



Strasbourg, 5th October 2018
[pa17e_2018.doc]

T-PVS/PA (2018) 17

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks

9th meeting
4-5 October 2018

**REPORTS BY THE COUNTRIES ON THE PROGRESS
AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE EMERALD NETWORK CALENDAR 2011-2020**

*Document prepared by
the Directorate for Democratic Participation*

Table of contents

1.	ANDORRA.....	- 3 -
2.	BELARUS	- 3 -
3.	GEORGIA.....	- 3 -
4.	ICELAND	- 5 -
5.	REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	- 5 -
6.	NORWAY.....	- 6 -
7.	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	- 6 -
8.	SWITZERLAND	- 7 -
9.	UKRAINE.....	- 8 -

1. ANDORRA

At the end of 2017 the Andorra's Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability has started conversations with the Secretariat of the Bern Convention about the possibility of including some Andorran natural protected sites in the Emerald Network, and send its GIS data for a first analysis of the quality and pertinence of those.

After seeing the validity of the data, during a meeting between the Secretariat, the Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability Minister of Andorra and technical staff of the ministry, the possibility of including two Andorran sites in the Emerald Network was validated. So on, the Ministry started conversations with the two local municipalities that are responsible of the conservation of the sites (Ordino and la Massana), with the collaboration of the Secretariat of the Bern Convention.

In August 2018, the Municipality of Ordino expressed officially his intention to present the "Parc natural comunal de la Vall de Sorteny" site as candidate for the Emerald Network.

In addition to this, the two municipalities signed in August, a convention of collaboration with the French regional natural park of l'Ariège and the Spanish one of Alt Pirineu català, resulting in one of the more extended of Europe, transboundary protected area.

2. BELARUS

As of the reporting date, the database of the Emerald Network sites of the Republic of Belarus includes 162 sites, 155 of them were approved as the Emerald Network sites at the 36th Standing Committee Meeting of the Bern Convention. The new seven sites were entered into the database in order to close the gaps on several species and habitats that were identified at the biogeographical workshops on the data assessment during 2015-2017.

In 2018 the representatives of the Republic of Belarus participated in two events organised with the support of the Secretariat of the Bern Convention of the Council of Europe, the European Environment Agency and the project on the Shared Environmental Information System, - in the First workshop on reporting under the Bern Convention (17-18 April 2018, Copenhagen) and the Biogeographical workshop on the assessment of the Emerald Network sites with the focus on birds (23-24 May 2018, Kiev). Based on the comments received during the biogeographical workshop, the information on ten additional sites has been prepared.

It is important to note that according to the results of the preliminary discussion of the inclusion of the mentioned additional Belarusian sites into the Emerald Network, the competent Belarusian specialists highlighted that the inclusion of fish farms into the Emerald Network must be approached carefully. These sites are not natural and due to the peculiarity of the economic activity attract a large number of migrating birds in certain periods of the year. At the present moment it is difficult to assess the negative and positive impacts of these farms on the conservation of such bird species, as well as to determine the necessary management measures on the part of these farms, hence specific studies of these facilities are needed to make further decisions. Moreover, it is important to take into account that these fish farms are located in rural areas, create jobs and play a significant role in terms of income level of the local population, that's why insufficiently considered limits setting for the economic activity implementation can have a negative impact.

At the same time, according to the data of the specialists from the relevant institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, currently it is difficult to determine other, natural sites for inclusion into the Emerald Network in order to follow the comments received during the mentioned workshop.

Based on the above-mentioned, our country needs consultative and financing support to carry out additional field and analytical studies regarding the sites being considered for inclusion into the Emerald Network, as well as to develop efficient management measures for such sites.

3. GEORGIA

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia would like to inform you about great effort of the Government of Georgia in terms of active engagement into the Emerald Network development process.

Taking into account the great importance of the subject we would like to provide information regarding the progress in implementation of document: T-PVS/PA(2015)16 "Revised calendar for the implementation

of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest 2011-2020”.

➤ **Finalize the designation of Emerald sites in the whole Pan-European area, as well as in participating African countries.**

Ministry of Environment and Agriculture of Georgia decided to nominate approximately 35 Emerald Sites for final designation by the 38th Standing Committee meeting, which will be held in November 2018, in Strasbourg, France. 28 of these territories have status of candidate sites, including 3 compensatory sites, 7 out of them are proposed territories. For other 20 sites (7 candidate and 13 proposed sites) additional scientific studies are needed, therefore, the Ministry is working to generate funds for the abovementioned studies.

