



Strasbourg, 30 March 2021  
[tpvs02e\_2021.docx]

**T-PVS(2021)02**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**WORKING GROUP  
ON DEVELOPING A VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN  
FOR THE BERN CONVENTION FOR THE PERIOD TO 2030**

**1<sup>st</sup> meeting** (*virtual*)

**Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, 1.30 pm – 5.30 pm (CET)**

---

**Meeting report**

**1. Tour de Table**

The Secretary of the Bern Convention opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and conducted a Tour de Table.

**2. Appointment of Chair**

**Mr Simon Mackown**, Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy, National Biodiversity and Ivory Team, Wildlife Division, Defra, United Kingdom (UK) and Focal Point of the UK to the Bern Convention offered his candidature. With no other candidates, and no objections, Mr Mackown was unanimously elected as Chair.

**3. Re-cap on the mandate for developing a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Convention and the objectives of the Working Group**

The Secretariat recalled the process of developing a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention which had begun in 2019, but initially been postponed by the 39<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee in order to take into account the outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) initially organised for 2020. What with this being postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 40<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee, in order to avoid further delays, had mandated this Working Group to initiate the process and present to the 41<sup>st</sup>

Standing Committee a draft Vision and Strategic Plan for possible adoption (Terms of Reference: [T-PVS/inf\(2020\)08rev](#)). Amongst other existing relevant instruments at the national, European and international level and policy documents developed/co-developed, adopted and implemented by the Bern Convention, the text should take into account the European Union (EU) Biodiversity Strategy adopted in 2020, as well as the eventual outcomes of the rescheduled CBD COP, now planned for October 2021. The timing of the latter could lead to a possible need to revise the proposed Bern vision and strategic plan after it is presented at the 41<sup>st</sup> Standing Committee.

The Secretariat also highlighted the required timeframe for the elaboration of the draft Vision and Strategic Plan. Following a query on the membership of the Working Group, it was confirmed that the mandate of the Group allowed for new members to join even after this first meeting.

#### **4. Summary of previous strategic orientations adopted under the Convention**

Mr Dave Pritchard, independent consultant for the drafting of the Vision and Strategic Plan, briefly recalled the previous strategic orientations which had been adopted by the Convention that had been provided to participants ahead of the meeting. He stressed that although several declarations and one Resolution had been elaborated in the past, nothing like the present planned Vision and Strategic Plan had ever been developed, nor had a comprehensive follow-up or assessment ever been done.

The Secretariat also updated the members on progress of the future financing mechanism for the Convention, a topic which was closely related to the work of this Group. The Intersessional Working Group on Finances had met on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, and a meeting of the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) had met on 18<sup>th</sup> March. While no final decisions had yet been taken, it would be important to follow developments of the financing situation in line with the work of this Group. Furthermore, momentum in the Council of Europe on environmental issues had reached a new peak with the inclusion in its four-year strategic priorities of environmental degradation and climate change for the first time - this momentum should be exploited.

During the discussion it was highlighted that the Bern Convention had been more closely involved with other major environmental agreements (MEAs) in the past, and that it was crucial to regain its place on the international agenda of environmental issues, even if it was only a regional treaty. What was different from the previous strategic orientations was the fact that global awareness of environmental issues and the biodiversity crisis was at an all-time high and increasing year on year, thus it was important that the Bern Convention find its niche amongst the many other organisations now addressing these issues, as well as to strengthen and create new synergies.

#### **5. Discussion**

Mr Pritchard presented the scoping document he had prepared for the meeting ([T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)09](#)) which, as well as containing chapters related to the previous agenda items, focused on the following three broad discussion points: the purpose of the Vision and Strategic Plan, possible approaches to its construction, and possible elements to include.

- **Purpose of the new Vision and Strategic Plan – what should it aim to achieve? What are the opportunities?**

During the discussion, it was highlighted that the Bern Convention was recognised for its dynamic, hands-on approach which featured concrete actions and results on the ground, especially with regard to its case-file and on-the-spot appraisal systems. This, as well as its unique approach of cooperating with all relevant stakeholders and providing a forum to civil society, set it apart from other conventions, and should be a retained and reinforced

approach for the future. The purpose of the Vision and Strategic Plan should be to strengthen the already-existing tools in place, rather than inventing many new ideas or instruments, especially as too many topics could lead to a dilution of tangible progress. In particular, stronger encouragement of Contracting Parties to implement recommendations and settle case-files was highlighted.

