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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

41st meeting

Strasbourg, 29 November - 3 December 2021

Meeting of the Bureau

15-16 September 2021

(online meeting)

- MEETING REPORT -

*Report prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Participation*

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, Ms Jana Durkošová, opened the second annual meeting of the Bureau to the Bern Convention for 2021 taking place again online. She welcomed the members and thanked the Secretariat for the hard work in preparing the meeting and the documents under the continuing uncertain circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic.

Decision: The meeting agenda was adopted with no amendments (appendix 1).

2. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION

2.1. Inter-sessional working group on financing: state of play

The Chair of the Intersessional Working Group on Finances, Mr Jan Brojáč, and the Secretariat informed the Bureau of the outcome of the discussions on the future funding and development of the Bern Convention. Three meetings of the Working Group on Finances had been organised alongside meetings of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) held on 21st January, 18th March and 27th May. Moreover, two informal GR-C meetings had also been organised by the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers on 5th July and 10th September in order to progress with the reform process of the Bern Convention. The meeting reports of the Working Group on Finances and a brief summary of the GR-C discussions had been distributed by the Secretariat to the delegates of the Bern Convention to keep them informed on progress.

The GR-C had expressed a general support to the Bern Convention and, at the last informal GR-C meeting on 10th September, some amendments had been proposed to the "draft Resolution establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Fund for the implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats" (EPA), elaborated by the Standing Committee in 2020. So far, only 10 Contracting Parties have expressed an interest in joining the Enlarged Partial Agreement. 16 Contracting Parties are required as a minimum threshold to set up the EPA. In October, the Secretariat will carry out another survey to evaluate if the EPA is a viable option for the future funding and development of the Bern Convention. The next formal GR-C meeting will be held on 5th October to examine the amended draft Resolution and it will be followed by the 4th meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Finances on 12th October. The amended draft Resolution establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement will be presented at the forthcoming Standing Committee meeting.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided and thanked the Working Group for its efforts. The Bureau encouraged Contracting Parties to consider adhering to the Enlarged Partial Agreement.

2.2. Voluntary contributions received in 2021: state of play

The Secretariat informed that a letter had been sent in May on behalf of the Chair reminding Contracting Parties to provide voluntary contributions for the implementation of the programme of activities for 2021, flagging certain activities which are in need of funding. Further, it reported on the situation of voluntary contributions received so far in 2021. 13 Contracting Parties had paid a voluntary contribution amounting to €185,300. In addition, voluntary contributions from five Contracting Parties totalling approximately €125,365 were underway, one of which was an earmarked contribution for the creation of the Emerald Network Barometer and the implementation of an Emerald Network biogeographical evaluation. The Secretariat highlighted that Hungary had made an exceptional contribution of €30,000 in the framework of its Committee of Ministers Presidency.

Taking stock of the voluntary contributions made in 2020, the Secretariat pointed out that the amount of voluntary contributions received by September in 2020 had been approximately the same. Nevertheless, the Secretariat was expecting that the total amount of contributions received by the end of the year would be less than in 2020.

The Bureau stressed that these voluntary contributions are crucial for securing the basic business of the Convention and that providing the contributions already at the beginning of the year allowed for improved planning of activities for the rest of the year.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information and thanked the Contracting Parties which had contributed to this point. It instructed the Secretariat to present to the Standing Committee a diagram on the evolvement of the voluntary contributions received over the years.

The Bureau urged all Contracting Parties to provide voluntary contributions in order to guarantee the efficient operation of the Bern Convention in 2021.

2.3. Report on the use of the resources from the Special Account of the Bern Convention

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the current balance on the Special Account amounted to approximately €297,590. It pointed out that, aside from staff costs and earmarked voluntary contributions, the Secretariat prioritises spending funds from the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe ahead of voluntary contributions from the special account, as any underspend of the ordinary budget at the end of the year would be lost.

So far, earmarked voluntary contributions had been used in 2021 for the marine turtles initiative and the maintenance of the online reporting system (ORS) for the biennial reporting. Upcoming costs for the creation of the Emerald Network barometer and a biogeographical evaluation of the Emerald Network would also be covered by earmarked voluntary contributions, as mentioned under 2.2 above. Further, the Secretariat informed that, should the need arise for additional translations of working documents, due to the high document output this year, and the engagement of an expert on climate change for the production of working documents for the Group of Experts on Climate Change, these expenditures would be paid from non-earmarked voluntary contributions.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information of the Secretariat. It supported that the expenditures outlined by the Secretariat be covered by the Special Account.

2.4. Working Group on a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030: state of play

The Chair of the Working Group on a Vision and Strategic Plan, Mr Simon Mackown, and the consultant Mr David E. Pritchard, who was charged with assisting the Working Group in elaborating the draft Vision and Strategic Plan, informed the Bureau about the outcome of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group, the written online consultations with the Working Group, the state of play of relevant documents and the upcoming 3rd meeting of the Working Group on 22nd September.

Decision: The Bureau thanked the Working Group and the consultant for their valuable contribution. The Bureau expressed its approval for the direction the advanced draft Vision and Strategic Plan were taking. It highlighted the necessity to identify appropriate and measurable indicators for the Strategic Plan. Noting once again the tight schedule for the completion of the tasks mandated to the Working Group by the Standing Committee, the Bureau suggested that a possibility would be to finalise and potentially adopt the Vision at the Standing Committee, while continuing to elaborate the Strategic Plan in 2022.

2.5. Policy Guidelines for an integrated culture/nature/landscape management

Mr Terje Birkrem Hovland, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) and Ms Kathrin Merkle, Head of the Culture and Cultural Heritage Division and Secretary to the CDCPP, informed the Bureau of a new initiative to develop policy guidelines for an integrated culture, nature and landscape management. The initiative is a follow-up to one of the main thematic CoE priorities as stated in the 2021 report by the Secretary General of the CoE "State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. A democratic renewal for Europe" in the field of culture, cultural heritage and environment. The overall objective of the initiative is to strengthen the inseparable links between people, culture and nature based on the Council of

Europe's human rights and participatory approach and the Council of Europe's Conventions in the field of culture, nature and landscape. Together with other CoE conventions (i.e. the European Cultural Convention, Granada Convention, Valletta Convention, Florence Convention, Faro Convention, Nicosia Convention), the Bern Convention should form the basis for the guidelines/principles. Mr Hovland invited the Bureau to participate in the new initiative and to appoint one member of the Bureau to the Working Group which is going to prepare the culture-nature guidelines.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided and thanked the Vice-Chair of the CDCPP and the Secretary of the CDCPP for inviting the Bureau of the Bern Convention to participate in the new initiative to develop policy guidelines for an integrated culture, nature and landscape management. The Bureau expressed its full support for the initiative, appreciated the opportunity to participate in drafting the document and designated Bureau member Mr Carl Amirgulashvili to participate in the Working Group.

2.6. Rules of procedure: Possible modifications

The Secretariat presented possible draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee, which had been developed in collaboration with the legal department of the Council of Europe. The main aim of the proposed amendments was to include a more explicit mention of the possibility to use digital technologies for the work of the Standing Committee, taking into account the lessons learnt from the pandemic experience, addressing procedural issues such as working methods, electronic voting, written consultations and remote participation.

The Bureau discussed the proposed amendments and agreed for them to be presented for discussion and possible adoption at the 41st Standing Committee.

Decision: The Bureau thanked the Secretariat and legal department of the Council of Europe for drafting the proposed amendments of the Rules of Procedure. Following several suggestions of the Bureau, the Secretariat was mandated to prepare a revised version of the document with a view to presenting it for discussion and possible adoption at the 41st Standing Committee.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2021

3.1. European Diploma for Protected Areas: state of play of the 2021 on-the-spot appraisal visits

The Secretariat recalled that the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas had decided to test a virtual scenario for the on-the-spot appraisal visits in order to continue monitoring the European Diploma sites. The scenario consisted in two phases: online meetings with the stakeholders and a shorter visit in the field if the conditions allowed.

So far, the first phases of two virtual visits had been carried out. A third one was in preparation.

Furthermore, two standard on-the-spot appraisal visits to areas requiring special attention had taken place and a third one to twinned areas was in preparation.

The Secretariat further informed that the draft resolutions renewing the Diploma of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve and National Park Weerribben-Wieden and extending the validity of the Diploma to 11 areas had been adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7th July 2021.

As part of the communication strategy for raising the profile of the European Diploma discussed during the meeting of the Group of Specialists, the Secretariat reported that the exhibition prepared for the 40th anniversary of the Bern Convention had been transformed into a virtual exhibition and was already available in French and English. The translation of the exhibition into all the national languages of the countries hosting diploma holding areas was underway. The objective was that every diploma holding area displays the exhibition in their information centers. In addition, the Directorate of Communication of the Council of Europe was creating a dedicated webpage derived from the exhibition.

The Secretariat informed the members of the Bureau that the call for manifestation of interest aiming to constitute a pool of independent experts providing pro bono intellectual services had resulted in the selection of 12 experts who will be involved in on-the-spot appraisal visits in the future.

