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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

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

3rd meeting (*virtual*)

Wednesday, 22nd September 2021, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm (CET)

Meeting report

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome of participants by the Chair, Mr Simon Mackown

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and adopted the agenda with no changes.

The Chair recalled that following the previous meeting in June, a further online written consultation on the 3rd draft Vision and Strategic Plan had been launched over the summer months. The Chair thanked the Working Group for the comments provided. Unfortunately, several comments had only been received the morning of the meeting, thus not allowing the Chair, consultant, Secretariat nor the other members of the Working Group to take them into account yet. Nevertheless, the comments of members were greatly appreciated.

2. Presentation of the 4th draft of the “Vision” text for discussion and final decision

The Chair presented the 4th draft of the Vision text, and expressed his hope that a final version could be agreed upon today to present at the 41st Standing Committee. He also recalled that the mandate of the Working Group was to advise the Standing Committee by presenting to it a generally-agreed text, and that if certain members still did not agree with every detail, they would have the opportunity to submit amendments officially via their Contracting Party at the Standing Committee.

The participants discussed several amendments suggested by different members. In particular, it was cautioned to not go into too much detail in this text, and to avoid using certain terms which may have different

legal/perceived meanings in different countries. It was also agreed to avoid referring to the articles of the Bern Convention Treaty, and to keep the text simple and catchy in order to appeal to a wide audience.

After a break in which the consultant amended the text following discussions, a draft text was agreed, and would be submitted to the 41st Standing Committee for discussion and possible adoption.

3. Presentation of the 4th draft of the “Strategic Plan” text for discussion and final decision

The Chair informed members that, unlike the Vision text which was well-developed, the Strategic Plan may need more than the approximate six-months that this Working Group had had to work on it, particularly in order to include detailed and technical points such as indicators. Furthermore, the on-going financial reform process of the Bern Convention, as well as the postponement of adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework to next year were also reasons to consider further elaborating the Strategic Plan in 2022.

The members took on board these comments, but nevertheless agreed that the Group should advance as much as possible today and by the end of September when, due to internal administrative deadlines, a draft would have to be agreed for the Standing Committee. This draft may, however, be only for the information of the Standing Committee, to give an indication of ways in which the Vision might be applied in practical terms, and the likely shape of future work should the Standing Committee decide to extend the Group’s mandate into 2022.

As many of the comments which had been received late concerned the Strategic Plan, it was agreed to focus discussions on key issues and agree on a general outline, rather than going into detailed “wordsmithing”.

One general comment of a Contracting Party did, however, provoke a lively discussion: is there a need for a Strategic Plan? The question was whether such a Plan would bring added value, or simply lead to a heavier reporting burden for Contracting Parties, which must be avoided. Furthermore, as proven by these discussions, was the tedious work which would go into elaborating targets and indicators worth the effort for the already constrained Secretariat? The case of CITES, which only uses a Vision with overarching goals, was mentioned as an example to consider. The conclusion of the discussion was that the Working Group should continue its clear mandate of developing the Strategic Plan, but that its observations on these issues would be shared with the Standing Committee at the end of the year.

On the Goals of the Strategic Plan, there was general agreement that the targets of Goal 3 would need to be reworked to become more precise and measurable, while recognising that they were designed to align with the Global Framework. It was mentioned that, should the Standing Committee agree to prolong the work to next year, a consultant should be commissioned to undertake further work on analysing and establishing indicators, and using best practices from other MEAs.

4. Next steps/ way forward at Standing Committee

The Working Group agreed to submit the draft Vision to the 41st Standing Committee for discussion and possible adoption.

It agreed to also submit the draft Strategic Plan, as it stood now, for information and, should the Committee wish, discussion, and to propose to the Standing Committee to extend the mandate of the Working Group into 2022, in order to be able to narrow down the focus of the work to the details such as targets and indicators. Sub-groups could be envisaged to enhance this work, and a consultant may again need to be commissioned. Developments in terms of the Bern Convention financial reform process and possible adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework should be taken into consideration.

5. Any other business

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

Appendix - List of Participants

Contracting Parties	Name and Function
Czech Republic	<p>Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ Unit of International Conventions Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments, Ministry of the Environment</p> <p>Mr Jan PLESNIK Nature Conservation Agency</p> <p>Ms Lenka VANOVA</p>
Norway	<p>Mr Andreas SCHEI Senior Advisor Norwegian Environment Agency</p>
Poland	<p>Ms Ewa PISARCZYK Chief specialist Nature Management Department General Directorate for Environmental Protection</p>
Portugal	<p>Mr Mário REIS Head of the Conservation and Monitoring Division (DCM) Department of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (DCNB) Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)</p> <p>Mr João TIAGO NUNES Institute of Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF)</p>
Slovenia	<p>Mr Peter SKOBERNE</p> <p>Ms Sabina JEREB</p>
Sweden	<p>Ms Melanie JOSEFSSON Senior technical advisor Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, EU-Section</p> <p>Ms Linnea SUNDBLAD</p>
Turkey	<p>Mr Emrah BOZKAYA General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks Ministry of Agriculture and Forest</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Mr Simon MACKOWN (Chair) Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, Defra</p>
Observers	Name and Function
CEE Bankwatch Network	<p>Mr Andrey RALEV Biodiversity Campaigner Czech Republic</p>

EUROPARC Federation	Ms Stefania PETROSILLO Policy Officer
FACE European Federation for Hunting and Conservation	Ms Sabrina DIETZ Wildlife Policy Officer Belgium
IENE Infra Eco Network Europe	Mr Tom LANGTON IENE Council of Europe Area representative United Kingdom
Planta Europa	Ms Erika PENZESNE KONYA Vice-Chair France
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth	Mr Friedrich WULF Head, International Biodiversity Policy Switzerland
Independent consultant	Name and Function
	Mr David E. PRITCHARD
Secretariat, Council of Europe	Name and Function
	Ms Ursula STICKER Secretary of the Bern Convention Mr Marc HORY Bern Convention Project Manager Mr Eoghan KELLY Bern Convention Project Assistant