It was recalled that Articles 1 and 2 of the text of the Convention<sup>1</sup> already provide the overarching aims of the Convention, and should be the starting point for the Vision. However, further consideration will be needed on how treaty language (“conservation” and “maintaining populations”) will align with a vision that reflects the current global ambition for “recovery” and “restoration” (e.g. EU, CBD, UN decade on restoration). It was also important to distinguish between strategy and planning, as well as targets (what) and actions (how).

Furthermore, it was mentioned that the Vision and Strategic Plan should remain a stand-alone instrument, unique from other strategies, yet taking inspiration from and aligning to certain of their targets where relevant, i.e. the EU Biodiversity Strategy and CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Its purpose should be as a guiding tool for Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and the other active stakeholders, while also manifesting as a useful communication statement to be shared with other organisations. It should be accessible and assessable, and a final suggestion was that the Vision could align to the GBF timeline of a Vision to 2050, with milestone targets to 2030.

#### **– Possible approaches to the construction of the Vision and Strategic Plan**

During the discussion, several members proposed to draft the text in two parts, with the first part comprising a high-level political statement for the Vision - it was even suggested that, inspired by the CBD, Heads of State could be approached to sign this statement, thus making it a high-level commitment from Contracting Parties. The second part should comprise the Strategic Plan which would include the operational and technical targets and actions. It was also recommended to keep the overall text quite short and with simple, understandable language for all stakeholders. This simplicity should also imply an ease of assessment of the Strategy, as well as comparison with others, as these reporting exercises were a burden on the Contracting Parties - therefore a harmonisation with EU reporting was further suggested.

It was also proposed to initiate elaboration of the text from the Convention itself, then align it where possible with the CBD and EU texts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were also mentioned as an important benchmark globally, and thus the text should also find a way to align with these.

#### **– Possible elements for developing in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Vision and Strategic Plan**

The Secretariat presented visualisations of the working structure of the Bern Convention, and brief synopses of the CBD and EU strategies. A brainstorming exercise was then initiated, whereby members were invited to submit short statements on two aspects: current strengths of the Bern Convention and priorities to 2030. The general outcome of the exercise was that the current approach and tools of the Convention were still considered very relevant and should be reinforced to address more effectively the current and any future challenges within its mandate.

In particular, the case-file system, Emerald Network, and stakeholder involvement (forum, participatory approach) were recurring as key strengths. The same three elements appeared as future priorities along with strengthening monitoring and implementation (compliance system, better and systematic reporting), communication and visibility, synergies/collaboration with other organisations, interlinkage between biodiversity

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680078aff>

and other sectors, address climate change and nature-based solutions, restoration and recovery, linking with human rights (eco-system services), strengthening the European Diploma, species-specific action plans, whole government approach, ensure adequate financing for the Convention, keeping the appendices up-to-date, and alignment to EU approaches (while realising that not all Contracting Parties are EU member states). The full list of suggested strengths and priorities can be found in Appendix III.

## **6. Next steps**

Mr Pritchard presented the proposed next steps for the Working Group. The members agreed that it would be important to have a draft Vision before going into the details of the operational strategic plan, thus they suggested to separate slightly these two aspects. The consultant was thus mandated to work on a draft vision as well as a preliminary outline for the rest of the text (zero-draft) and to submit this to the Working Group by the end of April for online consultation.

It was furthermore suggested that, depending on the outline of the text and following the feedback of members, it could be envisaged to either narrow down the members into a Select Working Group, which would be charged with working more closely and actively with the consultant in further elaboration; or, to split into several sub-groups based on themes, for further elaboration. This expansion of the process could be dependent on the availabilities of the Chair, consultant and sub-group members and capacity of the Secretariat to facilitate extra meetings within the required timeframe. Nevertheless, the full Working Group should still meet for a second time in June/July as already planned. A revised roadmap can be found in Appendix II.

## **7. Any other business**

With no other business, the Chair thanked the participants for their active and fruitful participation, the consultant and Secretariat for their preparation of the meeting, and closed the meeting.

