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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

40th meeting
Strasbourg, 30 November - 4 December 2020

**PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET OF THE
BERN CONVENTION FOR 2021**

*Document prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Participation*

Table of contents

I. Procedure for the adoption of the Council of Europe Biennial “Programme and Budget”	- 3 -
II. The Bern Convention Programme of activities and budget within the Council of Europe’s Biennial “Programme and Budget”	- 3 -
III. Draft Bern Convention Programme of activities for 2021	- 3 -
1. Statutory bodies (Standing Committee and Bureau).....	- 4 -
2. Monitoring of obligations	- 4 -
3. Standard setting.....	- 5 -
4. Assistance to Parties and coordination of the implementation of legal provisions and past Recommendations	- 5 -
5. Education and awareness-raising	- 5 -
6. Staff.....	- 5 -
IV. Budget Year 2021	- 6 -

I. Procedure for the adoption of the Council of Europe Biennial “Programme and Budget”

Since 2011 the Council of Europe follows two consecutive financial years, called the “biennium”. The Council of Europe “Programme and Budget” presents for each financial year of the biennium the General Budget (including the “Ordinary Budget¹”), and the budgets of the Partial and Enlarged Agreements.

The Committee of Ministers examines the proposal of activities submitted by the Secretary General, including a progress review of the previous and on-going years, as well as the strategic priorities identified for the two forthcoming years (Y1-Y2), together with their budgetary implications.

During the whole process, the proposal is also screened by the Committee of Ministers’ Budget Committee, as well as by an Internal Auditor responsible for evaluating and contributing to the improvement of risk management, control, and governance processes, and by an External Auditor. The latter is appointed by the Committee of Ministers with the task of, inter alia, certifying the annual financial statements and the budgetary management accounts of the Organisation, making observations with respect to the economy efficiency and effectiveness of the financial procedures. The adoption of the “Programme and Budget” by the Committee of Ministers is generally expected by the end of November.

The “Programme and Budget” includes:

- ⇒ the programme of activities for the biennium,
- ⇒ the budget for year N,
- ⇒ the provisional budget for year N+1.

During year N, until 1st November, the member states and the Secretary General may request the re-opening of the debate on the budget for year N+1 so to adjust its programme when necessary in response to political priorities. If no such request is made, the Committee of Ministers takes the decision to approve the budget.

II. The Bern Convention Programme of activities and budget within the Council of Europe’s Biennial “Programme and Budget”

The Bern Convention adapted to the requirements of the Council of Europe biennial programme and budget to ensure the efficient implementation of its own Programme of Activities as well as budgetary discipline.

It should be noted that the draft Programme of Activities for the Bern Convention, to be adopted at the Standing Committee meeting preceding the Year N of the Programme, is prepared and examined by the Bureau before the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget. The amounts presented to the Standing Committee are therefore forecasts and take into account both the expected provision allocated to the Bern Convention via the Ordinary Budget as well as the estimated voluntary contributions to be received from countries.

III. Draft Bern Convention Programme of activities for 2021

¹ The Ordinary budget derives from the contributions of Contracting Parties. The calculation of the scales of Member States’ contributions is effected using the average of the data on annual population and GDP (Gross Domestic Product, converted to US dollars) of each MS in respect of the three-year period ending 24 months before the date of entry into force of the scale. In the calculation, the weighting to be given to data on GDP shall be 5 times the weighting to be given to the data on population. In 2013, the Committee of Ministers further adopted CM Resolution (2013)7 concerning “Financial arrangements for the participation of non-member States in Council of Europe conventions”, according to which non-member states should contribute to the costs related to the functioning and operation of Council of Europe’s Convention with monitoring mechanism to which they are Party.

The Bern Convention functions by way of a triangular work mechanism composed of (1) monitoring of obligations, (2) standard setting and (3) assistance to Parties. All activities and initiatives implemented by the Convention are proposed by the Bureau to the Convention, adopted by the Standing Committee and implemented by the Secretariat under the coordination of the Bureau.

Drawing on the experience of 2020 and anticipating a persistence of the pandemic and the impossibility to organise physical meetings, an additional column foreseeing alternative activities was added to the budget breakdown.

1. Statutory bodies (Standing Committee and Bureau)

This heading includes the meetings of the statutory bodies of the Bern Convention. The Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, whose existence is foreseen in Article 13 of the Convention for enabling parties to meet regularly to develop common and co-ordinated programmes, is the body composed of the representatives of Parties. It has much of the responsibility for the functioning and monitoring of the Convention and meets once a year. The Rules of procedure of the Standing Committee are available in document T-PVS/Inf(2013)06.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee takes administrative and organisational decisions in between meetings of the Standing Committee. It includes the Chair of the Standing Committee, the Vice-chair, the previous Chair, and two additional Bureau members, and is assisted by the Secretariat.

