assessing the conservation status, members questioned the availability of the data to set numbers, though it will be possible to record the quality of the data.

➤ **Range when the Convention came into force**

The Working Group discussed several options namely the date the Convention entered into force for Parties, the date of adoption of Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) and the date of adoption of Resolution No. 8 (2012). In the end, members of the Working Group supported to consider 2012 as reference date.

➤ **Species population reporting units**

Members of the Working Group expressed their concern regarding the replacement of the 1x1 km grid reporting unit by individuals to measure the populations of vertebrates. They appreciated the possibility to use another reporting unit (field “additional population size”) in case individuals were unknown, and also noted that lack of information on number of individuals would not be a blocker to report submission.

➤ **Percentages estimates for trends**

The Working Group took note of the pre-defined ranges for defining the short-term trend magnitude and appreciated the possibility to report “unknown”. Members of the Working Group acknowledged the need for guidelines.

➤ **Pressures and threats**

The Working Group took note of the changes for reporting on the Pressures and threats. Some members expressed concern regarding the availability of data and would prefer that the fields were optional. Others supported the new way pressures and threats would be reported. The Working Group acknowledged the different perspectives and that reporting on pressures and threats would need considerable attention by Parties.

➤ **Invasive Alien Species**

The format of the reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive included a section on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and referred to a list of IAS of Union concern. The Working Group discussed whether the creation of a list of IAS for non-EU Bern Convention Parties should be considered for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012). Members of the Working Group noted the long development needed for the list of IAS of Union concern and agreed to ask for the advice of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species under the Bern Convention.

➤ **Next Steps**

Further discussion of validation rules and whether fields are optional or mandatory will be needed in the next meeting. Looking further forward, Parties were supportive of having training sessions on how to use the online reporting tool.

**7. Election of the Chair**

Following the resignation of Mr James Williams (United Kingdom) from the position of the Chair, the members of the Working Group elected Ms Salome Nozadze (Georgia) as Chair of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting as from 2024.

**8. Any other business**

The Secretariat informed that the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group was provisionally scheduled online on 30 April 2024 and that a 6<sup>th</sup> meeting was planned later in the autumn 2024. The Chair invited members of the Working Group to already save the date in their calendars.

**9. Conclusions of the meeting**

The Chair thanked the participants for their constructive inputs and closed the meeting. Members of the Working Group thanked the outgoing Chair for his dedication and leadership.

## Appendix 1 – Agenda

		Documents	Expected results
<b>Thursday 9 November 2023</b>			
<b>10.00</b>	<b>1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair</b>		
	<b>2. Adoption of the agenda</b>	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2023)18  <b>For adoption</b>	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	<b>3. Conclusions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting and objectives of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting</b>  <i>Presentation by the Chair</i>  <i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are reminded of the outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group and informed of the expected objectives of the meeting.</i>	Report of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting T-PVS/PA(2023)03  <b>For information</b>	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group take note of the state of play of the discussions and of the objectives of the meeting.
	<b>4. Checklists of species and habitats</b>  <i>Presentation by Otars Opermanis / Marc Roekaerts</i>  <i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are invited to exchange views on the draft checklists of species and habitats to be reported on and to advise the Secretariat on follow up work.</i>	Draft Checklists of species and habitats (Excel folder)  <b>For discussion and decision</b>	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group agree on the changes to be reflected in the checklists of species and habitats and provide the Secretariat with guidance for finalising them.