### Appendix I: List of Participants

Contracting Parties	Name and Function
Czech Republic	<p><b>Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ</b> Unit of International Conventions Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments Ministry of the Environment</p> <p><b>Mr Jan BROJÁČ</b> Ministry of the Environment</p> <p><b>Mr Jan PLESNIK</b> Nature Conservation Agency</p>
Estonia	<p><b>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI</b> Senior Officer Nature Conservation Department Ministry of the Environment</p>
Georgia	<p><b>Ms Mariam SULKHANISHVILI</b> Biodiversity and Forestry Department Biodiversity Division Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p>
Monaco	<p><b>Ms Céline VAN KLAVEREN - IMPAGLIAZZO</b> Chef de Division Département des Relations Extérieures et de la Coopération Ministère d'Etat</p>
Norway	<p><b>Mr Andreas SCHEI</b> Senior Advisor Norwegian Environment Agency</p>
Poland	<p><b>Ms Ewa PISARCZYK</b> Chief specialist Nature Management Department General Directorate for Environmental Protection</p>
Portugal	<p><b>Mr Mário REIS</b> Head of the Conservation and Monitoring Division (DCM) Department of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (DCNB) Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)</p> <p><b>Mr João TIAGO NUNES</b> Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)</p>
Slovenia	<p><b>Ms Katja VRTOVEC</b> Nature Conservation Division Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning</p>
Switzerland	<p><b>Mr Norbert BÄRLOCHER</b> Head of Rio Conventions (climate, biodiversity) International Affairs</p>

	Federal Office for the Environment
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Mr Emrah BOZKAYA</b> General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks Ministry of Agriculture and Forest
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Mr Simon MACKOWN</b> Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, Defra
<b>Observers</b>	<b>Name and Function</b>
<b>CEE Bankwatch Network</b>	<b>Mr Andrey RALEV</b> Biodiversity Campaigner Czech Republic
<b>EUROPARC Federation</b>	<b>Ms Carol RITCHIE</b> Executive Director Germany
<b>FACE European Federation for Hunting and Conservation</b>	<b>Ms Sabrina DIETZ</b> Wildlife Policy Officer Belgium  <b>Mr Matt ELLIS</b> Head of Science and Research at BASC
<b>IAF International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey</b>	<b>Mr Gary Timbrell</b> IAF CEO Belgium
<b>IENE Infra Eco Network Europe</b>	<b>Mr Tony SANGWINE</b> IENE Board member United Kingdom
<b>MEDASSET Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles</b>	<b>Ms Liza BOURA</b> Programmes Officer Greece
<b>Planta Europa</b>	<b>Ms Erika PENZESNE KONYA</b> Vice-Chair France
<b>Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth</b>	<b>Mr Friedrich WULF</b> Head, International Biodiversity Policy Switzerland
<b>Independent consultant</b>	<b>Name and Function</b>
	<b>Mr David E. Pritchard</b> United Kingdom

<b>Secretariat of the Council of Europe</b>	<b>Name and Function</b>
	<p><b>Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI</b> Head of the Biodiversity Division</p> <p><b>Ms Ursula STICKER</b> Secretary of the Bern Convention</p> <p><b>Mr Marc HORY</b> Bern Convention Project Manager</p> <p><b>Ms Nadia SAPORITO</b> Bern Convention Junior Project Officer</p> <p><b>Mr Eoghan KELLY</b> Bern Convention Project Assistant</p> <p><b>Ms Helena ORSULIC</b> Bern Convention Administrative Assistant</p>

