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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

38th meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2018

**PROPOSED ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNATURE OF THE
BERN CONVENTION (2019)**

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prepared by
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PROPOSED ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNATURE OF THE BERN CONVENTION (2019)

1. BACKGROUND

The 40th anniversary of the signature of the Convention will be celebrated in 2019.

Although the occasion should be clearly celebrated, in the current budgetary crisis facing the Convention, a moderate and careful planning of possible activities in relation to the anniversary is necessary.

A decision on celebratory activities should therefore take into account the outcomes of the discussion on the financial mechanism of the Bern Convention for 2019 and onwards [document T-PVS(2019)6].

2. PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR CELEBRATORY ACTIVITIES

On proposal from the Secretariat and with the agreement of the Bureau, the following options are suggested:

- **Option 1:**

Preparation of a dedicated brochure on the achievements of the Bern Convention in 40 years of existence, a revised celebratory logo of the Convention and the organisation of a dedicated purely celebratory event in conjunction with the 39th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention.

- **Option 2:**

In addition to activities planned under Option 1, the organisation of a separate event in 2019, supporting the definition of the role and expected contribution of the Bern Convention to the new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The event could aim at identifying the added value of the Convention, taking into account its past achievements and role at Pan-European level in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, underpinning the delivery of the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The planning of such an event can already start with the establishment of an informal ad-hoc working group composed of a small number of voluntary Parties, to be formed at the upcoming 38th Standing Committee meeting. The Ad-hoc Group will be charged to plan the event, discuss a possible venue, content and exact format of the event. A very short questionnaire can be prepared for Parties in advance to the event to enhance collective thinking.

The Bureau of the Convention has already advised that any future planning of the Convention's future work post-2020, should very clearly lead from the global dimension to the Pan-European dimension and remain as regional as possible. The three approaches to be considered for the planning of the Convention's post-2020 work should be (1) the scientific aspect, (2) the policy aspect and (3) the interface between both of them or how science can influence the policy and vice-versa.

- **Option 3:**

In addition to activities planned under Option 1, the organisation of a communication campaign, focusing on the importance of biodiversity conservation for human wellbeing, the contribution by the Convention to nature conservation (PAs Network, case-file system, innovation in terms of dealing with emerging issues such as IAS, etc.) and how it contributes to human rights' protection and to safeguard nature for the benefit of future generations.

3. HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON THE LINKS BETWEEN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Georgian Ambassador to the Council of Europe informed the Secretariat of the Convention on the decision of his authorities to include the issue of linking human rights and environment protection as one of the four priorities of the future Georgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe (November 2019-May 2020).

The Georgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe is thus planning the organisation of a High Level event on the issue of human rights and the right to a healthy environment, with a focus on the Council of Europe's treaties in the field, including the Bern Convention. The event will take place in Strasbourg at the beginning of 2020 (tentatively April 2020) and gather Ministers of Environment from all Council of Europe Member and Observer States.

The Bureau of the Convention already welcomed this initiative and stressed that the Bern Convention should use this opportunity to emphasise and raise-awareness on the particular importance of nature for human health, well-being and human rights in general.

This High Level event could be integrated in the planning of the celebratory events and activities planned under all Options presented above.

4. EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSION ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERN CONVENTION

The Standing Committee is invited to discuss the proposed options and to make a decision on the activities it agrees to see organised throughout 2019.