Finally, the Secretariat reported that discussions were ongoing with Switzerland for the nomination of a member of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas and that Bulgaria had not replied to the solicitations of the Secretariat despite several reminders.

Decision: The Bureau welcomed the positive outcomes of the virtual on-the-spot appraisal visits carried out so far and the adoption of the Resolutions renewing the European Diploma of two areas and extending the validity of the European Diploma of 11 areas.

The Bureau looked very much forward to the virtual exhibition and its translation into the national languages of the countries hosting Diploma holding areas.

The Bureau took note of the creation of a pool of 12 independent experts.

In the absence of reply of Bulgaria to the request of the Secretariat to nominate a member to the Group of Specialists as from 2022, the Bureau suggested to approach another country and encouraged Switzerland to confirm the nomination of their representative as soon as possible.

3.2. Illegal killing of birds: state of play (joint MIKT meeting, IKB Score board and Rome Strategic Plan)

The Secretariat reported on the outcomes of the joint meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (IKB) and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (MIKT) in the Mediterranean, which had taken place online on 9-11 June.

During the joint meeting, an updated assessment of the second Scoreboard to assess the progress in Combating IKB, which now took into account the additional submissions of Belarus, Greece, Malta, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom, had been presented to the participants. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that the original Scoreboard data of 23 countries was now [available online](#) for public consultation.

Based on the discussion during the joint meeting and a subsequent written consultation, Special IKB Focal Points to the Bern Convention and MIKT members had agreed on the modalities for regular assessments under the Rome Strategic Plan and frequency of future meetings. In order to address the possible information gaps of the regular self-assessments conducted by Contracting Parties on the implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan, and to avoid creating another level of reporting, it was agreed that a more extensive and systematic usage of comment boxes would be included in the Scoreboard. Additional information concerning fundraising activities would be shared verbally by member states during joint meetings. Furthermore, 'in-person' joint meetings would take place every three years, to align with the Scoreboard reporting (2023, 2026, 2029). As an exception to this schedule and should the COVID-19 pandemic allow, an 'in person'/hybrid meeting would be held in 2022, kindly hosted by Spain.

Finally, the Bureau was made aware of progress in the development of a format and guidance for the development and implementation of National IKB Action Plans, as well as the approach to set a baseline and methodology for assessing progress toward achieving the Rome Strategic Plan. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that the CMS MIKT group was currently working on the development of a workplan which would elaborate on the Rome Strategic Plan.

On another note, the Secretariat brought to the attention of the Bureau that the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Birds had last met in 2017 and that non-IKB related issues related to bird conservation are not currently covered by the joint meetings with MIKT.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided and appreciated the efforts to develop documents that will help Contracting Parties to implement the Rome Strategic Plan. The Bureau also acknowledged the close collaboration among the CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats.

It further appreciated the proposed way forward on future periodic assessments and frequency of joint meetings and thanked the Spanish authorities for renewing the invitation to meet in Valencia in 2022.

Finally, the Bureau stressed the importance for the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Birds to re-activate its activities and asked the Secretariat to organise a meeting next year, should there be sufficient resources available.

3.3. Invasive Alien Species: state of play (Group of Experts meeting, guidelines on Communication and IAS, E-Commerce and IAS, Study on Alien Pathogens)

The Secretariat presented the results of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) held online on 6th July.

The objective of this year's meeting was to take stock of the progress achieved since the last meeting of 2019 and in particular to advance with preparations of the three studies initiated in 2019 (Guidance on Communication and IAS, Guidance on E-commerce and IAS and the Study on Alien Pathogens and Pathogens spread by IAS).

On the study on alien pathogens and wildlife in Europe, the Group of Experts had discussed the main revisions needed before submitting the study to the Standing Committee for discussion and possible adoption, including an annex on relevant legislation of Bern non-EU Contracting Parties.

In reference to the Guidance on e-commerce and IAS, the Group of Experts had welcomed the document and stressed that only minor edits were necessary in order for it to be submitted to the Standing Committee. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the suggested edits had been addressed and a draft recommendation was ready to be presented for discussion and possible adoption at the Standing Committee.

Despite what had been anticipated since the last Bureau meeting in April, the Secretariat informed that a new draft Guidance on communication and IAS could not be delivered by the consultant. During the meeting in July, the Group of Experts had exchanged ideas on possible candidates who could take over the consultancy next year, with a view to presenting a new draft to the Group either through written consultation or in an online meeting during 2022.

Finally, at their meeting, the Group of Experts had identified the use of IAS as a nature-based solution to mitigate climate change as an important issue that the Group should focus its future work on. A small working group had been established to draft a brief evidence-based document ahead of the UNFCCC COP 26 to draw some attention to the topic. Due to the summer break, the first meeting of the working group was scheduled to take place virtually at the end of September, therefore it was not sure that the document could be ready ahead of the COP which starts at the end of October.

Bureau member Mr Carl Amirgulashvili also informed of his new role as IUCN Councillor – East Europe, North and Central Asia for the period 2021-2025.

Decision: The Bureau appreciated the results of the meeting and expressed its interest on the topics that the Group of Experts had identified as a focus of the Group's future work, particularly welcoming the initiative to establish a working group on the use of IAS as a nature-based solution to mitigate climate change.

The Bureau took note of the draft recommendation on e-commerce and IAS and instructed the Secretariat to present it to the 41st Standing Committee for discussion and possible adoption.

The Bureau congratulated Bureau member Mr Carl Amirgulashvili for the nomination and election as an IUCN Councillor.

3.4. Amphibians and reptiles: Group of Experts meeting and Action Plan on Marine Turtles

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the next meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles would take place online on 28th September 2021. Three external expert speakers would be invited to inform the participants of newest research and management options for the *Batrachochytrium Salamandrivorans Chytrid Fungus* (BSal fungus), as well as to present on the impact of

run-of-river small hydropower plants on biodiversity, with a particular view on amphibians and reptiles, in the Balkans.

Moreover, the Secretariat informed the Bureau of the current state of play of the initiative for the conservation of marine turtles, agreed upon at the 40th Standing Committee. Introductory meetings had been held with the authorities and NGOs of the three Contracting parties Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey to present the initiative and identify next steps. During these meetings, the national authorities from Cyprus had offered to be the first country to hold national consultations, which were scheduled to take place online at the end of October, while it had been agreed that Greece would be the second country and that Turkey would follow as the third and final country. The aim of these national consultations would be to identify obstacles to the implementation of the previous recommendations of the Standing Committee and to set up a platform of exchange and collaboration. A draft roadmap was presented to the Bureau to summarise key steps and milestones of the initiative.

Furthermore, the Secretariat presented to the Bureau a draft Terms of References of an *ad hoc* Working Group for the Conservation of Marine Turtles, whose first meeting was tentatively envisaged to take place online ahead of the Standing Committee meeting.

Finally, the Bureau was informed of the state of play of the drafting of a briefing paper on (i) mapping existing initiatives/policies/strategies for marine turtles' conservation, (ii) assessing possible gaps and (iii) identifying global good practices in relation to the co-existence of economic development and marine turtles' protection, of which the preparation would ideally involve scientific stakeholders in all three Contracting Parties.

Decision: Recognising the ambition of the initiative, the Bureau appreciated the progresses made in the past months.

The Bureau welcomed the cooperation of the three Contracting Parties and NGOs in the marine turtles' initiative and particularly thanked the Cypriot authorities for their offer to be the first country in which consultative meetings with national stakeholders would be held.

3.5. Setting-up of the Emerald Network: state of play and ongoing activities in 2021

a. Group of experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, 5-6 October 2021

The Secretariat informed on the state of preparation of the meeting scheduled virtually on 5-6 October. The Group of Experts was expected to tackle several requirements of the 40th Standing Committee in particular the follow up on its decision regarding the legal framework of the Emerald Network.

The Secretariat reported that a survey had been carried out among Contracting Parties and participants from the 2020 Group of Experts on Protected Areas seeking their insight on the recommendations of the 2020 legal study entitled *Obligations of Bern Convention parties regarding the conservation of candidate and adopted Emerald Network sites: a legal analysis* (document T-PVS/PA(2020)07). Based on the 19 replies received, four proposals for complementing the current legal framework of the Emerald Network had been drafted and would be presented to the Group of Experts.

Decision: The Bureau endorsed the agenda of the meeting of the Group of Experts. It welcomed the strong participation of Contracting Parties in the survey on the follow up to the legal study on the obligations of Contracting Parties towards their Emerald Network sites and looked forward to the outcomes of the discussions of the Group of Experts on the four proposals for complementing the legal framework of the Emerald Network to be presented to the 41st Standing Committee.

b. State of development of the Emerald Network

The Secretariat informed that the biogeographical evaluation of the list of sites proposed by Belarus as a follow up to the project implemented in 2020 within the frame of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Belarus had had to be postponed *sine die* as a consequence of the current halt to all cooperation activities with Belarus.