2. Monitoring of obligations

2.1 Monitoring of the implementation of legal aspects

Activities implemented under this heading concern mainly the only compulsory reporting under the terms of the Bern Convention - the so-called “biennial reporting”. All Parties making exceptions to the provisions of the Convention, in compliance with the strict terms and conditions spelt out in Article 9 must submit their reports to the Secretariat every two years. These reports must contain a scientific assessment of the impact of such exceptions to the general obligation to protect the species and habitats covered by the Convention. The biennial reports are presented each year to the Standing Committee for examination, after being submitted under the Bern Convention ORS tool or the Habides + tool of EU member states parties to the Convention.

Under this heading, the Convention manages the “general reports” submitted by parties every four years on the national implementation of the Convention, as well as the general reviews of the implementation of the Convention in a Contracting Party which are regularly commissioned by the Standing Committee.

2.2 Monitoring of specific sites and populations

Activities under this heading concern the monitoring of the implementation of obligations by Parties by examination of cases dealt within the framework of the Bern Convention’s case-file system and of the European Diploma for Protected Areas of the Council of Europe. They may also concern emergencies in the eventuality of a grave ecological damage as a result of a catastrophe, an accident or a conflict situation.

2.3 Maintenance and update of the Online Reporting System (ORS)

To address the technical bugs of the Online Reporting System, a maintenance contract is being negotiated with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP/WCMC)

2.4 Creation of a dashboard for the case file system

As part of a wider rethinking of the monitoring of the implementation of the Bern Convention, a new webpage for the case file system is planned to be initiated in order to facilitate its follow-up.

3. Standard setting

3.1 Conservation of species

Activities under this heading aim at assessing the conservation status of populations of species listed in the appendices to the Convention and identifying species at risk with the aim of supporting the development of models and tools to counteract conservation challenges, common management standards, action plans, various strategic policy documents, etc.

This work is achieved with the support of the relevant Groups of Experts set up under the Convention to monitor and guide the implementation of both the Treaty and the Recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee, including review of past Action Plans, Strategies and Guidance documents.

3.2 Conservation of natural habitats

Activities under this heading aim at ensuring the conservation of natural habitats and the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention, as well as of Resolutions No. 1 (1989), No. 3 (1996), No. 4 (1996), No. 5 (1998), No. 6 (1998) and Recommendations No. 14 (1989), No. 15 (1989) and No. 16 (1989) of the Standing Committee. The setting-up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) in Europe is the main objectives of the Convention's work in this field.

4. Assistance to Parties and coordination of the implementation of legal provisions and past Recommendations

Activities under this heading consist of assistance to Parties in the implementation of their obligations through capacity building or trainings. Activities also include the coordination of the implementation of Action Plans, Strategic or guidance documents. Projects aiming at supporting the setting-up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) in Europe are also included here.

The 2021 programme of activities also foresees a possible joint EU/CoE Programme for the coordination of the Pan-European Action Plan on the conservation of the Sturgeon.

5. Education and awareness-raising

Article 3 of the Convention sets out the general obligation for each Contracting party to take action individually, with respect to the conservation of wild flora and fauna and all natural habitats in general, by for instance promoting national conservation policies as well as education and information. Through the activities planned under this heading, the Convention provides assistance to Parties in communicating on the biodiversity advantage and benefits and develops awareness-raising campaigns and materials, as well as online platforms for facilitating access to information on progress in the setting-up of the Emerald Network.

6. Staff

The Bern Convention's Secretariat is charged with the overall coordination and implementation of the Programme of activities, under the supervision and guidance of the Bureau and the Standing Committee to the Convention.

IV. Budget Year 2021

In 2021, the Council of Europe's Ordinary Budget is expected to provide an approximate amount of € 237,000 to the Bern Convention. This amount corresponds to:

- 164,100 € for financing the programme of activities including overheads and
- 72,900 € for staff and pensions, which corresponds to the position of assistant to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention.

The Bern Convention Special Account will be used to cover expenses that are not covered by the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe. The activities that will not receive additional contributions will not or partially be implemented. The amount to be provided to the Bern Convention budget via voluntary contributions (Special Account) amounts to € 488 084,98 and corresponds to:

- 191 684.98 € for financing the programme of activities and
- 296 400 € for staff and pensions.