	<p><b>5. State of preparation of the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and status of ReportNet 3</b></p> <p><i>Presentation by the EEA or ETC/BE</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are informed of state of progress of the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and of the ReportNet 3 platform</i></p>	<p><b>For information</b></p>	<p>Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group take note of the state of progress of the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and of the ReportNet 3 platform.</p>
	<p><b>6. Reporting format</b></p> <p><i>Presentation by Otars Opermanis / Marc Roekaerts</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are informed of the changes reflected in the reporting format considered for the EU reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and invited to exchange views on the consequences of these changes on the format of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)</i></p>	<p>Reporting format T-PVS/PA(2023)04</p> <p><b>For discussion and decision</b></p>	<p>Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting agree on changes to be reflected in the reporting format considered for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and provide the Secretariat with guidance for updating the format.</p>
	<p><b>7. Election of the Chair</b></p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Following the resignation of the current Chair, members of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting are invited to elect a new Chair.</i></p>	<p><b>For decision</b></p>	<p>Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting elect a new Chair.</p>
	<p><b>8. Any other business</b></p>		
	<p><b>9. Conclusions of the meeting</b></p>		

<b>15.00</b>	<i>Thursday 9 November 2023</i> <b>End of the meeting</b>
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**Appendix 2 – List of participants**

<b><i>Contracting Parties</i></b>	<b><i>Focal Point</i></b>
<b>ALBANIA / ALBANIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Klodiana MARIKA</b>  Director of Nature and Forests  Ministry of Tourism and Environment  Directorate of Development Programs on Environment  Boulevard "Deshmoret e Kornbit", No.1  100 I Tirana, Albania</p> <p><b>Ms. Edit VARDHAMI</b>  Expert on biodiversity  Ministry of Tourism and Environment  Boulevard "Deshmoret e Kornbit", No.1  100 I Tirana, Albania</p>
<b>ARMENIA / ARMÉNIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Tatevik ZUERKER</b>  Advisor/Coordinator of Separate Functions at  Structural Subdivisions  Ministry of Environment  Government House 3  0010 Yerevan  Armenia</p>
<b>GEORGIA / GÉORGIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Salome NOZADZE</b>  Third Category Senior Specialist  Biodiversity and Forest Department  Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture  6 Marshal Gelovani avenue  0159 Tbilisi / Georgia</p>
<b>MONACO / MONACO</b>	<p><b>Mrs Astrid CLAUDEL-RUSOIN</b>  Head of section at the Environment Office</p>
<b>NORWAY / NORVÈGE</b>	<p><b>Mr Endre GRÜNER OFSTAD</b>  Norwegian Environment Agency  Nature Management Department (LAL)  Threatened Biodiversity Section (LTR)</p>
<b>SERBIA / SERBIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Snezana PROKIC</b>  Ministry for Environmental Protection  Omladinskih brigada 1, SIV III  11070 New Belgrade / Serbia</p> <p><b>Mr Ivan MEDENICA</b>  Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia</p>
<b>SWITZERLAND / SUISSE</b>	<p><b>Ms Danielle HOFMANN</b>  Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and  Communications (DETEC)  Species, Ecosystems, Landscapes Division  Worbentalstrasse 68, CH-3063 Ittigen,  Bern / Switzerland</p>

<p><b>UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Sarah SCOTT</b> Senior International Biodiversity Adviser Joint Nature Conservation Committee Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA United Kingdom</p> <p><b>Ms Kerry VITALIS</b> Protected Sites Team Natural Environment, Trees &amp; Landscape (NETL) Directorate Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF United Kingdom</p> <p><b>Mr James WILLIAMS</b> UK Scientific Councillor for the Convention on Migratory Species Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2 East Station Road, Fletton Quays, Peterborough, PE2 8YY United Kingdom</p>
<p><b>Partner Organisations</b></p>	<p><b>Contact person</b></p>
<p><b>EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Eleni TRYFON</b></p>
<p><b>EUROPEAN TOPIC CENTRE ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Rafaella CANESSA MESÍAS</b> Martin Luther University of Halle / iDiv Centre</p>
<p><b>Experts</b></p>	
	<p><b>Mr Otars OPERMANIS</b></p> <p><b>Mr Marc ROEKAERTS</b></p>
<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>	
	<p><b>Mr Mikaël POUTIERS</b></p> <p><b>Mr Marc HORY</b></p>