The Secretariat further informed that thanks to the recent payment of a voluntary contribution by Germany, the biogeographical evaluation of the list of sites proposed by Georgia was tentatively planned during the week of 13 to 17 December 2021.

The Secretariat reported that Liechtenstein had proposed two Emerald Network sites, thus becoming the 17th non-EU Contracting Party to join the Emerald Network, and that Iceland had announced its intention to propose a first group of sites which were already protected by national law ahead of the forthcoming meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

Decision: The Bureau took note that cooperation activities with Belarus had been put on hold by the Council of Europe. It thanked Germany for their voluntary contribution. It congratulated Liechtenstein for joining the Emerald Network and encouraged Iceland to take action and concretise its announcement.

c. Update on the Emerald Network tools: funding needs

The Secretariat reported that following the decisions of the Standing Committee, several IT work sites were underway:

Regarding the monitoring of the implementation of the Emerald Network, the creation of a barometer was foreseen. The Emerald Network Barometer will mirror the Natura 2000 Barometer and provide an overview of the Emerald Network in the non-EU Contracting Parties to the Convention in terms of number and area of terrestrial and marine sites. The barometer will enable the production of various statistics for individual Contracting Parties or groups of Contracting Parties and the evaluation of the evolution of statistics over the years.

The creation of the Barometer will not only help the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention monitor the progress in the implementation of the Emerald Network by Parties but also support Contracting Parties in stepping up their efforts and in setting conservation priorities.

The development of the Barometer was pending the voluntary contribution of Germany. It was hoped to present the Standing Committee an initial version of the Barometer.

Furthermore, the Emerald Network Webapp created last year had been further developed in order to become a semi-automated tool. This will include the automated update of the Viewer, the automated creation of the lists of candidate and adopted Emerald Network sites, the production of change reports and the creation of QA/QC warnings.

The Secretariat concluded by recalling that IT developments represented a significant investment and represented a large part of the voluntary contributions. Specific voluntary contributions should be sought in the future in order to maintain the current level of the reserves of the Convention.

Decision: The Bureau welcomed the various IT developments and looked forward to seeing their presentation at the 41st Standing Committee.

The Bureau called on Contracting Parties to step up their voluntary contributions in order to support the further development of the Emerald Network tools.

d. Criteria for the assessment of negative changes to Emerald Network databases

The Secretariat recalled that the Emerald Network Webapp includes the functionality to issue change reports comparing the latest national database with the previous version. While the functionality can detect any positive or negative change, it aims primarily to spot the reduction in area of Emerald Network sites or the removal of features from the standard data forms.

The Secretariat informed that discussions regarding the criteria based on which the acceptability of the changes will be assessed had started.

It further informed that the European Commission had recently issued guidelines for assessing changes in Natura 2000 sites which consider three main circumstances for justifying negative changes: A proven, genuine scientific error, natural developments, and a consequence of an application of Art. 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive.

The Secretariat felt that the same or similar circumstances could be considered for assessing negative changes occurring in Emerald Network sites.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided and mandated the Secretariat to inform the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks of the state of play of the reflection on the criteria for assessing negative changes to Emerald Network databases.

e. Cooperation project in South East Europe

The Secretariat informed that the European Environment Agency with the financial support of the European Commission (EC) was implementing an IPA project in the South East of Europe. The project aims to update the Emerald Network databases of the Western Balkan Contracting Parties. Data collected by countries over the years with the support of the EC will be aggregated and submitted under the Emerald Network with a view to its evaluation. The IPA project will end in December and it was hoped that a follow up phase of the project will take place next year to enable the biogeographical evaluation of the updated lists of Emerald Network sites in South East Europe.

Decision: The Bureau thanked the European Commission for its support to the Emerald Network and looked forward to the outcomes of the project.

3.6. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats: results of the consultation of Contracting Parties

The Secretariat informed that at the request of several Contracting Parties, the outcomes of the reporting on the conservation status of species and habitats carried out in 2019, 4 national summary dashboards will be created. They will present the data delivered according to the following themes:

- Number of habitats and species per Country;
- Conservation status and trends of habitats and species;
- Main pressures and threats;
- Data completeness and quality.

The Secretariat further informed that in accordance with the request of the Standing Committee a survey had been carried out among non-EU Contracting Parties on their experience from the past reporting and their expectations for the future reporting. A questionnaire had been elaborated, and the opinions of Contracting Parties collected via bilateral interviews. 17 non-EU Contracting Parties had participated in the exercise.

The outcomes of the survey will be presented and discussed at the Group of Experts. The outcomes of the discussion should provide pointers for the preparation of the next reporting cycle. The majority of the respondents had already expressed the wish that a specific working group on reporting under the Standing Committee be set up which could not only deal with the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) but also tackle issues related to the biennial and quadrennial reporting.

Decision: The Bureau welcomed the development of the national summary dashboards and looked forward to the recommendations of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks for the preparation of the next reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

The Bureau also recommended that the Standing Committee set up a Group of Experts on Reporting as from 2022.

3.7. Biodiversity and Climate Change: state of play

The Secretariat informed that the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, initially scheduled back-to-back with the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, had been postponed to 2022 in agreement with the Chair of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided.

3.8. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the Sturgeon (PANEUAP): state of play

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that, contrary to the information provided in April, the draft project proposal for a joint CoE/EU programme on the coordination of the implementation of the PANEUAP had in the end not received the internal administrative visa. Discussions on possible alternative ways forward for the implementation of coordination activities foreseen under the PANEUAP were underway.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information provided on the state of play of the preparation of activities for the implementation of the PANEUAP. It expressed its strong disappointment that a joint CoE/EU project would not be feasible. It looked forward to receiving information on possible alternative ways forward for the implementation of coordination activities foreseen under the PANEUAP.

3.9. Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in Europe: state of play

The Secretariat recalled that the Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palearctic, 2021-2025, adopted at the 40th Standing Committee, foresees an annual reporting by all Contracting Parties. It informed the Bureau that a reporting questionnaire, developed by Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), co-host of the expert meeting held on 25 February 2020 and author of the review of progress and revised action plan for 2021-2025, had been sent out to Contracting Parties in June.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a virtual expert meeting had taken place on 21 July. Mr Peter Cranswick, technical expert of WWT, gave a brief recap of the presentations given at the meeting by the nominated experts of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany and United Kingdom on the progress made in their countries. He informed the Bureau that the participants considered that positive progress to significantly reduce numbers of birds had been made in all countries but the Netherlands. He highlighted further that the participants considered that the situation in the Netherlands is urgent and significantly undermines the chances of the international eradication plan meeting its target.

Decision: The Bureau thanked WWT for its continuous support in providing technical expertise, took note of the information provided and welcomed the progress made by most countries. Noting with concern the pressing situation in the Netherlands, it urged the Netherlands to step up its efforts.

3.10. Review of the European Plant Conservation Strategy: state of play

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the proof reading and editing of the Review of the European Plant Conservation Strategy had been finalised. It would be published shortly and presented on the Bern Convention website.

Decision: The Bureau thanked Planta Europa for the fruitful cooperation and looked forward to seeing the finalised review of the European Plant Conservation Strategy.

4. 41ST STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

4.1. Draft Agenda

The Secretariat presented a preliminary draft agenda for the 41st Standing Committee.

The Bureau discussed the format of the 41st Standing Committee. In light of the ongoing restrictions on travel and the convening of large physical gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bureau agreed that the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee would be held virtually as a video conference. Due to the complexity, increased costs and risk of reduced inclusivity for participants, the Bureau decided not to hold a hybrid meeting. The physical attendance in the meeting room would therefore be limited to the Chair and Vice-

Chair, should travel restrictions permit, as well as Secretariat members, while other participants would participate remotely.

Taking into account the heavy meeting agenda and the constraints of the virtual process, the Bureau also agreed that the meeting should be extended to four and a half days, as done last year, thus beginning already on Monday afternoon, 29th November 2021.

Decision: The Bureau approved the preliminary draft agenda for the 41st Standing Committee.

In light of the ongoing restrictions on travel and the convening of large physical gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bureau decided that the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee will be held online as a video conference and begin on Monday afternoon, 29th November 2021.

4.2. Draft Programme of Activities 2022-2023

The Secretariat presented a preliminary planning of the activities which could take place in the upcoming biennium, also taking into account new working methods which had evolved throughout the pandemic. It reminded that the discussion on the programme of activities for 2022-2023 at the 41st Standing Committee should take place in the light of the current negotiations on the financing of the Convention. Due in particular to the fragile staffing situation and a growing workload, it was suggested to be conservative with the upcoming activities.

As a follow up to the Standing Committee decisions of last year, namely for the Secretariat to report on the lessons learned from the pandemic and to provide an assessment of the pros and cons of holding Standing Committee meetings only every two years, the Secretariat presented the findings of its brainstorming and assessment to the Bureau. The brainstorming was an opportunity to explore whether and how the working methods of the Standing Committee and Secretariat could be improved and the extent to which changes could affect the expectations of Contracting Parties.