For the record, as from 2020, the funding of the position of the Secretary of the Bern Convention is no longer borne by the Council of Europe's Ordinary budget; it relies on the financial support of Contracting Parties.

Budget 2021						
Expenditure	# Units	Unit cost	Total cost	Total available from CoE BO allocation	Funds needed through VCs	Alternative activities in case of persistence of the pandemic
1. Statutory bodies			55 600,00	55 600,00	0,00	
Meeting of the Standing Committee (4 days)			45 600,00	45 600,00	0,00	
<i>Subsistence of Chair/Delegates/Experts (average: 24 experts*5 per diem). Chair + Countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia, Slovak Republic, North Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Morocco, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Senegal</i>	120,00	175,00	21 000,00	21 000,00	0,00	Hybrid / online meeting with interpretation
<i>Travel expenses of Chair/Delegates/Experts</i>	24,00	470,00	11 280,00	11 280,00	0,00	
<i>Interpretation Services</i>	6,00	2 220,00	13 320,00	13 320,00	0,00	
1st Meeting of the Bureau (1 day)			4 562,50	4 562,50	0,00	
<i>Subsistence of Bureau Members (5 experts*1,5 per diem)</i>	7,50	175,00	1 312,50	1 312,50	0,00	Online meeting + strengthening of the monitoring
<i>Travel expenses of Bureau Members (5 experts)</i>	5,00	650,00	3 250,00	3 250,00	0,00	

						of the Convention
2nd Meeting of the Bureau (1,5 days)			5 437,50	5 437,50	0,00	
<i>Subsistence of Bureau Members (5 experts*2,5 per diem)</i>	12,50	175,00	2 187,50	2 187,50	0,00	Online meeting + strengthenin g of the monitoring of the Convention
<i>Travel expenses of Bureau Members (5 experts)</i>	5,00	650,00	3 250,00	3 250,00	0,00	
2. Monitoring of obligations			63 382,50	25 000,00	38 382,50	
Group of Experts on the European Diploma for Protected Areas (EDPA) (1,5 days)			17 762,50	8 000,00	9 762,50	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	15,00	480,00	7 200,00	4 000,00	3 200,00	Online meeting + communicati on strategy for the EDPA
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (15 experts*2,5 per diem)</i>	37,50	175,00	6 562,50	4 000,00	2 562,50	
<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	1,00	4 000,00	4 000,00	0,00	4 000,00	
Monitoring of and advice on sites at risks (case file system and EDPA sites)			33 120,00	12 000,00	21 120,00	
<i>Travel experts</i>	24,00	480,00	11 520,00	4 000,00	7 520,00	Explore the feasibility to carry out virtual
<i>Subsistence experts</i>	72,00	175,00	12 600,00	4 000,00	8 600,00	

<i>Consultancy</i>	3,00	3 000,00	9 000,00	4 000,00	5 000,00	monitoring/a sessment visits
Maintenance and update of the ORS			7 500,00	0,00	7 500,00	
<i>Lumpsum</i>	1,00	7 500,00	7 500,00	0,00	7 500,00	N/A
Creation of a dashboard for the case file system			5 000,00	5 000,00	0,00	
<i>Lumpsum</i>	1,00	5 000,00	5 000,00	5 000,00	0,00	N/A
3. Standard setting (Groups of Experts)			98 157,50	43 000,00	55 157,50	
Group of Experts on Birds and Network of SFPs for IKB (2 days)			19 075,00	9 000,00	10 075,00	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	15,00	480,00	7 200,00	4 000,00	3 200,00	Online meeting + desk research
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (15 experts*3 per diem)</i>	45,00	175,00	7 875,00	4 000,00	3 875,00	
<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	1,00	4 000,00	4 000,00	1 000,00	3 000,00	
Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles (1,5 days)			27 175,00	9 000,00	18 175,00	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	10,00	480,00	4 800,00	4 000,00	800,00	Online meeting + desk research
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (15 experts*2,5 per diem)</i>	25,00	175,00	4 375,00	4 000,00	375,00	