➤ **Assessment of the adequacy of the Bern Convention’s Appendices and Resolutions No. 4 and No. 6**

The adequacy of Bern Convention appendices and Resolutions No.4 and No.6 have been evaluated. The framework and policy apply to Georgia, however we have selected number of species that do not require strict conservation and had been agreed on exceptions of several species: *Ursus arctos*, *Coracias garrulous*, *Lanius collurio*, *Melanocorypha calandra*, *Sterna hirundo* etc.;

➤ **First reporting exercise on the Emerald Network implementation for the period 2013-2019, as foreseen in Resolution No. 8 (2012)**

In order, to implement first reporting activities successfully, the Ministry has contracted academia for scientific research and assessment of 12 Bird species of Bern Convention according to Annex F - Reporting format on bird species listed in Resolution No. 6 (1998).

Second step towards successful reporting, which is in progress right now, is contracting Scientific Research Center (Nacres) for research work on 8 habitats from resolution No. 4 (1996) according to the document T-PVS/PA(2017)11.

In November 2017 during the Biogeographical Seminar, 3 compensatory sites were selected based on literature information only, the method of so called “umbrella species” was used while identifying the territories, *Ursus arctos*, *Lynx lynx* and *Lutra lutra* were selected as umbrella species. Unfortunately, the field studies weren’t held before now. In spring 2018 the Ministry asked the donor organization “GIZ” for financial support for the scientific studies of the species and habitats on the territories. In June 2018 “NACRES –Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and Research”, was contracted for the research on Samegrelo 2, Racha-Lechkhumi and Svaneti-Racha. The studies will be finalized by the end of August and Standard Data Forms will be updated accordingly. For this time GIS analysis and literature studies have been done for the habitats existing on abovementioned sites, after the field studies final maps of habitats will be available. After the report of the studies will be translated into English we will send it to the secretariat of the Bern Convention.

It is worth to mention that due to rising interest of stakeholders the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture requested GIZ to prepare the publication on the frequently asked questions regarding Emerald Network development; Georgian version has already been published and is available for stakeholders (English version will be published in near future). Due to the fact that the subject of impact assessment on Emerald Network is new for the country, as well as of infrastructure project developers, and thus as we don’t have any guidelines regarding this issue from the Bern Convention, the Ministry is unable to give the stakeholders exact methodology of the impact assessment. For this reason Ministry approached GIZ with the request to elaborate guideline for the “Assessment of impact on Emerald Network”. At the moment abovementioned document is being prepared (with coordination of the Ministry) and will be finalized by the end of 2018. These guidelines will be statutory act in future.

The Data Base is being updated according to the decisions of biogeographical seminar held in Tbilisi, November 2017.

“NACRES –Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and Research”, together with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture continues to work on the decisions of the biogeographical seminar and we assure you that most of the decisions and recommendations will be reflected on the Central Data Repository (CDR) by November 2018.

Herewith, I would like to provide statistics within Emerald Network. Currently, the total area of the Network is 1 285 974 ha - 18% of the total country area.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia is looking forwards to successful and fruitful cooperation with the Secretariat of Bern Convention towards the further development of the Emerald Network in Georgia.

4. ICELAND

1. In 2010 the Icelandic Institute of Natural History (IINH) published habitat type maps of some areas in the highland of Iceland. With funding from EU, that was later withdrawn, the mapping project continued in 2012 along with mapping of important bird areas. The mapping now covered the whole country, both lowland and highland areas. In 2016 and 2017 the IINH published two reports Fjölrit 54, Vistgerðir á Íslandi / Habitat types in Iceland, and Fjölrit 55, Mikilvæg fuglasvæði / Important Bird Areas, see http://utgafa.ni.is/fjolrit/Fjolrit_54.pdf and http://utgafa.ni.is/fjolrit/Fjolrit_55.pdf.

Along with the two publications web maps showing both the habitat types as well as important bird areas were made available, see <http://vistgerdakort.ni.is/>.

2. According to the Icelandic Nature Conservation Act no 60/2013 the IINH in April 2018 proposed to the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources that 112 sites (including land-, freshwater- and coastal habitat types and important bird areas, also including 6 geological sites) should be protected in a network of ecologically important sites. The proposals were mainly based on the two above publications, see <http://www.ni.is/midlun/naturuminjaskra> and web map <https://naturuminjaskra.ni.is/>. The proposed sites are now being processed by the Ministry, the Consulting Committee for the Nature Conservation Register and The Environment Agency of Iceland according to the Act on Nature Conservation.