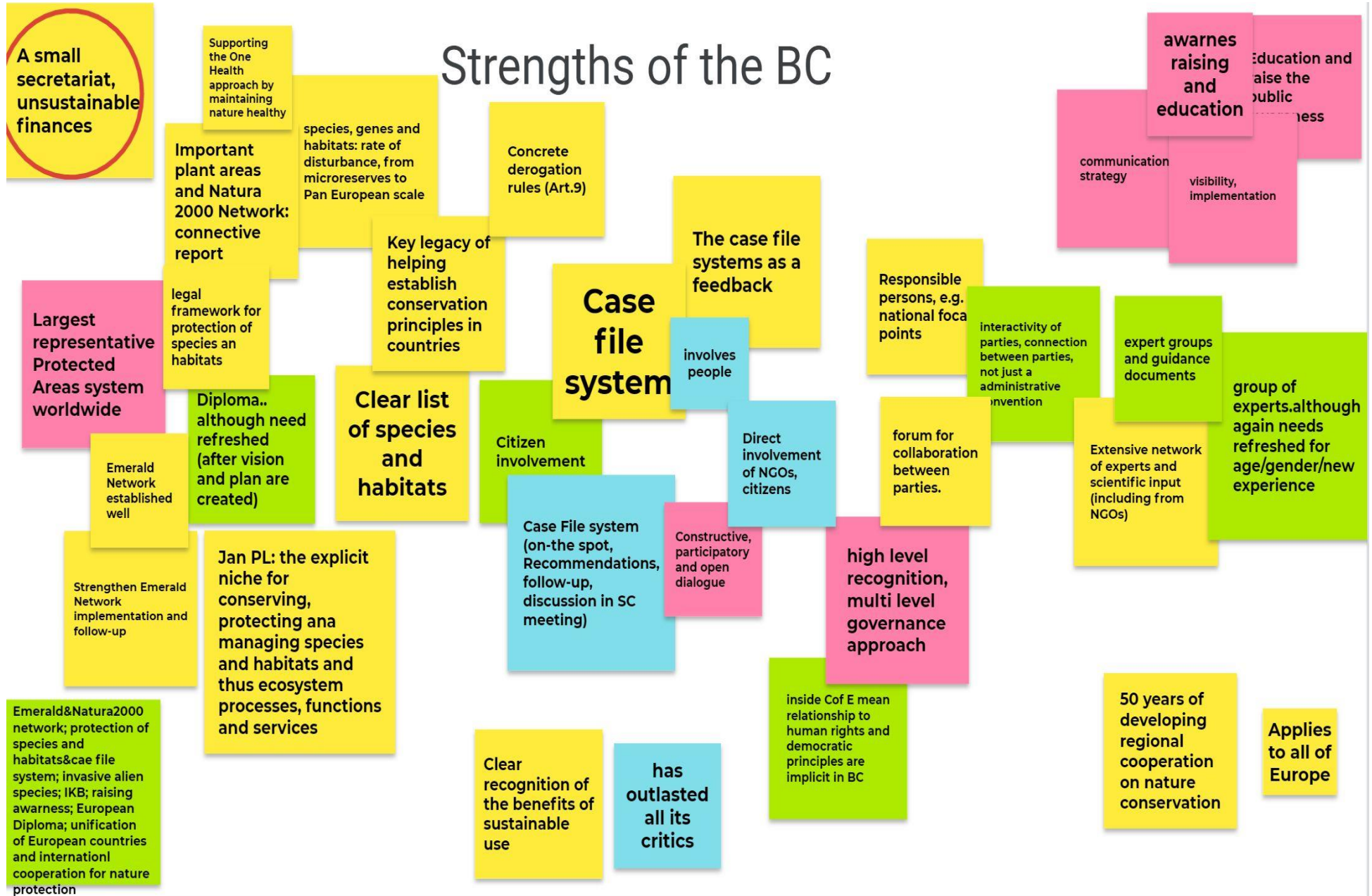
### Appendix II: Revised Roadmap

<b>Draft roadmap 2021 for the development of a draft vision &amp; strategic plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030</b>	
<b>1st meeting of working group</b> to define elements for the draft Vision and Strategic Plan	23 March (online)
<b>1st Bureau meeting:</b> Share first steps taken with members of the Bureau	14-15 April (online)
<b>Outline document including overarching draft “vision statement”</b> to be shared with all members by email	End April
Taking into account the outline text and feedback from members, <b>consider splitting into one or more sub-groups</b> for the development of the draft	May
<b>Develop 1<sup>st</sup> draft of Vision and Strategic Plan</b> taking into consideration the comments provided by the Working Group, Bureau and Secretariat	By early June
<b>2nd meeting of Working Group</b> to examine 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of Vision and Strategic Plan	By June (online, date tbc)
<b>Develop 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of Vision and Strategic Plan</b> taking into consideration the comments provided by the Working Group and Secretariat	By early August
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau meeting:</b> Share 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft of Vision and Strategic Plan with members of the Bureau	15-16 September (online, tbc)
<b>Integrate</b> comments of the Bureau and <b>finalise 2<sup>nd</sup> draft Vision and Strategic Plan</b>	<b>By mid-September</b>
Submit draft Vision and Strategic Plan for <b>translation into French</b>	By end of September
<b>Publish draft Vision and Strategic Plan</b> on webpage of 41 <sup>st</sup> Standing Committee	By 30 October
Present draft Vision and Strategic Plan at <b>41st Standing Committee</b> for discussion and possible adoption	30 November-3 December (online/hybrid/physical, tbc)
<b>Revise draft Vision and Strategic Plan</b> based on outcome of discussion at Standing Committee	By 2 December (or early 2022, depending on feedback provided by Standing Committee)
Should the post-2020 global biodiversity framework be adopted during/after the 41 <sup>st</sup> Standing Committee: review and, if necessary, revise the proposed Vision and Strategic Plan after the Standing Committee.	Early 2022



### Appendix III: Results of members' brainstorming session

# Strengths of the BC





# Priorities to 2030