Decision: The Bureau approved the preliminary draft programme of activities 2022-2023. It also instructed the Secretariat to present its findings on the lessons learned from the pandemic and the assessment of the pros and cons of having biennial Standing Committee meetings at the 41st Standing Committee and invited Contracting Parties to exchange views on a possible follow-up.

5. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND VISIBILITY OF THE CONVENTION (Voices of Nature Campaign and World Forum for Democracy)

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the ongoing Voices of Nature Campaign which focuses on participatory engagement for nature conservation. Monthly short blogs on different themes were being developed and published in coordination with various stakeholders of the Bern Convention, to complement the five longer-form stories published during the first half of the year, and the online panel discussion which had taken place in collaboration with the World Forum for Democracy (WFD). The Campaign aims to culminate in a participation during the physical WFD event on 8-10 November in Strasbourg, and details are still being worked out in this regard.

The Secretariat was now brainstorming on themes for next year's campaign, in line with the increased importance of visibility actions, and it welcomed any ideas from the Bureau.

Decision: The Bureau highly appreciated the success of the Campaign and the forthcoming participation at the World Forum for Democracy. It particularly welcomed the strong engagement of various Bern Convention stakeholders in the activities.

6. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION (Biennial Reporting, Online Reporting System)

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a maintenance contract for the Online Reporting System (ORS) had been signed with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in order to ensure a dedicated technical support and reduce the issues experienced by users in the past. This contract was due to last until the new version of the ORS would be launched, hopefully next year.

The biennial reporting questionnaire for the period 2019-2020 had also been launched in June - so far only one non-EU Contracting Party had reported, but it was usual for more reports to be received closer to the deadline of end-October, and the Secretariat would send out a reminder soon. It also expected to receive the EU Contracting Party reports via the Habides+ system.

Finally, it was recalled that the Secretariat was looking into the possibility of assessing the biennial reports, and it was expected to make progress in this area next year, with the aim to possibly start assessing the 2019-2020 reports during 2023.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information, and reminded Contracting Parties to submit their biennial reports by the deadline.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: CASE-FILES

7.1. Case-file system reflection and possible improvements

The Secretariat recalled that the Bureau had discussed in detail this reflection and its memorandum during the extra-ordinary meeting in June. The memorandum has since undergone a written consultation with the members, and most of the proposals had been agreed to. The Secretariat proposed to extract the key guidelines and proposals from the memorandum into a short document to be submitted to the Standing Committee for its attention. This document would aim to establish a framework of case-file system rules and guidelines, and could include longer-term proposals for the future efficient functioning of the system.

Decision: The Bureau highly appreciated the work which had been done and supported the memorandum with several amendments. It agreed with the proposal to present to the Standing Committee a short document acting as a framework of case-file system rules and guidelines, and possibly including longer-term proposals for the future efficient functioning of the system. The Bureau stressed that this was a very important exercise to improve the system and make it more efficient and effective for all of the stakeholders involved.

7.2. Open files

- 1995/6: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau took note of the concerns of the complainant that the government has achieved little progress on the 13 points of Recommendation No. 191 (2016), and that, despite the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, illegal activities have continued on and in the vicinity of the nesting beaches.

The Bureau welcomed progress in relation to the development of a Local Development Plan and the issuance of a Ministerial Decree, but noted that bureaucracy is slowing down progress.

The Bureau noted the information provided by the complainant that several proposals for the expansion of existing or the creation of new quarries within and adjacent to the Akamas Peninsula Natura 2000 area have been put forward and asked the authorities to report on this issue at the 41st Standing Committee meeting.

The Bureau further encouraged enforcement efforts such as those indicated by the complainant in Argaka and Gialia.

The Bureau also thanked both parties for their cooperation on the ongoing marine turtles' conservation initiative, which is in elaboration with the goal of identifying holistic solutions for the long-standing (and any future) marine turtle case-files. The Cypriot authorities were congratulated for their offer to be the first country to hold national consultations.

The file remains **open** and both parties are invited to make a brief presentation at the 41st Standing Committee meeting, focusing on any recent updates.

- 2004/2: Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica

Decision: The Bureau thanked the authorities of Bulgaria and the complainant for having presented new reports, recalling that, following the request of the authorities at the 40th Standing Committee, it had been agreed to reduce monitoring of this case to once a year.

It took note of the authorities request to consider several of the recommendations as having been completed, but taking into account certain related concerns of the complainant, reminded the authorities that the recommendations are long-term efforts, and thus requested that the authorities continue to report on the recommendation as a whole.

The Bureau urged the authorities to ensure a participatory, multi-stakeholder approach when elaborating its Energy and Climate Plan, and to ensure the previous recommendations on this case, as well as other international guidelines are respected.

The Bureau also recalled from a discussion at a previous meeting the idea to take a closer look at this recurring issue of wind farms and their effects on birds and other species. It recalled the guidelines that already exist including of the Bern Convention, EU, Birdlife and Energy Community Treaty, and proposed that the latter could make a short presentation at the Standing Committee.

Both parties were invited to present these update reports at the 41st Standing Committee. The file remains **open**.

- 2012/09: Turkey: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau welcomed the information on the preparation of the renewal of lighting on the public beach of Fethiye as well as the continuous efforts to work with local stakeholders for the conservation of marine turtles.

The Bureau renewed its request to the authorities to share more information regarding the management plan prepared for Patara, outlining its content and clarifying whether this has already been adopted. Despite the increase in nesting activities, the Bureau also noted that issues of illegal buildings have not been resolved and reminded the authorities to provide information on the new hotel development in Fethiye as well as the additional houses built outside the summer house construction project in Patara, as reported by the complainant in August 2020, and the new business facilities in Fethiye, as reported by the complainant in August 2021. Additional clarifications were also requested regarding the ongoing redetermination of the SPA's zoning in Patara. A timeline on the completion of the judicial proceeding aimed at regulating land registry records in Fethiye was also requested as well as a timeline for the demolition of illegal buildings. The authorities were further encouraged to develop and implement management plans for Fethiye.

The Bureau also thanked both parties for their cooperation on the ongoing marine turtles' conservation initiative, which is in elaboration with the goal of identifying holistic solutions for the long-standing (and any future) marine turtle case-files.

The file is kept **open** and both parties are invited to make a brief presentation at the 41st Standing Committee meeting, focusing on the issues above.

- 2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of Mavrovo National Park: on-the-spot appraisal

Decision: The Bureau recalled that the online advisory mission had taken place in May, and that the independent experts were in the process of finalising the draft report and draft recommendation for the Standing Committee. The Bureau once again thanked both parties and all involved stakeholders for their excellent cooperation, and asked them for a continuing engagement with the Secretariat and experts until the process has been finalised.

The Bureau looked forward to hearing presentations from both parties and the independent experts on the mission and consulting the draft recommendation during the Standing Committee. If any progress would already be achieved by then, it would be a most welcome update for the Standing Committee.

- 2016/5: Albania: Presumed negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Vjosa river

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for their updated reports.

It took note that the pandemic continues to delay the River Basin Management Plan preparation, that the government is nearing the finalisation of declaring the Vjosa River area as a Cat. IV Nature Park, but that the complainant and IUCN have made proposals based on extensive studies to declare the park as a National Park (IUCN Cat. II). The Bureau asked the authorities to clarify when referring to the category of the park if they are referring to the IUCN classifications, and if so, why the proposal of the complainant and IUCN was not taken into account.

The Bureau also reiterated its deep concern regarding the urbanisation plans for the Vjosë-Nartë Protected Area, including construction of an airport, and urged the government to rethink these plans. The natural values of this area are evident, and a strong protection regime needs to be implemented.

It was also concerned with the potential reduction of the national network of protected areas, and delays in this project as well as of the River Basin Management Plan preparation, and encouraged faster development of these projects.

The Bureau again urged the national authorities of Albania to cooperate with both the local stakeholders and international community such as IUCN and the ECT when taking decision which could affect the long-term viability of nature conservation in Albania.

The file stays **open**. Both parties were invited to present their reports and any updates at the 41st Standing Committee meeting.

- 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the continued timely and quality reporting.

It noted with appreciation that cooperation had been established between the government and civil society, including a panel discussion which had led to some positive outcomes.

It noted that there appeared to be consensus on the negative risks associated with the SLS Mihalovici, and urged the authorities to cancel constructions and revoke permits, including related to the Porto Skadar Lake and White Village, and to identify alternative eco-touristic solutions.

It welcomed the transfer of ownership of Ulcinj Salina to government hands and encouraged the authorities to take correct decisions for its management.

It further welcomed multiple other projects that the government was implementing along with local and international partners and endorsed these cooperation's; particularly noteworthy was the project on restoration of wet meadows of Skadar Lake for sustainable and traditional use.

It appreciated the submission to UNESCO of the forest area, but noted that the submission had failed demonstrating that there are still challenges in that area, and asked the authorities to clarify why the submission had been rejected, and what were the future intentions.

It again requested the authorities to consider alternative options to the Bar-Boljare highway which could have serious negative effects on the Tara river and its surroundings.

It also urged the government to step up efforts to deliver a spatial plan, as this had been pending already for a long time, as well as to ensure better enforcement of existing laws on the ground.

The Bureau also invited the European Commission to present any possible updates at the Standing Committee.

Both parties were invited to present their reports and any updates at the 41st Standing Committee meeting. The file stays **open**.

➤ 2010/05: Greece: threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau welcomed the adoption of the 6-year Action Plan on *Caretta caretta* and asked both parties to keep the Bureau updated on the developments of more detailed action plans for relevant species and habitats.

The Bureau also welcomed the adoption of the Ministerial decision for the designation of national conservation targets for 21 natural habitats and 55 species of Community interest, but noted that conservation targets for *Caretta caretta* are not expected to be issued soon (at least 26 months after the award of the contract).

The Bureau noted the complainant's new concerns related to recent national law 4819/2021, which adds to the concerns on article 218 of Law 4782/2021 previously reported. Authorities were asked to clarify what defines an area of 'absolute nature protection' in relation to the additional information they provided on Art 218 of Law 4782/2021. Moreover, authorities were invited to clarify the reasons for removing the "conservation of biodiversity" from the objectives of the newly created Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (OFYPEKA) and provide more information on the financial sustainability of the agency (law 4819/2021).

Further, as according to the complainant Law 4819/2021 excludes the possibility for OFYPEKA to take a decision on the effects of construction projects that may affect the protected areas, the authorities were asked to clarify which agency will be in charge of taking such decisions.

The Bureau welcomed the development of the project on the regulation and delimitation of human activities on the beaches within the jurisdiction of the Kotychi-Strophylia Wetlands Management Body; the authorities were invited to share a more detailed timeline for the completion of the project as well as to clarify whether there is already a plan for follow up in place.

The Bureau noted the complainant's new concerns related to recent national law 4819/2021, which adds to the concerns on article 218 of Law 4782/2021 previously reported. The authorities were asked to clarify if the entirety of Thines Kiparissias qualifies as an area of 'absolute nature protection' according to Art 218 of Law 4782/2021.

The Bureau further took note of the concerns of the complainant that the government has achieved little progress on the implementation of Recommendation No. 174 (2014), due to insufficient enforcement of relevant national laws. In relation to the construction of new illegal roads, the authorities were invited to keep the Bureau updated on the environmental study on the restoration of sand dunes, the inversion of erosion as well as the restoration of the area after the destruction of the roadways.

The Bureau welcomed the national authorities' monitoring and mitigation initiatives and encouraged them to continue and strengthen their efforts for the enforcement of national law.

The Bureau also thanked both parties for their cooperation on the ongoing marine turtles' conservation initiative, which is in elaboration with the goal of identifying holistic solutions for the long-standing (and any future) marine turtle case-files.

The file remains **open** and both parties are invited to make a brief presentation at the 41st Standing Committee meeting, focusing on the issues above.

➤ 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas bay, Zakynthos

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau welcomed the national authorities' monitoring and mitigation initiatives and encouraged them to continue and strengthen their efforts for the enforcement of national law.

The Bureau noted the complainant's new concerns related to recent national law 4819/2021, which adds to the concerns on article 218 of Law 4782/2021 previously reported. Authorities were asked to clarify if the entirety of Laganas Bay qualifies as an area of 'absolute nature protection' according to Art 218 of Law 4782/2021.

The Bureau also noted the information on the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon on Laganas Bay and asked the government to clarify whether any project has been approved or awaiting approval.

Regarding the illegal constructions in Laganas Bay, the Bureau welcomed that no new constructions have been built in recent years and asked the authorities to clarify which of the illegal buildings in Laganas Bay can be demolished and sites restored and where this responsibility lies.

The Bureau took note of the complainant's ongoing concerns about inadequate enforcement of the established protective management measures within the protected area as well as the delays in the implementation of the Greek governance model for the management of protected areas.

The complainant's concerns in relation to the national laws 4685/2020 and 4819/2021 were also considered and addressed in the Bureau decision concerning case file 2010/05.

The Bureau also thanked both parties for their cooperation on the ongoing marine turtles' conservation initiative, which is in elaboration with the goal of identifying holistic solutions for the long-standing (and any future) marine turtle case-files.

The file is kept **open** and both parties are invited to present on the situation at the 41st Standing Committee.

7.3. Possible files

- 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge: on-the-spot appraisal

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for their reports, and particularly congratulated them on their excellent cooperation with the Secretariat and two independent experts who had recently conducted online advisory meetings with various stakeholders of the case. The Bureau was informed by the Secretariat that the meetings had gone well, proposals had been made, and the experts were now working on finalising a draft report and draft recommendations to be submitted for the 41st Standing Committee's attention.

As the process was not yet finished, the Bureau encouraged both parties to continue the timely cooperation in order to ensure deadlines would be met, and looked forward to hearing presentations from both parties and the independent experts on the mission during the Standing Committee. If any progress in terms of the collaborative process would already be achieved by then, it would be a most welcome update for the Standing Committee.

The Bureau also recalled that the work of the two experts funded by the European Commission to develop site-specific conservation objectives was ongoing, and should also be taken into account during the Committee meeting.

- 2019/05: Turkey: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau noted that following the on-the-spot appraisal (OSA) of a group of scientific experts to assess a second project on coastal development/beach arrangement, the project had been amended to move certain components to more suitable locations. However, the Bureau requested more information on a possible Environmental Impact Assessment to have a better overview of the impact that this project would have in the area.

The Bureau also took note of the complainant information that rubble and soil remain after the rehabilitation works in the Picnic Area in Karaağaç and regretted that authorities did not involve the complainant organisations and other relevant local NGOs in reference to the on-the -spot appraisal visit and the recommendations for the rehabilitation.

The Bureau positively noted the efforts of Turkish national authorities to raise awareness of these local stakeholders and asked to increase the enforcement, as the complainant continues to report violations and lack of enforcement of conservation measures.

Finally, Turkish authorities were invited to share more details on Mersin Metropolitan Municipality's approval of Anamur Municipality's request to change the established protection zone, which could enable further construction works within Anamur's protected area.

The Bureau finally thanked both parties for their cooperation on the ongoing marine turtles' conservation initiative, which is in elaboration with the goal of identifying holistic solutions for the long-standing (and any future) marine turtle case-files.

The file remains a **possible** file. Both parties were invited to present updates to the 41st Standing Committee.

7.4. Complaints on stand-by

- 2015/02: North Macedonia: Possible impact of wind-farm developments on bats

Decision: The Bureau acknowledged the short report of the complainant but regretted again not receiving a report from the national authorities. It remarked that the authorities in their last report from 2020 had requested that the case should be closed, however according to the complainant the follow-up process (monitoring of wind farms, etc) and lack of cooperation with NGOs has been problematic, therefore the Bureau would need to see a comprehensive response from the authorities before it could consider dismissing this complaint.

The Bureau also took note of the short update of EUROBATS which appeared to confirm this lack of cooperation with experts and civil society.

The complaint remains on **stand-by**. The Bureau again asked the national authorities to respond at its next meeting in Spring 2022 to the issues raised by the complainant, and it urged them to collaborate with the organisations which can provide expert advice, including Batlife Macedonia and EUROBATS.

- 2016/06: Serbia: Presumed risk of national extinction of Great Bustards

Decision: The Bureau thanked the authorities for the report and congratulated them for the important progress achieved in reference to the measures put in place for the conservation of the Great Bustard. However, it noted that data on hatching suggests that the population is not recovering yet.

Both the authorities and the complainant were asked to report to the Bureau in Autumn 2022, sharing more information on the adoption of the management plan for "The pastures of Great Bustard" as well as on the population, nesting and hatching registered in the area in 2021 and 2022. Unless further concerns are expressed by the complainant by Autumn 2022, the Bureau would consider dismissing the complaint. It remains on **stand-by**.

- 2017/02: North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments

Decision: The Bureau thanked the complainant for the comprehensive report, but strongly regretted again the lack of a report from the national authorities.

The Bureau was deeply concerned with the very negative picture painted by the complainant of the situation on the ground with numerous worrying developments.

It thanked the Ramsar Convention for their update and common concern, especially on the lack of a buffer zone for the Ramsar site.

It also thanked the UNESCO secretariat for their update, and added its concern over the decision to not inscribe the site on the List of World Heritage in Danger despite the strong justifications to take this step.

The Bureau further recalled that the online advisory mission for Mavrovo National Park had also taken into account this complaint, and that during the meeting it was clear that this complex situation may require its own dedicated mission.

The complaint remains on **stand-by**. The Bureau decided to exceptionally bring this complaint to the agenda of the 41st Standing Committee where both Parties could present their position, and the independent expert for the Mavrovo mission could present the findings on this case. The national authorities were urged to provide a report ahead of this meeting responding to all of the allegations of the complainant, and also commenting on the Draft Law on Proclamation of Studenchishte Marsh as a Nature Park.

- 2017/05: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site Tarutino (UA0000137) from cultivation developments

Decision: The Bureau noted the short reports of both parties, that no new negative actions have occurred, and that the government is making efforts to restore the area as part of the global rewilding project in the Danube Delta area.

The Bureau was satisfied of the progress in this case and decided to **dismiss** it. However, it reminded the national authorities to ensure that the restoration continues, and would remain ready to assess any possible future negative actions in this Emerald Network territory.

- 2017/06: Iceland: Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve's authentic birch woods from new road infrastructure: on-the-spot appraisal

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the short update reports, recalling that it had remarked at its extraordinary meeting in June that it seemed unlikely that an online advisory mission could take place this year within the deadlines to provide a draft report and recommendations to the Standing Committee, due to delays including the change in national focal point of Iceland.

It also took note that road construction has begun, despite the numerous calls of the Bureau and Standing Committee to halt any works until an independent international assessment has taken place.

The Bureau however noted the progress and willingness of the Icelandic authorities to finally move ahead with the proposal of sites for the Emerald Network- it encouraged continued work in this regard.

The Bureau asked the authorities to clarify if the area affected by the road was within one of the areas proposed to become part of the Emerald Network.

It again called for the OSA to go ahead this year even if the draft recommendations couldn't be ready for the Standing Committee, at the least to ensure mitigation measures are being properly implemented.

This complaint remains on **stand-by** and would again be exceptionally assessed at the 41st Standing Committee, where both Parties were invited to present updates.

- 2018/01: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site "Polonina Borzhava" (UA0000263) from wind energy development: on-the-spot appraisal

Decision: The Bureau recalled that an online advisory appraisal was scheduled for next week (week of 20th September), bringing together both parties, concerned stakeholders and the independent experts. It thanked both parties for their willingness to cooperate up to this point, and hoped for productive meetings next week.

The Bureau invited both parties to attend the 41st Standing Committee to present their feedback on the advisory mission, provide any updates on the case, and to discuss the draft mission report and draft recommendation that the experts would present at that meeting.

- 2018/05: Ukraine: Alleged threats to the Emerald Network sites Skhidnyi Svydovets, Marmaroski ta Chyvchyno-Hryniavski Hory and Carpathian biosphere Reserve

Decision: The Bureau noted the lack of an update complainant report and that the government had reported no changes to the case. This complaint remained on **stand-by** and would be discussed again next Spring where both Parties were invited to share updates, and the complainant was warned that, should no further negative actions be shared with the Bureau, it may consider to dismiss this complaint.

- 2019/04: United Kingdom: Badger Culling Policy in England

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau welcomed the information that the badger control policy is now being phased out in favour of vaccinations, testing and other less-intensive measures.

The Bureau also considered the additional information shared by the complainant, noting their concerns regarding affected territory and number of licenses issued.

Due to the caveats to the updated Strategy in relation to the phase out of the badger culling policy, the case file was kept on **stand-by** and both parties were requested to report again in two years' time, and especially to provide updated information on population estimates, the proportion of population culled and on monitoring results of the strategy.

- 2020/01: Ukraine: Recognising Horbachykha as a protected area to save it from residential developments

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for their update reports. It took note of various allegations of the complainant including of the city authority's apparent unwillingness to find a compromise and protect the valuable territory, of illegal rezoning, and of arson attacks, amongst other negative issues.

It appreciated the information of the national authorities that a neighbouring site has been proposed as an Emerald Network site, and of legislative amendments which should aid in nature conservation issues.

The Bureau again urged the Ministry to step in and proclaim this whole area as an Emerald Network site, and to stop any illegal constructions or illegal rezoning of territories by the city authorities.

It also encouraged both parties to cooperate in order to find solutions for the protection of this territory. The responsible authorities at every level in Ukraine should be reminded that they are expected to follow their international commitments to the Bern Convention and other treaties.

The case remained on **stand-by**. The Bureau asked for update reports for its next meeting, in particular requesting the authorities to respond to the allegations of the complainant report.

- 2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and its impacts on Emerald Network sites

Decision: The Bureau thanked the national authorities for the timely report and noted the lack of a response from the complainant.

It took note of the information provided by the authorities, namely that activities were being carried out for clarification and adjustment of boundaries of potential Emerald Network sites according to recommendations of the Convention. It further took note that, according to studies conducted, the "Sevan" and "Gorhajak" sites would not be exposed to negative effects from the mining site or processing plant as the sites are located higher. It also noted that, according to the authorities, the mammal species presented in the complaint were not confirmed on the territory; the bird species do not nest on the territory, only fly across, and have large territories around; the fish, invertebrate and plant species indicated in the complaint also do not inhabit the territory.

The Bureau reiterated its recommendation to halt any developments that can negatively affect the habitats and species protected under the Convention, whether it pertains to an Emerald Network site or not. The Bureau asked the authorities to provide the results of the conducted assessments showing that the project would not bring any negative impacts on species and habitats.

Once again, the Bureau expressed its concern at the expected large reduction in size of Emerald Network coverage in Armenia and again urged the authorities to clarify on when the revised list would likely be ready and submitted to the Secretariat. It recalled its request for an update on Armenia's Emerald Network structure at the upcoming Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks meeting in October 2021.

The case remained on **stand-by**. Both parties were invited to submit reports for the Bureau meeting in Spring 2022.

- 2020/06: Portugal: Presumed threat to Tagus Estuary Special Protected Area from a new airport

Decision: The Bureau thanked the complainant for their updated report and noted the lack of a response from the national authorities. The other international organisations involved in the case were also thanked for their good cooperation.

The Bureau noted that the internal administrative proceeding is progressing. The Bureau also noted the concerns of the complainant in relation to the mitigation measures proposed by the authorities, the limited intertidal area available to maintain the functional integrity of the site and the consequences on the conservation value of wetlands for shorebirds.

The Bureau also noted that the European Commission is investigating the case and that the Ramsar Convention remains available for a possible joint mission on-site.

The Bureau renewed its request to the authorities to provide more information for its next meeting on the current status of the project, when construction is planned to begin, as well as on the state of play of the study on potential disturbances on birds, which was meant to be carried out for a minimum of one year before construction.

The Bureau also renewed the request to the authorities to share any data available on the disturbance of the current military airport on avifauna, as well as on the foreseeable growth in flight traffic, flight heights and flight routes, etc.

In addition, the Bureau requested more in-depth information to facilitate its understanding of the issues identified and measures proposed. The Portuguese authorities were therefore requested to share the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and any other relevant publicly available documentation related to the EIA procedure ahead of the Bureau meeting in Spring 2022.

The Bureau requested that the complainant also send any updates including on the procedures taking place with the Lisbon Administrative Court, as well as a response to the report of the authorities for the next meeting.

The Secretariat was instructed to request any updates from the European Commission, AEWA and Ramsar Convention on their parallel processes, as sharing information between the various international organisations involved in the case was considered to be very important.

Should no report be submitted by the national authorities to the Bureau at its next meeting, the Bureau would consider elevating the status of the case to a possible file. For the time being, the complaint is kept on **stand-by**.

- 2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river

Decision: The Bureau thanked the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the complainant for the reporting.

It expressed its concern and confusion that construction appeared to have begun in the Emerald Network site, despite the authorities in their report of April and again in the new report having stated that all works must be halted until a new EIA has been carried out- furthermore the authorities had not mentioned the start of the works in their new report.

The Bureau was equally concerned by the alleged illegal procedure of splitting the EIA of the small hydropower plants into several different studies, as well as the alleged lack of a competent cumulative assessment study.

It welcomed that a study towards the proclamation of certain sites as protected areas has begun, but asked for clarification as to whether these sites cover the area of development, and whether they are already Emerald Network sites.

Due to the urgency and risk to this Emerald site as described by the complainant, and the apparent lack of commitment to the Emerald Network provisions from the authorities, the Bureau decided to **upgrade this case to a Possible File**, thus bringing it to the agenda of the 41st Standing Committee where both Parties are invited to present.

The Bureau meanwhile urged the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to uphold their international obligations to the Emerald Network and Bern Convention, and halt any works at the site until comprehensive and legally sound environmental assessments have been carried out. It should also refer to Recommendation 208 (2019) of the Standing Committee on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites.

7.5. Other complaints

- 2019/01: Ukraine: Possible negative effects of hydrocarbons extraction in four Emerald sites in Donetsk-Kharkiv region

Decision: The Bureau noted the lack of a complainant report and the short government update informing that an EIA is underway but that the drilling is on agricultural land so not expected to affect any local flora or fauna. It reminded that four Emerald Network sites are affected, and so to ensure the precautionary principle.

The Bureau urged the complainant to send an update report as soon as any negative developments occur, and the government was also invited to send an update report in one year's time including on results of the EIA.

- 2019/02: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site Zatoky (UA0000214) from windfarm developments

Decision: The Bureau noted the lack of a government report and that the complainant mentions no updates, but reiterates the proposal to consider an overview of wind energy development on the Black Sea coast. This complaint would be discussed again in one year or as soon as any negative developments occur and both parties were invited to send updates. It recalled to the authorities to refer to Recommendation 208 (2019) on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites.

