



Strasbourg, 25 March 2025

T-PVS(2025)03

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

WORKING GROUP
ON EXPLORING MECHANISMS TO GUIDE AMENDMENTS TO THE
APPENDICES OF THE BERN CONVENTION

1st meeting
13 March 2025
Online meeting, 10.00 – 13.00 CET

- Meeting Report –

Document prepared by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention

1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat

The Secretariat welcomed the participants (see Annex II) in the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention and wrapped up the tasks it had been entrusted with by the 44th Standing Committee to the Bern Convention (see the Terms of Reference of the Working Group [T-PVS\(2024\)20](#))

2. Election of the Chair

The Secretariat had received the candidature of Mr Simon Macknown who was also the Delegate of United Kingdom to the Bern Convention. As there were no other applications, the participants elected Mr Simon Macknown as Chair of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention was adopted without amendments (see Annex I).

4. Existing criteria and procedures for amending lists of features

4.a Appendices of the Bern Convention

The Secretariat informed participants of the only existing guidance for amending the appendices of the Bern Convention, namely [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#). The recommendation invited Contracting Parties to consider 2 criteria when proposing amendments to appendices I and II of the Bern Convention:

- The degree of threat supported by the species: namely the vulnerability of the species to changes in its habitat, and whether the species is declining in the central area of its distribution, or it is only threatened in the border of its range.
- The ecological role of the species, such as their position or role in the food chain and their structural role in ecosystems.

Participants acknowledged that Recommendation No. 56 (1997) lacked on clarity of the requirements and focussed only on adding species to Appendices I and II. The change of protection status was not referred to and Appendix III of the Bern Convention was excluded from the scope of the recommendation.

Participants agreed on the need for an evidence-based mechanism with scientific criteria and clear methodology going beyond the scope the recommendation.

Participants mandated the Secretariat to prepare a historical review of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) to understand the context within which the recommendation had been prepared and to recollect the amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention since 1997.

4.b Annexes to the Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) regarding features protected by the Emerald Network

The Secretariat informed participant of the mechanism designed for controlling and managing the evolvement of the lists of features protected by the Emerald Network (see document [T-](#)

[PVS/PA\(2019\)05](#)). The mechanism was conceived to enable Contracting Parties to adjust conservation priorities to the actual needs of nature.

The mechanism emphasised the endemic character of features and consisted of two phases of consultations over two consecutive years.

During the first year, the proposal of amendment was assessed by the European Topic Centre on Biodiversity and Ecosystems. The outcomes of the assessment were presented and discussed at the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks. Contracting Parties engaged in consultations at national level on whether the proposed features occur on their territory.

During the second year, Parties were invited to submit comments in writing which were reviewed by the European Topic Centre on Biodiversity and Ecosystems and presented to the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks. Only Parties in which the proposed features occurred or might occur expressed their views.

In case the Group of Experts supported the proposed addition, the amendment of the annexes to Resolutions No. 4 (1996) or No. 6 (1998) was presented to the Standing Committee for adoption.

Participants stressed that within the frame of the Emerald Network and Natura 2000, despite the growing scientific knowledge on new species groups, the extension of the lists of species and habitats faced some resistance as this generated additional work to designate sites for protecting the new features and could hinder the completion of the network of protected areas in terms of sufficiency. For EU-Enlargements only amendment proposals were agreed on when no new site designations for actual member States were required.

The Chair emphasised that other conventions had regular review processes of their list of protected features. Within the frame of the Bern Convention there was not a review culture, may be because Contracting Parties were less proactive.

Participants took note of the mechanism for amending the lists of features protected by the Emerald Network and underlined that using a standardised form for introducing the amendment proposals and involving a scientific body or process for their assessment could be considered for the mechanism for amending the appendices of the Bern Convention.