<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	2,00	4 000,00	8 000,00	1 000,00	7 000,00	
<i>Initiation of an Action Plan on the conservation of marine turtles</i>	1,00	10 000,00	10 000,00	0,00	10 000,00	
Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species (1,5 days)			18 762,50	9 000,00	9 762,50	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	15,00	480,00	7 200,00	4 000,00	3 200,00	Online meeting + desk research
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (15 experts*2,5 per diem)</i>	37,50	175,00	6 562,50	4 000,00	2 562,50	
<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	1,00	5 000,00	5 000,00	1 000,00	4 000,00	
Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Climate Change (2,5 days)			19 075,00	9 000,00	10 075,00	
<i>Travel expenses of Chair/Delegates/Experts</i>	15,00	480,00	7 200,00	4 000,00	3 200,00	Online meeting + desk research
<i>Subsistence expenses of Chair/Delegates/Experts (15 experts*3 per diem)</i>	45,00	175,00	7 875,00	4 000,00	3 875,00	
<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	1,00	4 000,00	4 000,00	1 000,00	3 000,00	
Working Group on the development of a Vision / Strategic Plan 2021 - 2030 for the Bern Convention (2 x 2 days)			14 070,00	7 000,00	7 070,00	
<i>Travel experts of Chair/Delegates/Experts</i>	14,00	480,00	6 720,00	3 500,00	3 220,00	Online meeting + strengthenin

<i>Subsistence of Chair/Delegates/Experts</i>	42,00	175,00	7 350,00	3 500,00	3 850,00	g of the monitoring of the Convention such as national reports on the implementation of the Convention
Intersessional Working Group on Finances (3*1 day) - online meetings						
4. Assistance to Contracting Parties			47 945,00	2 500,00	45 445,00	
Emerald Network bilateral evaluation Seminar (1 day)			15 240,00	2 500,00	12 740,00	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	7,00	470,00	3 290,00		3 290,00	
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (7 experts*2 per diem)</i>	14,00	175,00	2 450,00		2 450,00	Online meeting
<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	2,00	4750,00	9 500,00	2 500,00	7 000,00	
Emerald biogeographic evaluation Seminar (2 days)			32 705,00	0,00	32 705,00	
<i>Travel expenses of Delegates/Experts</i>	14,00	470,00	6 580,00		6 580,00	Online meeting
<i>Subsistence of Delegates/Experts (14 experts*2,5 per diem)</i>	35,00	175,00	6 125,00		6 125,00	

<i>Consultancy/technical reports</i>	2,00	10 000,00	20 000,00		20 000,00	
Coordination of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan on the conservation of Sturgeons						
<i>Joint programme with the European Commission (tbc)</i>			600 000,00			
5. Education and awareness raising			40 000,00	20 000,00	20 000,00	
Awareness and visibility: communication strategy			40 000,00	20 000,00	20 000,00	
<i>Lumpsum (communication campaign and supports)</i>	1,00	20 000,00	20 000,00	10 000,00	10 000,00	N/A
<i>Development of on-line tools (Emerald Network Viewer update)</i>	1,00	20 000,00	20 000,00	10 000,00	10 000,00	
6. Official Journeys of staff			18 000,00	18 000,00	0,00	
<i>Travel and subsistence</i>	12,00	1 500,00	18 000,00	18 000,00	0,00	Further development of the Emerald Network dataflow
7. Provision for the Chair			5 000,00	0,00	5 000,00	
<i>Travel and subsistence expenses (lumpsum)</i>	1,00	5 000,00	5 000,00		5 000,00	

8. Overheads			27 699,98	0,00	27 699,98	
<i>Printing Internal</i>	110 000,00	0,03	3 300,00		3 300,00	In the case more desk research is carried out in replacement of meetings, the budget of overheads (in particular printing and translation costs) might increase accordingly
<i>Postage (lumpsum)</i>	1,00	400,00	400,00		400,00	
<i>Prepress (lumpsum)</i>	1,00	2 500,00	2 500,00		2 500,00	
<i>Translation Services</i>	636,00	33,81	21 499,98		21 499,98	
Sub-total operational costs (1 - 8)			347 284,98	164 100,00	191 684,98	
9. Staff costs*			369 300,00	72 900,00	296 400,00	
<i>Permanent staff</i>	lumpsum		60 200,00	60 200,00	0,00	N/A
<i>Pensions Permanent staff</i>	lumpsum		12 700,00	12 700,00	0,00	
<i>Fixed term contract (salary and pension) - position of Secretary of the Bern Convention</i>	12,00	9 000,00	108 000,00	0,00	108 000,00	
<i>Fixed term contract (salary and pension) - position of Emerald Network project manager</i>	12,00	7 300,00	87 600,00	0,00	87 600,00	
<i>Fixed term contract (salary and pension) - position of project assistant</i>	12,00	4 200,00	50 400,00	0,00	50 400,00	

<i>Temporary staff (salary and pension) - one ad-hoc support assistant</i>	12,00	4 200,00	50 400,00	0,00	50 400,00	
Grand total			725 084,98	237 000,00	488 084,98	