- 2020/02: Ukraine: Logging threats to the Black Tysa River in Emerald Network site "Marmaroski ta Chyvchyno-Hryniavski Hory" (UA0000117)

Decision: The Bureau noted the update reports of both parties, and expressed concerned with the complainant information that the situation is worsening in the territory.

It also noted that the authorities have reported that the surface area which can be logged has been reduced, and of amendments to law on biodiversity conservation in forests.

The Bureau was concerned with this case and commented that large-scale logging should be reduced. It reminded the authorities to abide by Recommendation 208 (2019) on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites.

The Bureau asked for update reports for the Spring meeting, in particular asking the authorities to provide precise information on the quantity of logging occurring. This complaint is considered on **stand-by**.

- 2020/03: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald Network site "Bugzkyi Gard National Nature Park" (UA0000040)

Decision: The Bureau noted the reports of both parties which confirmed that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources had refused the EIA of the developer due to incomplete and low-quality information- it congratulated the authorities for evaluating seriously the quality of the data in the EIA and for recommending consideration of alternative solutions. It asked the Ministry to clarify if it recommended the total abandonment of the project.

The Bureau reminded the authorities to abide by Recommendation 208 (2019) on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites. It requested update reports in one year or as soon as any negative developments occur.

- 2020/08: Bulgaria: Alleged threat to biodiversity due to draft amendment of hunting legislation

Decision: The Bureau acknowledged receipt of the response from the Complainant.

The Bureau was pleased to note that the Complainant had confirmed that the draft amendment had been withdrawn by the national authorities.

As the issue appeared to have been resolved, the Bureau decided to **dismiss** the complaint.

- 2021/01: Turkey: Alleged threats to marine turtles due to a new coal-fired power plant at Sugözü Beach

Decision: The Bureau thanked both parties for the updated reports.

The Bureau thanked the Turkish authorities for providing more information on the project and noted that the use of new power plant technologies was expected to decrease the negative effects on sea turtles.

The Bureau noted the scarcity of data available on nesting populations and noted the importance of ensuring the availability of sound scientific data for monitoring the nesting population in Sugözü Beach.

In reference to the possible negative effects of the power plant on other species including birds, the Bureau noted that the new technologies would minimise the risk of air pollution and asked the authorities to clarify how the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has taken in consideration the possible negative effects of the development on marine turtles and other species.

The Bureau was deeply concerned that this important nesting site was being compromised by a fossil-fuel energy development, and, also in view of the other cases-files concerning nesting beaches in Turkey as well as the Bern Convention initiative for the conservation of marine turtles which was in elaboration, the Bureau decided to elevate this to a complaint on **stand-by** and to request updates from both parties for the Bureau in Spring 2022.

7.6. New complaints

- 2021/2: Norway: Alleged threat to birds and protected sites due to the proposed construction of windfarms

Decision: The Bureau acknowledged the new complaint received as well as the detailed response from the authorities of Norway. It acknowledged that the complaint has to be considered as related only to Haram wind power plant, as the project in Havsul I, included in the original complaint form, had been rejected by the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy on 26 March 2021.

It noted that the remaining planned windfarm would affect three Emerald Network sites and would be situated along one of Norway's most important migration routes for birds, some of which are protected under the appendices of the Bern Convention.

The Bureau thanked the authorities for their detailed report and clear explanation of the licensing processes in Norway. The Bureau noted the high level of scrutiny given by the authorities during the preliminary phases on the potential impact of the wind farm on the surrounding ecosystem. Both the authorities and the complainant were asked to share updated reports in one year's time, specifically focusing on the monitoring programme for relevant avian fauna (also in reference to the Monitoring framework for the Emerald Network) and giving more details on the mitigation measures identified.

The complaint is considered on **stand-by**.

- 2021/03: Romania: Alleged unsustainable logging within the Retezat National Park

Decision: The Bureau acknowledged the new complaint received as well as the response from the government of Romania.

The Bureau took note of the concerns of the Complainant that increased logging within the territory of the Retezat National Park, which is an EDPA site, would cause the loss of an invaluable genuine wilderness area, along with irreversible damage to the flora and fauna in the park.

It also noted the information provided by the national authorities that the area subject to the complaint is included in the Sustainable Conservation Zone of Retezat National Park in which certain logging activities may take place. It further took note of the information provided that the logging activities mentioned in the complaint were the subject of controls carried out by the competent authorities, who reacted to a petition which the Complainant had sent to state institutions. It acknowledged that, as a result, two controls had been made by the National Environmental Guard (NEG) which had reported that no illegal logging evidences had been found and no sanctions were applied for matters related to the legality of logging.

The Bureau asked the authorities to provide English translations and/or summaries of the two control reports and clarify further which types of logging are permitted in the Park for the next Bureau meeting.

The Bureau reminded the authorities to respect the ecological integrity of the European Diploma holding area of international importance. It highlighted that an on-the-spot-appraisal visit to Retezat National Park was planned for 2022 in the framework of the EDPA which could possibly cover pending issues related to the complaint.

The Bureau asked the Complainant to respond to the authorities' report for the next Bureau meeting.

- 2021/04: Ukraine: Threats to wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats in Irpin river valley Emerald Network site from constructions

Decision: The Bureau thanked the complainant for the new complaint, and the national authorities for their response, despite the short deadline.

The Bureau took note of the allegations of the complainant of constructions which could have negative effects on species and habitats in the Irpin River valley, part of which is an Emerald Network site. It was also concerned that despite requests to both local and national authorities, no action had been taken.

It however also took note that the authorities had initiated relations with the complainant and local stakeholders in order to involve them in the EIA procedures.

The Bureau asked the authorities to provide more precise information on the status of constructions and the EIAs already carried out or in progress, as well as on the allegations of the lack of a proper sewage system, which could be a public health issue.

The Bureau reminded the authorities to abide by Recommendation 208 (2019) on detecting, reporting, assessing and responding to changes in the ecological character of Emerald Network sites.

It requested update reports from both parties for the next meeting in Spring, and encouraged good collaboration between the national authorities, local authorities and the complainant and other local and civil society.

7.7. Follow-up of previous recommendations and case-files

- [Recommendation No.190 \(2016\)](#) on the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, especially birds, in afforestation of lowland in Iceland

Decision: The Bureau thanked the Icelandic authorities for the progress report, welcoming that the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) had taken various steps towards conserving natural habitats and wildlife in Iceland, such as a new bill on forestry, an increase in forestry-based actions, an increase in land restoration projects, increased monitoring as well as plans for forestry and land restoration. It further welcomed that Iceland would start the process of proposing sites to the Emerald Network in September 2021.

The Bureau also took note of concerns expressed by an NGO that Iceland's draft nation-wide plan for forestry (NWPF) fails to take account key recommendations of Resolution No. 190 (2016) and that it undermines the progress made since 2016 in line with the AEWA/Bern recommendations by the Environmental Institutes.

The Bureau welcomed the overall progress made and urged the Icelandic authorities to keep up the positive trend. It asked to authorities to clarify the compliance of the draft plan for forestry with Resolution No. 190 (2016).

The Bureau reminded the Iceland that a report on the implementation of the Recommendation No. 190 (2016) is expected to be sent each year to both AEWA and the Bern Convention. It asked the authorities to provide further information on the draft plan for the 41st Standing Committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Infra-Ecology Network of Europe (IENE) had approached enquiring as to whether a collaboration could be envisaged. A Memorandum of Cooperation was an option and the Secretariat, recalling that the IENE had assisted in the identification of experts for the OSAs, would look into the options.

To increase the visibility of the composition of the Bureau, the Secretariat suggested that the names of the Bureau members and the Contracting Party they represent be published on the Bern Convention webpage.

The Bureau discussed tentative dates for the Spring Bureau meeting in 2022.

Decision: The Bureau took note of the information concerning a possible Memorandum of Cooperation with the IENE.

The Bureau agreed for the composition of the Bureau to be published on the Bern Convention webpage.

The Bureau agreed on the week of 4-8 April 2022 as tentative dates for the Spring Bureau meeting.