3. The above proposed sites, when processed, should also be the foundation for official nomination of candidate Emerald Network sites.

4. All data (including GIS data) for the proposed sites is available. The main challenges in implementing Emerald Network in Iceland is lack of funding and manpower to carry out the basic work needed to fulfil obligations as described e.g. by Resolution No. 8 (2012).

5. REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

1. By the Law nr. 162 of 07.20.17 (MO352-355 / 09.29.17 art.588) were approved amendments to the Law on the vegetal kingdom nr. 239/2007 and the Law on the Ecological Network nr. 94/2007 and have been partially transposed the provisions of Council Directive 92/43 / EEC on the conservation of natural habitats, of wild fauna and flora.

The national legislation was supplemented with the notion of "Emerald Network" and legal regulations on its creation were established special powers to create the Emerald Network for the central environmental authority and scientific institutions.

The Law on the vegetal kingdom was supplemented with the list of plant species of national and international importance requiring protection and impose the establishment of a strict protection system for the plant species included in the Annexes to the Directive on Habitats and the Berne Convention and meeting on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, applying prohibitions at all stages of the biological development cycle of the targeted plant species. At the same time, for the purpose of recovering the damage caused by the destruction of the targeted species (rare, jeopardized, endangered) the payment for an exemplary calculated in conventional units was introduced.

2. In the Year of 2017 under the Emerald Network project a number of activities have been realized, including the following main achievements:

- Revised and improved the national database and reference information according the QA/QC report

- Follow-up of the evaluation results of the previous Biogeographic Seminars I 2015 and 2016:

a) revision and self-evaluation of plant and animal species and habitats from the Continental zone.

b) revision and self-evaluation of plant and animal species and habitats from the Steppe zone.

- Identified species distribution information: Total new Emerald species - 3 sp. of plants, 1 sp. of fishes, 9 sp. birds.

Total Emerald species from the lists identified and mapped: Total: 165 sp., including plant species – 14; total animal species: 151 sp.: mammals – 14sp. birds – 89sp. reptiles – 2sp. amphibians – 3sp, fish – 19 sp. invertebrates – 24sp.

Identified new sites: new 9 sites (6937 ha) – Sculeni-Prut (113 ha), Chioselia (307ha), Limanul Cahul-Etulia (577ha), Pohrebeni (998ha), Matrusanca-Orhei (128ha), Radoia (1430ha), Sector de stepa Vranesti (147ha), Dobrusa (3032ha), Viscauti (205ha), extension of Dubasarii Vechi (ext. of 471 ha). Total area –7408 ha.

The *total surface of the Emerald Network* in Moldova in 2017 is – 28248,9 ha/or 8,35% of the territory. Emerald habitats – 30; Total Emerald sites – 61.

Two Coordination meetings and one Skype conference with Mr. Marc. Roekaerts, international scientific expert and national consultants were organized to revise national database and new developments, GIS mapping and the status of species and habitats according the results of biogeographical seminars.

Ten field trips organized to the following raions: Cahul, Ungheni, Cantemir, Orhei, Sangerei, Soldanesti, Stefan Voda, Criuleni. The species with the status of Scientific reserve has been evaluated in the natural ecosystems.

6. NORWAY

Implementation of the Emerald Network

The 37th Standing Committee meeting in (December 2017) added 568 sites from Norway to the list of officially adopted Emerald sites. Another 138 sites remained on the list of officially nominated candidate Emerald sites. The Adopted and the Candidate sites combined, now makes up an extensive network of approximately 5164000 ha. Most of the area is terrestrial (app. 94 %).

In spite of its relatively large extent, the network is sufficient for only 37 species. Further evaluation on other relevant species and habitats is necessary. The further progress needs more planning nationally, but also discussion and agreement with the Secretariat about a realistic schedule.

The Nature Diversity Act protects each Emerald site in Norway. A comprehensive regime of management and measurement is therefore in place for each site. However, the implications of the network status on management, measurements, monitoring etc. need more discussion nationally. An adapted regime is under development.

Reporting exercise for species and habitats according to resolution no. 8 (2012)

Norway welcomes the series of workshops established by the Secretariat to facilitate the reporting exercise for the period 2013-2018. Our agency participated at the first workshop ([Copenhagen, 17-18 April](#)), and has the intention to join the next one as well ([Paris, 8-9 November](#)).

A national project is being setup these days, to support the reporting process. Experts on the relevant species and habitats will assist the necessary reporting tasks. Cooperation with neighbouring countries is under consideration, and if possible coordinated with the parallel reporting under EUs Habitat directive and the Bird directive.

7. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The year 2018 became sad for the Russian Emerald Team: our coordinator since 2008, IUCN Regional Councilor for Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia, Chair of the IUCN National Committee for Russia, Director of “Biologists for Nature Conservation” NGO, Dr. Rustam Sagitov left us on 19 August 2018. He was our leader until his last days, and we will continue the work, which he led.

The year 2017 was declared the Year of Protected Areas in Russia. Thus, we celebrated the centenary of the Barguzinsky Zapovednik (State Nature Reserve), the oldest existing one.

The Russian Geographical Society and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research have supported the project of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences on Mapping the Great Eurasian Natural Tract (GEANT). GEANT extends from the Pacific to Fenno-Scandia and we consider it as an important component of the PEEN embracing a lot of potential Emerald sites and providing Europe and North Eurasia with various ecosystem services. Under the mentioned project we have up-dated the Indicative Map of the Russian Ecological Network as a part of PEEN. At the same time, we have started an assessment of the coherence between the lists of species of European importance (the Resolution No 6)

and red lists in force in the entities of Russian Federation. We have presented the first results of this on-going project in several international scientific conferences.

Russian Government has established several Specially Protected Natural Areas (SPNA) of federal level, some of them improving previously nominated potential Emerald sites: in March 2017 - Sengileevskiy Gory National Park (RU7300135, RU7300138, RU7301471, RU7301528) in Ulyanovskaya Oblast'; in December 2017 – Vostok Finskogo Zaliva State Nature Reserve (9 aquatories with islands and archipelagoes in Baltic Sea, will be described as potential ASCI's) in Leningradskaya Oblast', Ladozhskie Shkhery NP (RU1000798) in Republic of Karelia, Vasiuganskiy SNR (Asian Russia, Novosibirskaya and Tomskaya Oblast's); in 2018 – Khibiny NP (RU5100181 and partly RU5100193) in Murmanskaya Oblast', as well as Lenskie Stolby NP and Novosibirskie Ostrova Federal Preserve (both in Asian Russia, Republic of Sakha-Yakutia).

Regional administrations have established about 80 SPNA's of regional level in 2017-2018. Several newly established SPNA's improve the protection on previously nominated potential ASCI's: in Chavash Republic (RU2100458), Ryazanskaya Oblast' (RU6201457, RU6201634, RU6201635), Tul'skaya Oblast' (RU7101261), Nenetskiy Autonomous Okrug (RU8300202, RU8301147, RU8301148, and partly RU8301149). Other newly established regional SPNA's will be assessed for possible nomination as potential ASCI's.

Regional environmental authorities and activists increase the protection of frequently visited pASCI's having no special ranger staff, through educational work with visitors as shown below:

- Committee for Natural Resources of Leningradskaya Oblast' and "Biologists for Nature Conservation" NGO organize excursions in several largest pASCI's in the region;
- non-governmental Administration of Zhuravlinaya Rodina Preserve manages more than 10 SPNA's unified in RU5000579 and RU5000580 pASCI's near Taldom and hosts visitors, while other NGOs and companies ensure tourist travels (administrations of Moskovskaya and Tverskaya Oblast's supported the project "Ecological train Moscow – Taldom");
- Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment of Tul'skaya Oblast' and local activists have organized the Malinovaya Zaseka ecological path in Yasnopolianskiy Les (RU7101260) and issued an audio guide available at izi.travel platform for download on mobile phone.

The construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline through the Kurgal'skiy Preserve (RU4700492) inevitably harms its nature, despite the measures taken. After pipeline completed, it is necessary to assess the changes that have occurred and develop measures to compensate them.

Representative of Russian Emerald Team has participated in the First workshop on reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) of the Bern Convention (17-18 April 2018, Copenhagen). We expect to prepare the first report on the Emerald Network implementation in time.

8. SWITZERLAND

After the adoption of the 37 Emerald sites of Switzerland in December 2012, we did not modified our Emerald databases. Yet, these 37 sites are not sufficient and we have to complete our Network.

We are currently working on two processes to do it:

The first process aim to add already existing protected areas to the Network. Those areas are all Biotopes of national importance and correspond to five types of habitats: the Raised and Transitional Bogs, the Fens, the Alluvial Sites, the Amphibian Spawning Areas and the Dry Meadows and Pastures. They represent more than 6000 objects protected by the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage. The responsibility of implementing their protection lays by the cantons. In order to announce them to the Bern Convention, a group of experts developed in 2017 a tool, which groups these small objects according to criteria such as proximity and biogeographical regions. The same experts are currently analysing the grouping in the light of management requirements.