4.c Lists of features in other Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

The Chair introduced to participants an information document mapping existing procedures and criteria in other conventions and MEAs for handling proposals of amendments to their lists of protected features (see document [T-PVS/inf\(2025\)04](#)). The document required further work as it focused for the time being mainly on requirements / obligations from countries and did not yet describe the mechanisms / processes leading to the adoption of the amendments. Nevertheless, the document showed that a number of conventions and treaties had already comprehensive procedures and guidance for amending their list of protected features and had also set up scientific overseeing bodies to assess the amendment proposals and advise their decision-making bodies.

Participants suggested to add to the document the Barcelona Convention and to look in particular into the mechanisms / processes of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Waterbirds (AEWA) and to prepare a comparative overview of the obligations, mechanisms / processes, advisory bodies, and criteria.

Participants agreed that it was necessary to distinguish the mechanism / process from the criteria to be considered. No consensus could however be reached on whether the Working Group should come up with proposals of criteria, criteria that could be different depending on the nature of the protection

granted, its reinforcement or reduction. The possible contribution of existing technical/scientific Groups of Experts under the Bern Convention to the assessment of the amendment proposals should also be considered. The Chair suggested that the Working Group should, for the time being, focus on high level principles and describe how the mechanism could look like and the scientific advisory body or process could function.

The Chair also recalled that it was unlikely that the Standing Committee would want to amend the Bern Convention for embedding in the text of the Convention the future evidence-based mechanism for amending the appendices. Consequently, it would also be necessary to look into how this mechanism could work in a non-binding context.

5. Next steps

The Chair recalled that a contextual review of Recommendation No. 56 (1997), a summary of the amendments to the Appendices to the Bern Convention since 1997 and a revised version of the mapping of how other conventions handle amendments to their lists of protected features would be prepared for the consideration of the second meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention.

In addition, the Chair suggested to outline a few options which could be presented to the 45th Standing Committee. Among the possible options, there were the revision and strengthening of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) and/or the description of high-level principles of a mechanism including a technical/scientific advisory group or process.

The Chair proposed to share with the Working Group the description of the mechanism before the summer for comments and input so as to have a more substantive discussion on the proposal of mechanism at the second meeting of the Working Group. Pending its support, the 45th Standing Committee could mandate the Working Group to elaborate the mechanism in detail.

6. Date of the second meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention

The Secretariat informed participants that the second meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention was provisionally scheduled online on **4 September 2025**.

7. Any other business

There was no other business.

8. Conclusions of the meeting

The Chair thanked participants for their contributions to the discussion and declared the meeting closed.



ANNEX I:

		Documents	Expected results
Thursday 13 March 2025			
10.00	1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat		
	2. Election of the Chair <i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are invited to elect their Chair.</i>	Mandate of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention T-PVS(2024)20 List of the members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention T-PVS/inf(2025)03 For decision	The Chair of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention is elected.
	3. Adoption of the agenda	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2025)02 For adoption	Members of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	4. Existing criteria and procedures for amending lists of features		

	<p>4.a. Appendices of the Bern Convention</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are informed of the existing guidelines contained in Recommendation No. 56 (1997) and invited to exchange views on whether they should be updated.</i></p>	<p>Recommendation No. 56 (1997) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments.</p> <p>For discussion</p>	<p>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention take note of the provisions of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) and provide guidance to the Secretariat on follow up work.</p>
	<p>4.b. Annexes to the Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) regarding features protected by the Emerald Network</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are informed of the procedure and criteria considered for amending the lists of features protected by the Emerald Network and invited to exchange views on whether they could serve as source of inspiration.</i></p>	<p>Mechanism for adding features to Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998)</p> <p>T-PVS/PA(2019)05</p> <p>For discussion</p>	<p>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention take note of procedure and criteria considered within the Emerald Network and provide the Secretariat with guidance on follow up work.</p>
	<p>4.c. Lists of features in other Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are informed of the procedures and criteria considered for amending the lists of features protected by</i></p>	<p>Mapping of the procedures and criteria considered by other Conventions and MEAs for amending lists of features</p> <p>T-PVS/inf(2025)04</p> <p>Version with comments of the UK</p> <p>T-PVS/inf(2025)04</p>	<p>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention take note of the procedures and criteria considered by other Conventions and MEAs and provide the Secretariat with guidance on follow up work.</p>