Appendix I - Agenda

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

[[T-PVS\(2021\)04](#) - report of April Bureau meeting]
[[T-PVS\(2021\)08](#) - report of June extra-ordinary Bureau meeting]

2. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION

2.1. Inter-sessional working group on financing: state of play

[[T-PVS\(2021\)01](#) - Report of the first meeting]
[[T-PVS\(2021\)03](#) – Report of the second meeting]
[[T-PVS\(2021\)06](#) – Report of the third meeting]

2.2. Voluntary contributions received in 2021: state of play

[T-PVS/Inf(2021)07 - Follow up table of the voluntary contributions received]

2.3. Report on the use of the resources from the Special Account of the Bern Convention

2.4. Working Group on a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030: state of play

[[T-PVS\(2021\)07](#)– report of 2nd meeting]
[4th drafts of Vision & Strategic Plan]

2.5. Policy Guidelines for an integrated culture/nature/landscape management

[Draft Concept Note]

2.6. Rules of procedure: Possible modifications

[T-PVS/Inf(2021)XX– draft of possible RoP modifications]

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2021

[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)11](#) – Calendar of 2021 meetings]
[[T-PVS\(2020\)07](#) - Programme of Activities and budget for 2021]

3.1. European Diploma for Protected Areas: state of play of the 2021 on-the-spot appraisal visits

[[T-PVS/DE\(2020\)20](#) – List of the 2021 on-the-spot appraisal visits]
[[T-PVS/DE\(2020\)19](#) - List of the 2020 on-the-spot appraisal visits]

3.2. Illegal killing of birds: state of play (joint MIKT meeting, IKB Scoreboard and Rome Strategic Plan)

[[T-PVS\(2021\)10](#) – Report of joint MIKT meeting]
[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)33](#) - proposal for future periodic assessment and frequency and format of future joint meetings]
[T-PVS/Inf(2021)45 - Options for Baseline and methodology IKB]
[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)25](#)- Considerations for the way forward on preparing a format and guidance for the development and implementation of national IKB action plans]

3.3. Invasive Alien Species: state of play (Group of Experts meeting, guidelines on Communication and IAS, E-Commerce and IAS, Study on Alien Pathogens)

[[T-PVS\(2021\)9](#) –Report of GoE meeting]
[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)42](#) - Brief summary of foreseen updates to the report on alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS]
[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)39](#) -Guidance on e-commerce and IAS]
[[T-PVS\(2021\)11](#) – Draft Recommendation on e-commerce and IAS]

3.4. Amphibians and reptiles: Group of Experts meeting and Action Plan on Marine Turtles

[[T-PVS/Agenda\(2021\)14](#) – Draft agenda of GoE meeting]
[[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)40](#) - Terms of reference of ad hoc working group for conservation of marine turtles]

3.5. Setting-up of the Emerald Network: state of play and ongoing activities in 2021

a. Groups of experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, 5-6 October 2021

[\[T-PVS/Agenda\(2021\)15\]](#) – Draft agenda of Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks]

[\[T-PVS/PA\(2021\)01\]](#) – Future work on the legal framework of the Emerald Network – Possible next steps]

b. State of development of the Emerald Network

c. Update on the Emerald Network tools: funding needs

d. Criteria for the assessment of negative changes to Emerald Network databases

e. Cooperation project in the South East Europe

3.6. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats: results of the consultation of Contracting Parties

[\[T-PVS/PA\(2021\)04\]](#) - Opinions about the reporting under the Resolution No. 8 (2012): assessment of the past reporting exercise and pointers for the future]

3.7. Biodiversity and Climate Change: state of play

3.8. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the Sturgeon: state of play

3.9. Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in Europe: state of play

3.10. Review of the European Plant Conservation Strategy: state of play

4. 41ST STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

4.1. Draft Agenda

[T-PVS/Agenda(2021)20]

4.2. Draft Programme of Activities 2022-2023

[Draft Programme of Activities and budget for 2022-2023]

5. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND VISIBILITY OF THE CONVENTION (Voices of Nature Campaign and World Forum for Democracy)

6. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION (Biennial Reporting, Online Reporting System)

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: CASE-FILES

[T-PVS/Notes(2021)4 – Summary of open and possible case files]

[T-PVS/Notes(2021)5 – Summary of complaints on stand-by]

[T-PVS/Notes(2021)6 – Summary of other complaints]

[T-PVS/Notes(2021)7 – Summary of Follow-up Recommendations]

[\[T-PVS/Inf\(2021\)05\]](#) – Register of Bern Convention's case-files]

7.1. Case-file system reflection and possible improvements

[T-PVS/Inf(2021)30 – [revised] Secretariat memorandum]

7.2. Open files

- 1995/6: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)60\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)61\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2004/2: Bulgaria: Wind farms in Balchik and Kaliakra –Via Pontica
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)73\]](#) - Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)70\]](#) - Complainant Report]
- 2012/09: Turkey: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)28\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)62\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of Mavrovo National Park: on-the-spot appraisal
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2020\)18\]](#) –Terms of Reference of the OSA]
- 2016/5: Albania: Presumed negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Vjosa river
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)68\]](#) - Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)57\]](#) - Complainant Report]
- 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)46\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)17\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2010/05: Greece: threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)47\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)32\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of Caretta Caretta in Laganas bay, Zakynthos
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)48\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)19\]](#) – Complainant Report]

7.3. Possible files

- 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge: on-the-spot appraisal
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)01\]](#) –Terms of Reference of the OSA]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)36\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)59\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2019/05: Turkey: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)29\]](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)27\]](#) – Complainant Report]

7.4. Complaints on stand-by

- 2015/02: North Macedonia: Possible impact of wind-farm developments on bats
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2020\)69\]](#)– Government Report (2020)]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)34\]](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2016/06: Serbia: Presumed risk of national extinction of Great Bustards
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)54\]](#)– Government Report]

- 2017/02: North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2020\)69](#) – Government Report (2020)
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)37](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2017/05: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site Tarutino (UA0000137) from cultivation developments
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)11](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)58](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2017/06: Iceland: Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve’s authentic birch woods from new road infrastructure: on-the-spot appraisal
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)64](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)24](#) – Complainant Report]
 - [T-PVS/Files(2021)02 – Draft Terms of Reference of the OSA]

- 2018/01: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site “Polonina Borzhava” (UA0000263) from wind energy development: on-the-spot appraisal
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)41](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)18](#) – Complainant Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)38](#) – Terms of Reference of the OSA]

- 2018/05: Ukraine: Alleged threats to the Emerald Network sites Skhidnyi Svydovets, Marmaroski ta Chyvchyno-Hryniavski Hory and Carpathian biosphere Reserve
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)41](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)21](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2019/04: United Kingdom: Badger Culling Policy in England
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)53](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)55](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2020/01: Ukraine: Recognising Horbachykha as a protected area to save it from residential developments
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)42](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)33](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and its impacts on Emerald Network sites
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)50](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)13](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2020/06: Portugal: Presumed threat to Tagus Estuary Special Protected Area from a new airport
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)31](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)56](#) – Complainant report]

- 2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)40](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)65](#) – Complainant report]

7.5. Other complaints

- 2019/01: Ukraine: Possible negative effects of hydrocarbons extraction in four Emerald sites in Donetsk-Kharkiv region
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)41](#) – Government Report]
 - [\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)30](#) – Complainant Report]

- 2019/02: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald site Zatoky (UA0000214) from windfarm developments
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)41](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)20](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2020/02: Ukraine: Logging threats to the Black Tysa River in Emerald Network site "Marmaroski ta Chyvchyno-Hryniavski Hory" (UA0000117)
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)43](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)66](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2020/03: Ukraine: Presumed threat to Emerald Network site “Bugzkyi Gard National Nature Park” (UA0000040)
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)44](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)23](#) – Complainant Report]
- 2020/08: Bulgaria: Alleged threat to biodiversity due to draft amendment of hunting legislation
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)05](#) – Complaint form]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)15](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)67](#) – Complainant report]
- 2021/01: Turkey: Alleged threats to marine turtles due to a new coal-fired power plant at Sugözü Beach
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)45](#) – Government Report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)71](#) – Complainant report]

7.6. New complaints

- 2021/2: Norway: Alleged threat to birds and protected sites due to the proposed construction of windfarms
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)07](#) – Complaint form]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)63](#) – Government Report]
- 2021/03: Romania: Alleged unsustainable logging within the Retezat National Park
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)51](#) – Complaint form+ [Annex](#)
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)72](#) – Government Report]
- 2021/04: Ukraine: Threats to wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats in Irpin river valley Emerald Network site from constructions
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)52](#) – Complaint form]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)XX](#) – Government Report]

7.7. Follow-up of previous recommendations and case-files

- [Recommendation No.190 \(2016\)](#) on the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, especially birds, in afforestation of lowland in Iceland
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)69](#) – Complainant report]
[\[T-PVS/Files\(2021\)74](#) – Government Report]

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appendix II – List of participants

CHAIR

Ms Jana DURKOŠOVÁ, Director, Department for Nature Protection, Ministry of the Environment, Slovak Republic

VICE-CHAIR

Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI, Senior officer, Nature Conservation Department, Ministry of the Environment, Estonia

BUREAU MEMBERS

Mr Carl AMIRGULASHVILI, Head of Biodiversity and Forestry Policy Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia

Mr Jan PLESNIK, Adviser to Director in foreign affairs, Nature Conservation Agency (NCA CR), Czech Republic

Mr Øystein STØRKERSEN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway (*excused*)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Mr Jan BROJAC, Senior Officer, International Relations Department, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; Chair of the Inter-Sessional Working Group on Finances of the Bern Convention

Mr Peter CRANSWICK, Senior Project Development Manager, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Mr Terje Birkrem HOVLAND, Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape

Mr Simon MACKOWN, Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy, National Biodiversity and Ivory Team, Wildlife Division, Defra; Chair of the Working Group on a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030

Mr Dave PRITCHARD, Independent Consultant for the Working Group on a vision and strategic plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030

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Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI, Head of the Biodiversity Division

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Ms Nadia SAPORITO, Bern Convention Junior Project Officer

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