Despite the addition of the Biotopes of national importance in our Network, the Network will not be sufficient to fulfil the requirements of the Bern convention. This is why a second process to identify new ASCI started. To do so, we used the software named Marxan that does spatial conservation prioritisation. We based our analysis not only on the Emerald species, which we only have 105, and Emerald habitats, but also on the Swiss National Priority Species that represent 3665 species of several groups of organism

inclusive mushrooms. This analysis is now finalised and we want to protect the ASCI identified. Because we cannot actually modify the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage in order to add a new type of Biotope of national importance, we encourage, also financially, the cantons to implement the result of our analyse and to protect the identified ASCI as Biotopes of cantonal importance. This process will allow to implement the identified ASCIs in the field (with management plans and contracts) by the cantons.

It is for the moment not clear when we will be able to modify our Bern convention's database to complete our Emerald network.

9. UKRAINE

Finalize the designation of Emerald sites in the whole Pan-European area, as well as in participating African countries

The database of the Emerald Network sites of Ukraine includes 271 sites on the area of 6.2 million hectares or about 10% of Ukraine territory. The 36th Standing Committee meeting (November 2016) added 271 sites from Ukraine to the list of officially adopted Emerald sites.

This network is not yet complete and needs to be expanded for protection flora and fauna species and natural habitats from Resolutions 6 (1998) i 4 (1996) identified on decisions of biogeographical seminars. Further research to identify new territories for protection of relevant species and habitats is necessary.

For this purpose, the public initiative "Emerald-Natura 2000 in Ukraine" developed the so-called "shadow list" of sites, which are proposed to be included in the Emerald Network in Ukraine. To date, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine has received proposals on 95 new sites with expected area of more than 2 million hectares.

In cooperation with public initiative "Emerald-Natura 2000 in Ukraine" and in consultation with national experts on flora and fauna protection, the Ministry is working on adding new data to database of the Emerald Network sites of Ukraine. This work is planned to finalize at the end of 2018.

According to the preliminary analysis, these proposals will ensure the sufficient network of Emerald sites for conservation of proximally 2/3 of flora and fauna species and natural habitats listed on Resolutions 6 (1998) i 4 (1996) that exist in Ukraine.

Consolidation of additional national and international resources in the following years is required to complete the Emerald Network in Ukraine.

Assessment of the adequacy of the Bern Convention's Appendices and Resolutions No. 4 and No. 6

The adequacy of Bern Convention appendices and Resolutions No.4 and No.6 has been evaluated.

The proposal from Ukraine on including "E1.13 Continental dry rocky steppic grasslands and dwarf scrub on chalk outcrops" was accepted in 2014.

In 2018 there were 4 proposals from Ukraine for habitats to be added to Resolution No. 4 (1996) submitted to Secretariat of Bern Convention namely:

Depressions (pody) of the Steppe zone;
Pine forests on chalk;
Pistacia mutica woodland;
Mud volcanoes.

Designation, management and monitoring of Emerald sites on national level

Most of officially adopted Emerald sites are protected and managed according national legislation as protected areas of different level and types. The new protected areas that designated and established or in the process of establishing during 2016 – 2018 also include territory of adopted Emerald sites.

The special rules for designation, management and monitoring of Emerald sites on the national level the draft of Law "On territory of Emerald Network" is developed for establishing:
<https://menr.gov.ua/projects/127/>

With support of EU-funded project "Support to Ukraine in approximation of the EU environmental acquis" were developed Management Plan for Emerald site UA0000077 "Pyriatynskyi National Nature Park". The Management Plan presentation is available on <http://env->

approx.org/images/documents/218/Emerald_obj_Pyr.pdf. English and Ukrainian versions of Management Plan will be published in near future and will be available on Ministry web-site.

First reporting exercise on the Emerald Network implementation for the period 2013-2019, as foreseen in Resolution No. 8 (2012)

In order to prepare first report under Res. 8 (2012) for 31 selected flora and fauna species and natural habitats, the Ministry has contracted the Institute of Ecology of Carpathian of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. This report will be prepared basing on documents and information of workshop organized by the Secretariat (Copenhagen, 17-18 April) until and of 2018.

On September 11-12, 2018, the seminar "Assessment of the status of conservation of fauna and flora and types of natural habitats in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats in Europe" was held at the premises of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine.