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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

39th meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2019

REPORT
10TH MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON PROTECTED AREAS AND
ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS
TRONDHEIM (NORWAY), 2 OCTOBER 2019

*Document prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Participation*

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The 10th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks was held in Trondheim (Norway), on 2 October 2019.

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- Take note of the report of the meeting of the Group of Experts;
- Welcome the state of preparation of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and strongly encourage Contracting Parties to deliver their reports by 31 December 2019;
- Take note of the decision of the Group of Experts to update the national designation types of protected areas by 29 February 2020;
- Take note of the agreement of the Group of Experts on a mechanism for adding features to Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) as described in the document [T-PVS/PA \(2019\)5](#);
- Thank the European Commission for the opportunity given to non-EU Contracting Parties to attend Networking Events within the frame of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process;
- Consider the proposals for the future activities supporting the setting-up of the Emerald Network when adopting its Programme of activities and budget for 2020-2021;
- Examine and, if appropriate, adopt the following documents:
 - the draft updated list of officially nominated candidate Emerald sites;
 - the draft updated list of officially adopted Emerald sites;
 - the draft Recommendation on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites (T-PVS/PA (2019)13)
 - the amendment of Resolution No. 4 (1996) so as to include Deep-sea rock and artificial hard substrata (A6.1) and Communities of deep-sea corals (A6.61) and to substitute Alpine acidocline Rhododendron heaths (F2.22) and Bruckenthalia heaths (F2.26) by Evergreen alpine and subalpine heath and scrub (F2.2).
 - the amendments proposed to the Interpretation Manual of Habitats ([T-PVS/PA \(2019\)8](#))
 - the draft recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest ([T-PVS/PA\(2019\)11](#))
 - the revised Recommendation No. 157 (2011) as presented in the document TPVS/PA (2019) 14

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair opened the 10th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks by welcoming the participants.

The Secretariat welcomed the participants and thanked the Norwegian Environment Agency for its kind invitation to host the meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix I. Upon the proposal of the Secretariat, the Group of Experts agreed to discuss under item 8 Any other business the revision of the [Recommendation No. 157 \(2011\)](#) on the Status of

Candidate Emerald sites and guidelines on the criteria for their nomination.

3. Mandate of the Group and decisions of the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention

The Secretariat recalled the main decisions taken at the 9th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks endorsed by the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention regarding the adoption of 1. a revised Annex I to Resolution No. 4 (1996) including four new habitats, 2. the amendment of the Interpretation Manual of Habitats, and 3. a delineation of Marine Region for the purpose of the sufficiency assessments within the frame of the Emerald Network and for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

4. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

4.a State of play of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

The Secretariat recalled that within the frame of the cooperation agreement with the European Environment Agency, two training workshops on reporting took place in Paris in November 2018 and May 2019. The workshops were attended respectively by 12 and 10 Contracting Parties.

The objective of the workshops was to familiarize Contracting Parties with the reporting format and its guidelines and to discuss concrete examples supplied by Contracting Parties. For the third workshop Contracting Parties were required to deliver 6 trial reports and the related distribution maps using the reporting tool launched in April 2019. ETC/BD experts showcased examples from the trial reports and from the distribution maps in order to raise the participants' attention to good practices and to issues which could be improved so as to ensure better quality of the data process and delivery in the future reports.

The Secretariat reminded the members of and Observers to the Group of Experts that the deadline for delivering the reports under Resolution No. 8 (2012) is set on 31 December 2019.

4.b Reporting tool

The Secretariat reminded the Group of Experts that the reporting tool was made available in April 2019 and that a revised version correcting some inconsistencies was published on the [Reporting Reference Portal](#) mid-September.

4.c Reporting Reference Portal

The Secretariat reminded the Group of Experts that a Reference Portal dedicated to the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) was launched at the meeting of Group of Experts in 2018. The Reference Portal is hosted on the website of the Bern Convention under the tab "monitoring". The portal brings together the reference texts, legal texts, guidance and technical resources to assist Parties in the reporting exercise such as the reporting guidelines, checklists for species, for habitats and proposal of population units, pan-European projection grids for the creation of the distribution maps etc....

The Portal is updated regularly pending the availability of new or revised documents.

The Group of Experts' attention was drawn on the availability since mid-September of the [delivery manual](#). The document describes step by step including screen shots how to run the reporting tool. It also devotes chapter 3 to the range tool and how to calculate the range with some concrete examples.

5. Development of the Emerald Network

5.a Consultation on the Guidance on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites

The concept of the “ecological character” of Emerald Network sites was introduced to the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in 2017 as there is actually a gap in the guidance of the Bern Convention. The Standing Committee at its 37th meeting welcomed the initiative as it aimed to support the implementation of existing provisions and gave the Secretariat the mandate to develop appropriate guidance describing the ecological character of Emerald Network sites and to review the Bern Convention case files that relate to the change of ecological character of Emerald Network sites with a view to identify successful responses and define good practices.

In 2018, 15 guidelines [T-PVS/PA \(2018\)13](#) were drafted and presented to the Group of Experts. Parties required more time to crosscheck the extent to which the guidelines can be put into practice in their respective context. In the meantime, Ukraine volunteered to pilot the guidance on a complaint related to an Emerald Network site and the Secretariat was mandated to assess the relevance of the guidance for backing up the decisions of the Bureau regarding complaints/case files related to Emerald Network sites.

To explicit the guidelines, the Secretariat prepared a flowchart [T-PVS/Inf \(2019\)3](#)

which presents a 5-step approach of what is prescribed by the 15 guidelines and what the authorities are expected to do. At every step, the flowchart points to a particular guidance number, to be consulted in the full document on ecological character.

Only two Contracting Parties provided feedback following the consultation: Norway and the European Union. Norway is rather cautious. While they find the guidelines useful, relevant and intuitive, their implementation would require a lot of resources at the level of their 700 Emerald Network sites.

The EU noted that the approach for Natura 2000 is more complex and that Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires a specific appropriate assessment looking at alternatives in the case of threats to Natura 2000 sites. Sites can only be deteriorated in the case of overriding public interests. The European Commission will therefore need to ensure that countries negotiating to join the EU will be aware that the provisions for Natura 2000 are stricter and they will need to do more than required for Emerald Network sites.

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts that the Bureau at its meeting on 9-10 September 2019 decided that in the light of the numerous complaints regarding Emerald Network sites received under the Bern Convention case-file system, the guidelines will be used as an assessment tool of the complaints and authorities concerned by the complaint will be required to report to the Bureau by using the guidelines and the flowchart.

In general, Contracting Parties found the flowchart very useful for implementing the guidelines even though all the 5 steps described in the flowchart cannot yet be fully implemented. Several Parties raised their concern regarding additional reporting obligations which could result from the implementation of the guidelines.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

In the light of the decision of the Bureau, the members of and Observers to the Group of Experts mandated the Secretariat to draft a recommendation inviting Contracting Parties to make use of the Guidance on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites and instructing the Bureau and the Secretariat to assess the complaints related to Emerald Network sites received within the framework of the Case File System of the Bern Convention.

5.b Natura 2000 biogeographical process

As part of the results of the survey on climate change and protected areas carried out in 2018 presented at the Standing Committee last year, one of the pointers for enhancing climate change in the management of

protected areas was to foster Exchange of international knowledge and experience on site management in non-EU Contracting Parties similar to the Natura 2000 biogeographical process.

The purpose of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process is to help EU Member States to manage Natura 2000 as a coherent ecological network, whilst exchanging experience and best practice, addressing objectives and priorities and enhancing cooperation and synergies. The process is aimed to contribute to the achievement of Favourable Conservation Status for the habitats and species of community interest that have been identified as having priority within the given biogeographic region.

The focus of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process is on stakeholders working together to develop practical management actions on the common issues and shared priorities they identify.

The process brings representatives from Member States, nature conservation organisations, NGOs and expert stakeholder networks together to discuss real problems linked to areas of shared priority.

The biogeographical process constitutes a platform of cooperation supported by 3 different means.

- **Seminars**

Seminars are organised for each biogeographical regions every 3 years. They are hosted by one Member State of the region. It lasts 2.5 days and include discussions in plenary, working group sessions and site visits.

Countries concerned by the biogeographical region appoint a delegation of 10 participants consisting in policy officers, site managers and NGO representatives.

Seminars result in reports and in a Road Map for the consideration of and implementation by Member States.

- **Networking events**

The networking events offer a practical means to develop collaborative thinking, scope opportunities for joint working and focus attention on nature management matters of shared concern and priority that is required to build knowledge about ways to improve the conservation status of habitats and species.

The events aim to deepen specific aspects of the road map resulting from the Seminars and are designed to build knowledge and capacity.

The networking events are not attended by country delegations. The participation is open to whoever is interested in the topic.

- **A communication platform and newsletter**

The Natura 2000 biogeographical process is supported by a web-based Natura 2000 Communication Platform where all actors involved in management on Natura 2000 can find documents, useful links an events' calendar, discuss or exchange information on conservation objectives, measures and their follow-up. A bimonthly newsletter provides an overview of recent Natura 2000 developments within each of the biogeographical regions.

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts that resulting from its discussions with DG Environment representatives of non-EU Contracting Parties will receive financial support to attend Networking Events regarding biogeographical regions of interest of the Emerald Network.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

Members of the Group of Experts welcomed the opportunity to participate in Networking events within the framework of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process and mandated the Secretariat to explore the feasibility to set a similar process for non-EU Contracting Parties implementing the Emerald Network.

5.c Resources for the management of Natura 2000

The Secretariat reminded the Group of Experts of the resources for the management of Natura 2000 and the Emerald networks published on the website of the Bern Convention.

The [webpage](#) brings together the reference texts of the Bern Convention dealing with management and the guidelines from the European Commission. It is structured along guidance resources which are split into general and sector specific resources and good practices examples including management models and fact sheets.

Several resources were updated among them the guidelines on Climate Change and Natura 2000.

The Secretariat also reminded Parties of the possibility to publish on this webpage guidance or management resources developed by Parties themselves provided they are available in English.

5.d National Designation types

The National Designation Type is a criterion among many others for documenting Emerald Network sites in the Standard Data Form.

In 2018 the Group of Experts agreed on the principle to update the national designation types. Thanks to the support from the European Environment Agency (EEA), the webform designed for updating national designation types of EU Member States was adapted for non-EU Contracting Parties and is available from the [Common Data Repository](#) (CDR). A [delivery manual](#) describes how to fill in the webform.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

Members of the Group of Experts agreed to update their national designation types using EEA's webform by 29 February 2020 in order to ensure consistency with the data delivered by Parties to the Common Database of Designated Areas (CDDA) and to the World Database of Protected Areas (WDPA)

As a second step the look up tables in the Emerald Network Standard Data Form Manager will be amended so as to reflect the updated national designation types and Parties will be invited to update their Standard Data Forms according the revised list of national designations.

5.e Proposals of additional species to Resolution No. 6 (1998) and/or habitats to Resolution No. 4 (1996)

The Secretariat recalled that the sufficiency of the Emerald Network would be improved if the species and habitats listed respectively in the Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996) would be complemented with features predominantly present in Eastern Europe.

For the records, the deadline for the submission of proposals is set on 1st July of each year, using the Information Form adopted for this purpose by the Standing Committee in 2010, in order to allow the assessment of the proposals before the annual meeting of the Group of Experts in September.

The Secretariat informed the members of and observers to the Group of Experts that within the framework of the discussions with United Kingdom in the context of Brexit that several marine habitats inventoried in Natura 2000 marine sites did not find their equivalence in Resolution No. 4 (1996).

The Secretariat further explained that in 2014 when Resolution No. 4 (1996) was revised for coherence with Annex I of the EU's Habitats Directive, the Secretariat and European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity agreed not to revise the marine section, as the marine section of Annex I is also widely considered to poorly represent the full scope of marine habitats, and like Resolution No. 4 (1996), mainly covers a selection of habitats occurring in inshore waters or on the continental shelf.

The recent comparison of the habitats listed on Resolution No. 4 (1996) with those listed on Annex I of Habitats Directive also revealed that Alpine and sub-Alpine habitats were not harmonized consistently.

To address these omissions and to enable the possible transfer of UK's Natura 2000 sites under the Emerald Network the Secretariat proposed to align the marine habitats listed in Resolution No. 4 (1996) on the ones protected under Natura 2000 by adding two marine habitats to Resolution No. 4 (1996):

- A6.1 - Deep-sea rock and artificial hard substrata
- A6.61 - Communities of deep-sea corals

And to replace:

- F2.22 Alpine acidocline Rhododendron heaths
- F2.26 Bruckenthalia heaths

by:

- F2.2 Evergreen alpine and subalpine heath and scrub

Both proposals are presented in detail in the following documents: [T-PVS/PA \(2019\)6](#) and [T-PVS/PA\(2019\)7](#)

Finally, further to the 2018 decision of the Standing Committee to revise the descriptions of the habitat types G1.7 Thermophilous deciduous woodland and H6 Recent volcanic features in the Interpretation Manual of Habitats so as to include *Pistacia mutica* woodland and Mud volcanoes, the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity drafted a proposal of amendments ([T-PVS/PA \(2019\)8](#)) for the consideration of the Group of Experts.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

The Group of Experts agreed on the amendments of Resolution No. 4 (1996) so as to include Deep-sea rock and artificial hard substrata (A6.1) and Communities of deep-sea corals (A6.61) and to substitute Alpine acidocline Rhododendron heaths (F2.22) and Bruckenthalia heaths (F2.26) by Evergreen alpine and subalpine heath and scrub (F2.2).

The Annex I of Resolution No. 4 (1996) amended as agreed by the Group of Experts will be submitted to the 39th Standing Committee to the Bern Convention for formal endorsement.

The Group of Experts also agreed on the amendments proposed to the Interpretation Manual of Habitats ([T-PVS/PA \(2019\)8](#)) and mandated the Secretariat to further revise it so as to encompass the description of the two marine habitats and the Alpine habitat added to Resolution No. 4 (1996).

5.f Mechanism for adding features to Resolutions No 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998)

At its 2018 meeting the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks mandated the Secretariat to come up with a proposal to control the additions of new features to Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998). The aim of this mechanism is to limit the impact of new additions on Contracting Parties which would require them to allocate too much resources for proposing additional Emerald Network sites including these new features.

The mechanism is conceived to enable Contracting Parties to adjust conservation priorities to their own context.

It suggests that the evolution of the lists of species and habitats protected by the Emerald Network is not frozen but favours inclusion in Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) of country-specific features with a limited range in Contracting Parties.

The mechanism proposed consists of two phases of consultations over two consecutive years and is presented in the document [T-PVS/PA \(2019\)5](#)

In the discussion which followed the presentation of the mechanism some Parties expressed their concern about the endemic character of the proposed additional features which is referred to in the document as it contradicts the "European interest" of the features protected under the Emerald Network and excludes the features extinct in some countries which benefit or may benefit from re-introduction programmes. The Secretariat reassured Parties that the mechanism aims to continue support the inclusion of features

predominantly present in Eastern Europe and to limit the number of Parties potentially impacted by the additions.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

The Group of Experts agreed on the proposed mechanism for adding features to Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) as described in the document [T-PVS/PA \(2019\)5](#)

6. State of play of the Emerald Network and future perspectives

Activities implemented to support the Emerald Network development

The Secretariat informed the members of and observers to the Group of Experts that the list of sites proposed by Andorra were evaluated at biogeographical level. While the first evaluation should be seen as a capacity building exercise an excellent spirit and openness to discussion between the authorities and the NGOs could be noted. Regarding the results of the evaluation quite many insufficiencies are still to be tackled, but the conclusions will provide the authorities with pointers for setting priorities of work and most of all arguments for convincing other local authorities who have the responsibility over protected areas in Andorra to join the Network.

Within the framework of the cooperation agreement with the European Environment Agency, two biogeographical evaluation seminars involving the Eastern Partnership countries were foreseen. The first involving Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine took place end of May in Minsk. The second is planned on 29-30 October in Budapest and will involve Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and focus on bird species. This will complete the second evaluation cycle for these countries.

Overall the quality of the Emerald Network in the Eastern Partnership has significantly improved, and most of the countries took the ownership of the process after the end of the joint programmes with the EU. The dialogue with the NGOs in most of the countries is extremely constructive and supports the continuation of the work.

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts of the decision of the Andorran authorities to request the Standing Committee for the adoption of their Emerald Network sites skipping the intermediary status of “candidate” sites. This should be an example to be followed by more Contracting Parties.

The Secretariat welcomed the information very much that Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine will request the Standing Committee for the adoption of their remaining candidate Emerald Network sites.

The Secretariat recalled that Parties should formally request for nomination as candidate and adopted Emerald Network sites and supply the related lists of sites not later than 1st November.

Progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network

In terms of progress in the setting up and development of the Emerald Network, the Secretariat assessed similarly to last year the state of implementation of the Emerald Network Calendar (see document [T-PVS/PA\(2019\)12](#)). For the records, the network should be in capacity to ensure a favourable conservation status of the species and habitats listed respectively in the Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996) by 2020.

While the evolvement of the sufficiency shows significant progress, the assessment reveals that the major obstacles as of today to the functionality of the Network are as follows:

- Several countries still have not begun to implement the Emerald Network (African Parties but also Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco or Turkey)
- No updated databases were received from the South East European countries despite the commitment taken in 2017
- Many Parties are not committed to nominate their Emerald Network sites as ASCI and to designate them at national level (SEE countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russian Federation)
- Many Parties which have benefited from biogeographical evaluations did not address the conclusions and did not take steps to improve the sufficiency of their list of sites and/or did not engage in the further development of the list of sites (Azerbaijan, SEE countries, Switzerland)

The Secretariat reported to the Group of Experts that the Bureau to the Standing Committee at its second meeting in September 2019 expressed its concern regarding the delays in the implementation of the Emerald Network Calendar and the lack of commitment of many non-EU Contracting Parties.

Resulting from the current situation and with a view to the evaluation of the implementation of the Emerald Network calendar in 2020, the Bureau mandated the Secretariat to set up a periodic review of the implementation of the Emerald Network country by country accompanied by country specific technical and scientific advices. The review should take the form of a yearly recommendation from the Standing Committee and be backed up by an online barometer which would display the evolvement of the network in each country and point to the efforts to be made.

To follow up on the decision of the Bureau the Secretariat drafted the following recommendation [T-PVS/PA\(2019\)11](#)

The preamble of the recommendation restates the legal basis of the Emerald Network to which Contracting Parties adhered to and stresses the prerogative of the Standing Committee for reviewing the contribution of the Emerald Network to the achievement of the goals of the Convention (see Resolution No. 5 (1998)). The operational part of the draft recommendation first points to the specific actions required from each Contracting Party in order to improve its contribution to the Emerald Network and secondly mandates the Secretariat to proceed with the evaluation of the Emerald Network calendar, to propose a new road map and finally to set up a monitoring framework of the implementation of the Emerald Network backing up a yearly review.

State of play of the discussions with United Kingdom in the context of Brexit

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts of the on-going discussions for the transfer of United Kingdom's Natura 2000 sites under the Emerald Network. A meeting with DEFRA and JNCC and the European Topic Center took place end of March to assess the challenges and define the responsibilities.

The major issue identified remains the different codification of the habitats in Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network. This will require some work from United Kingdom to transform the habitat codes occurring in their sites.

United Kingdom's Natura 2000 network presents quite many overlapping sites. While there are objective reasons for this situation, it will create a precedent for the Emerald Network as its approach has prevented non-EU Contracting Parties from considering overlaps between sites.

The precedent created by UK will result in the need to adapt the Emerald Network Viewer which was not conceived for displaying overlapping sites.

Visibility

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts that the remaining obstacles to the publication of the data relating to the adopted Emerald Network sites were addressed and lifted and that these data will be aggregated in the Common Database of Designated Areas (CDDA) report and feed into World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

The Secretariat informed the Group of Experts that the data related to Areas of Special Conservation Interest will be aggregated in the Common Database of Designated Areas (CDDA) and for the first time ever, the Emerald Network will be displayed on the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and the data will be considered within the frame of the evaluation of the 2020 targets set by the UN Convention of Biological Diversity.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

The Group of Experts welcomed:

- the decisions of Andorra, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to nominate their candidate Emerald Network sites for adoption by the Standing Committee.
- the display of the Emerald Network adopted sites on the Protected Planet website

The Group of Experts took note of the decision of the Bureau to the Standing Committee to set a monitoring framework for reviewing the implementation of the Emerald Network every year and to develop a new strategic plan for the Emerald Network for the period 2021-2030.

The Group of Experts agreed on the draft recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest [T-PVS/PA\(2019\)11](#) and decided to forward it to the Standing Committee for discussion and possible adoption.

The Group of Experts took note of the preparatory work for the possible transfer of United Kingdom's Natura 2000 sites under the Emerald Network.

7. Future work of the Group of Experts

7.a Programme of activities

The Secretariat presented to the members of and observers to the Group of Experts its proposals for the Programme of activities in 2020.

The assessment of the reports submitted under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats will be the priority of the first quarter of 2020 with a view to ensure appropriate outreach of the results possibly as a contribution to EU's report on the State of Nature.

The follow up on the decision of the Bureau to the Standing Committee regarding the monitoring of the Emerald Network and in particular:

- The assessment of the implementation of the Emerald Network calendar (2011 -2020)
- The elaboration of a post 2020 strategic plan for the Emerald Network
- The setting up a monitoring tool for the implementation of the Emerald Network

will represent a worksite throughout next year.

The significative increase of incoming complaints within the frame of the Case File System of the Bern Convention regarding Areas of Special Conservation Interest raised the concern of the Bureau to the Standing Committee. The Secretariat will look into the existing legal provisions regulating adopted Emerald Network sites and if necessary, elaborate them further to address possible gaps.

The Secretariat will provide financial support to the participation the Alpine Networking Event in the frame of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

The Group of Experts agreed on the proposed activities for 2020.

7.b Date and place of the next meeting of Group of Experts

The Secretariat welcomed the invitation of Ukraine to host in Lviv the 11th meeting of the Group of Experts which will take place early end of September – beginning of October 2020.

8. Any other business

The Secretariat reminded the Group of Experts of the constitution process of the Emerald Network. The biogeographical evaluation represents an important milestone which should result in the nomination of the list of sites considered during the evaluation as Emerald Network candidate sites.

Since the 2018 meeting of the Group of Experts, the Secretariat reminded Contracting Parties involved in biogeographical evaluation seminars of this logical process. To inscribe this principle in the legal documentation of the Emerald Network, the Secretariat proposed to amend Recommendation No. 157 (2011) accordingly.

Decision of the Group of Experts:

The Group of Experts agreed on the terms of the revised Recommendation No. 157 (2011) as presented in the document TPVS/PA (2019) 14 and decided to submit it to the 39th Standing Committee to the Bern Convention for formal endorsement.

9. Conclusions of the meeting

The Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks agreed to submit to the 39th Standing Committee to the Bern Convention for formal approval the following decisions:

- The draft Recommendation on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites (T-PVS/PA (2019)13)
- The amendment of Resolution No. 4 (1996) so as to include Deep-sea rock and artificial hard substrata (A6.1) and Communities of deep-sea corals (A6.61) and to substitute Alpine acidocline Rhododendron heaths (F2.22) and Bruckenthalia heaths (F2.26) by Evergreen alpine and subalpine heath and scrub (F2.2).
- The amendments proposed to the Interpretation Manual of Habitats ([T-PVS/PA \(2019\)8](#))
- the draft recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest ([T-PVS/PA\(2019\)11](#))
- the revised Recommendation No. 157 (2011) as presented in the document TPVS/PA (2019) 14

Appendix 1

		Documents	Expected results
<i>Wednesday 2 October</i>			
14.00	1. Opening of the meeting		
	2. Adoption of the agenda	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2019)10 For adoption	Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	3. Mandate of the Group and decisions of the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention <i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i>	Report of the 9th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks T-PVS/PA(2018)19E Extract from the list of decisions and adopted texts on the protection of habitats T-PVS/PA(2019)9 For information	The salient points of the 38 th meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention are recalled.
	4. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)		
	4.a State of play of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) <i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i>		Members of and observers to the Group of Experts take note of the state of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

	<i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the state of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)</i>	For information	
	4.b Reporting tool <i>Presentation by Marc Roekaerts</i> <i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the current state of development of the reporting tool.</i>	Link to the reporting tool For information	Members of and observers to the Group of Experts take note of the state of play of the reporting tool
	4.c Reporting Reference Portal <i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i> <i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the recent resources made available from the Reporting Reference Portal</i>	Link to the Reference Portal for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) For information	Members of and observers to the Group of Experts take note of the recent resources published on the Reporting Reference Portal
	5. Development of the Emerald Network guidance		
	5.a Consultation on the Guidance on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites <i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i> <i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed on the results of the consultation on the Guidance documents and invited to exchange views on possible follow up work.</i>	Guidance on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites. T-PVS/PA(2018)13 Flowchart of steps to be taken to assess, report and respond to changes in ecological character of Emerald network sites T-PVS/Inf(2019)3	Members of and observers to the Group of Experts agree on the follow up to be given to guidance on detecting, assessing and responding to changes and likely changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites.

		<p>Study on the “ecological character” of sites T-PVS/PA(2017)8</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	
	<p>5.b Natura 2000 biogeographical process</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process and invited to exchange views the opportunity to initiate a similar process for the Emerald Network.</i></p>	<p>For information</p>	<p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts take note of the Natura 2000 biogeographical process and welcome the opportunity to participate in the networking events organised at the margins of the Natura 2000 biogeographical seminars.</p>
	<p>5.c Resources for the management of Natura 2000 sites</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the update of Natura 2000 resources aimed to assist Parties to develop management schemes.</i></p>	<p>Link to the website</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts take note of the update of the resources to be used in the context of the Emerald Network.</p>
	<p>5.d National designation types</p> <p><i>Presentation by Marc Roekaerts</i></p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the state of play of the updating process of the national designation types</i></p>	<p>Link to EEA’s website</p> <p>Designation types delivery manual</p> <p>National designation types</p>	<p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts agree to update their national designation types and agree to consider the new designation types in their forthcoming Emerald Network database.</p>

		For information and decision	
	<p>5.e Proposals of additional species to Resolution No. 6 (1998) and/or habitats to Resolution No. 4 (1996)</p> <p><i>Reminder by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Presentation of the proposals by Marc Roekaerts</i></p> <p><i>Presentation of the amendments of the interpretation manual of habitats listed in Resolution No. 4 (1996)</i></p> <p><i>Representatives of the Contracting Parties and Observer states are reminded of the procedure for amending the lists of species and habitats of the Resolution No. 6 (1998) and/or Resolution No. 4 (1996)</i></p> <p><i>Representatives of the Contracting Parties and Observer States are invited to discuss and to exchange views on the proposal to amend the Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998)</i></p>	<p>Proposal of addition of marine habitats to Resolution No. 4 (1996) T-PVS/PA (2019)6</p> <p>Proposal of addition of Alpine and sub-alpine heaths to Resolution No. 4 (1996) T-PVS/PA(2019)7</p> <p>Revision of the Interpretation Manual of the Habitats listed in Resolution No 4 (1996) T-PVS/PA (2019)8</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>The amendments proposed are agreed on and their inclusion in Resolution No. 4 (1996) and Resolution No. 6 (1998) is sent for adoption to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p>
	<p>5.f Mechanism for adding features on the Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998)</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are invited to discuss the working document and to exchange views on possible follow up work</i></p>	<p>Proposal of mechanism for extending the list of species and habitats to be protected under the Emerald Network T-PVS/PA (2019)5</p>	<p>The proposal of mechanism is agreed on by the members of and observers to the Group of Experts</p>

		For discussion and decision	
	<p>6. State of play of the Emerald Network and future perspectives</p> <p><i>Presentation of the state of implementation of the Emerald Network calendar by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Presentation of the consolidated sufficiency conclusion by Marc Roekaerts</i></p> <p><i>Representatives of the Contracting Parties and Observer states are invited to confirm that all newly proposed sites from their latest national databases are to be sent for official nomination as candidate sites to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</i></p> <p><i>Representatives of the Contracting Parties and Observer states are invited to inform the Secretariat whether their country is submitting its candidate Emerald Network sites for official adoption as Emerald sites by the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</i></p>	<p>Progress in the enforcement of the Revised calendar for the implementation of the Emerald Network (2011-2020) T-PVS/PA(2019)12</p> <p>Draft recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network T-PVS/PA(2019)11</p> <p>Progress of the sufficiency of the Emerald Network T-PVS/PA(2018)11</p> <p>Consolidated sufficiency conclusions following the 2017 and 2018 biogeographical evaluation seminars T-PVS/PA(2018)15 (excel version) / MS Access version</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the progress in the setting-up of the Emerald Network in all Contracting Parties and Observer States concerned.</p> <p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts agree on the draft recommendation on the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network and send it for adoption to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.</p> <p>Countries may request the official nomination of their newly proposed Emerald Network sites as candidate Emerald sites by the Standing Committee.</p> <p>Countries are reminded that proposed sites considered within the biogeographical evaluation process will automatically be nominated as candidate sites.</p> <p>Countries may request the official adoption as Emerald sites of their candidate sites by the Standing Committee.</p> <p>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are informed of the state of play and evolution of the sufficiency of the Emerald Network.</p>
	<p>7. Future work of the Group of Experts</p>		
	<p>7.a Programme of activities 2020</p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts are invited to propose and discuss new activities in 2020</i></p>	For discussion and decision	<p>Priority activities are identified and will feed into the Programme of activity 2020 of the Bern Convention (subject to the availability of financial and human resources)</p>

	<p>7.b Date and place of the next meeting of the Group of Experts</p> <p><i>Members of and observers to the Group of Experts wishing to host the next meeting of the Group of Experts are invited to inform the Secretariat.</i></p>	For decision	The provisional venue and dates of the next meeting are agreed on.
	8. Any other business		
	9. Conclusions of the meeting		
18.00	End of the meeting		