	<i>other Conventions and MEAs and invited to exchange views on whether they could serve as source of inspiration.</i>	For discussion	
	5. Next steps <i>Presentation by the Chair</i> <i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are invited to exchange views on the next steps and on a timeline.</i>	For discussion and decision	Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention provide the Secretariat with guidance on the next steps and the timeline.
	6. Date of the second meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention <i>Presentation the Secretariat</i> <i>Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention are invited to agree on the date of the second meeting of the Working Group.</i>	For decision	Members of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention agree on the date of the second meeting of the Working Group.
	7. Any other business		
	8. Conclusions of the meeting		
13.00	Thursday 13 March 2025 End of the meeting		



ANNEX II:

Contracting Party	Name
Austria	<p>Mr Martin WILDENBERG Directorate General V – Environment and Circular Economy Department 10 – National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology</p> <p>Ms Birgit LEITNER Directorate General V – Environment and Circular Economy Department 10 – National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology</p>
Belgium	<p>Mr Floris VERHAEGHE Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos</p> <p>Mr Joachim MERGEAY Research Institute for Nature and Forest</p>
Denmark	<p>Mr Peter LYHNE HØJBERG MSc Administrative Officer Species and Nature Ministry of Green Transition Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment</p>
Estonia	<p>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI Adviser Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of Climate</p>
European Union	<p>Ms Iva OBRETENOVA Policy Officer Unit D.3 DG Environment</p> <p>Ms Angelika RUBIN Team Leader Unit D.3 DG Environment</p>
France	<p>Mr Charles-Henri DE BARSAC Chargé de mission "accords internationaux et européens faune sauvage" sous-direction de la protection et de la restauration des écosystèmes terrestres</p>

	Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et Solidaire
Germany	<p>Mr Axel DRECHSLER Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection</p> <p>Mr Etienne VERGNE-KLANGWALD Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection</p> <p>Mr Axel SSYMANK Federal Agency for Nature Conservation</p>
Hungary	<p>Ms Éva FEJES Biodiversity expert Biodiversity and Gene Conservation Department Ministry of Agriculture</p>
Monaco	<p>Ms Astrid CLAUDEL-RUSIN Chef de section Direction de l'Environnement Département de l'Equipeement, de l'Environnement et de l'Urbanisme</p>
Slovak Republic	<p>Ms Jana DURKOŠOVÁ Directorate for Nature and Biodiversity Protection Department for Nature Protection and for State Administration Bern Convention, Birds Directive, Habitats Directive Ministry of the Environment</p>
Sweden	<p>Ms Clarisse KEHLER SIEBERT Senior advisor, CBD & Cartagena Protocol, Focal Point to the Bern Convention Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Sustainable Development Department</p>
Türkiye	<p>Mr Burak TATAR Senior Specialist Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Directorate General of Nature Conservation and National Parks Department of Wildlife Management</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Mr Simon MACKOWN Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, DEFRA</p> <p>Ms Katie BRICKETT Senior Advisor Species Recovery, National Biodiversity Division DEFRA</p> <p>Ms Sarah SCOTT Senior International Biodiversity Adviser JNCC</p>

Observer	Name
BirdLife Europe	Ms Marion BESSOL
Eurogroup for Animals	Mr Nick CLARK Wild Animals Programme Leader
European Anglers Alliance, EAA	Mr Jan Kappel Secretary General
FACE European Federation for Hunting and Conservation	Mr Guillaume AGÈDE Policy Advisor on Large Carnivores
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth	Mr Friedrich WULF Head, International Biodiversity Policy Switzerland
WWF	Ms Sabien LEEMANS WWF European Policy Office Ms Beate STRIEBEL-GREITER WWF Central and Eastern Europe WWF Sturgeon Initiative Leader
Bern Convention Secretariat	Name
	Mr Marc Hory