



Strasbourg, 24 May 2022

T-PVS(2022)14

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November - 2 December 2022

AD-HOC WORKING GROUP
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES

in the framework of the initiative to develop a guidance tool

2nd meeting (online)

Thursday, 19th May 2022, 10:30-13:00 (CEST)

-MEETING REPORT-

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention welcomed the participants to the meeting and conducted a *tour de table*. The Chair of the *ad hoc* Working Group, Ms Céline Van Klaveren-Impagliazzo (Monaco), presented the meeting agenda, which was adopted by the members of the *ad hoc* Working Group with no changes.

2. UPDATE ON STATE OF PLAY

The Bern Convention Secretariat updated the meeting participants on the current state of play of the initiative to develop a guidance tool for the conservation of marine turtles. After the first meeting of the *ad hoc* Working Group in November 2021, a first round of national consultations with stakeholders in Cyprus, Greece and Türkiye had taken place in late 2021 and early 2022. The aim of the national consultations was to identify obstacles to the implementation of the Recommendations of the Standing Committee and to set up a platform of exchange and collaboration. All meetings had been held online. Governmental and civil society stakeholders in the field had been consulted, as well as representatives of the economic sector, in the case of Greece and Türkiye. Following the first round of national consultations, the two experts engaged to implement the initiative and develop the guidance tool, Mr Paolo Casale and Mr Ivica Trumbic, started outlining the tool based on the findings from these meetings.

3. REPORT ON 1ST ROUND OF NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

The experts and Secretariat reported on the results of the first round of national consultations undertaken in the three Contracting Parties. To make the best use of the meeting time and ensure focused discussions, a questionnaire had been prepared by the experts, in coordination with representatives of key parties to the case-files, and shared with the national stakeholders prior to the online meetings. The answers to the questionnaires and stakeholders' point of views were further elaborated and clarified throughout the online discussions.

The national consultations had shown a number of similarities between the situations in the countries and sites concerned by the case-files. Stakeholders acknowledged a conflict between economic development/tourism and the conservation of turtles as, in some areas, the level of construction and urbanisation had increased. While not all but most of the sites had management plans, the process of enforcement and implementation was considered insufficiently funded and too lengthy. Meeting participants expressed a need for means of enforcement. It was stressed, however, that these means could not be provided by the Bern Convention and must come from the national authorities. It was also recalled by participants that, in addition to the beach, the habitat of marine turtles encompasses the marine area, which therefore creates a need for specific marine plans. The online discussions further showed a lack of alignment among the different stakeholders in terms of definition and assessment of the current conservation status of marine turtles. A set of aligned indicators to assess the conservation status appeared to be missing. Moreover, the need for awareness raising and training of all stakeholder groups was stressed. In order to bridge this gap, the idea was brought forward to identify stakeholders who could act as ambassadors to share information and raise awareness.

The interest and active participation of stakeholders in the national consultations were perceived as very positive by the meeting participants and the experts, as communication and exchange were considered key to successful work. Meeting participants expressed their readiness to contribute to joint efforts in finding long-term solutions. The Secretariat clarified that the reports of the national consultations were intended as internal working papers for the convenience of the Working Group only, briefly covering main points of the discussions.

4. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OUTLINE OF GUIDELINES

The expert Mr Paolo Casale presented the draft outline of Guidelines to the meeting participants, which had been jointly elaborated by the two experts Mr Casale and Mr Trumbic. He recalled that, at

its 40th meeting, the Standing Committee had decided to initiate the development of a guidance tool, such as an Action Plan or Guidelines, for the conservation of marine turtles. For the purpose of this initiative and following the first round of national consultations, the experts had come to the assessment that it may fit the stakeholders' needs better to elaborate Guidelines instead of an Action Plan, as guidelines could be applied across different sites and countries and adapted to the specific local context, whereas an Action Plan generally reflected agreed, specific and time-bound action steps that need to be implemented. The purpose of the Guidelines was to serve as a tool that stakeholders could use to facilitate problem-solving in nesting sites. Mr Casale pointed out that the presented outline should be considered a rough sketch which could be adjusted throughout the drafting process.

In particular, to address one of the main findings of the national consultations, the Guidelines would provide stakeholders with a new set of indicators for monitoring the marine turtle conservation status that would go beyond the sole nest counts. It was proposed by the Secretariat that the new set of indicators could be used by the case-file parties to report jointly on the marine turtles conservation status. Mr Casale further pointed out that ways for strengthening stakeholder and community engagement needed to be found as stakeholder contribution is crucial for driving a country's motivation to invest in conservation. The item was therefore included in the draft outline.

Some meeting participants expressed concern that general Guidelines could risk shifting the focus away from specific issues addressed by the pending case-files. The Secretariat clarified that the launch of the Guidelines would not reduce the importance of the pending case-files and the Recommendations of the Standing Committee. Moreover, it was recalled that the marine turtle conservation initiative aims to provide new angles to current conservation measures and to serve as a complementary, not substitutive function. It was hoped that the initiative would assist Contracting Parties in making progress on the pending marine turtle case-files and help prevent future complaints by contributing to an improved conservation status for marine turtles.

Closing the discussion and the expert's presentation, the meeting participants expressed their full approval for the draft outline of the Guidelines.

5. NEXT STEPS

The Chair thanked the experts for their work and presentation and looked forward to the further development of the draft Guidelines.

In autumn 2022, a second round of national consultations with local stakeholders of Cyprus, Greece and Türkiye will be held to collect feedback on the draft Guidelines. The draft Guidelines will be brought to the attention of the 42nd Standing Committee. The next online meeting of the *ad hoc* Working Group will take place in early 2023 with the aim of finalising the draft Guidelines for presentation at the 43rd Standing Committee.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

7. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX I: AGENDA OF THE MEETING

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
10:30	1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
10:50	2. UPDATE ON STATE OF PLAY [Marine Turtles Initiative_updated Roadmap, T-PVS/Inf(2022)06]
11:00	3. REPORT ON 1ST ROUND OF NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS [Working paper report of the 1st round of national consultations in Cyprus, T-PVS (2022)03] [Working paper report of the 1st round of national consultations in Greece, T-PVS (2022)06] [Working paper report of the 1st round of national consultations in Türkiye , T-PVS (2022)07]
11:30	4. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OUTLINE OF GUIDELINES [Draft Outline of Guidelines, T-PVS/Inf (2022)32]
12:30	5. NEXT STEPS
12:45	6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
13:00	7. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

APPENDIX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CONTRACTING PARTIES

Contracting Party	Name
Cyprus	Ms Despo ZAVROU Environment Officer Department of Environment Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment Ms Melina MARCOU Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Officer
Greece	Mr Evangelos BADIERITAKIS Ministry of Environment and Energy General Directorate of Environmental Policy Directorate of Natural Environment Management and Biodiversity Department of Biodiversity
Monaco	Ms Céline VAN KLAVEREN IMPAGLIAZZO (Chair) Chef de Division Département des Relations extérieures et de la Coopération Ministère d'Etat
Spain	Ms Helena MORENO Ministry for Ecological Transition
Türkiye	Mr Yakup KASKA Professor (representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest) Pamukkale University

	Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Biology
United Kingdom	<p>Mr James WILLIAMS Biodiversity Indicators Manager UK Scientific Councillor for the Convention on Migratory Species JNCC</p> <p>Ms Nikki TAYLOR Senior Marine Species Adviser, JCDP Project Manager JNCC</p> <p>Ms Kate GOFORTH Policy Advisor DEFRA</p>

OBSERVERS

Observer organisation	Name
ARCHELON	Ms Panagiota THEODOROU Conservation Coordinator
MEDASSET Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles	<p>Mr George SAMPSON Director</p> <p>Ms Vicky RAE Scientific Officer</p> <p>Ms Nadia ANDREANIDOU Programmes Officer</p>
Terra Cypria the Cyprus Conservation Foundation	Ms Kyriaki MICHAEL Director of educational and research center

INVITED SPEAKERS

Mr Paolo CASALE Independent consultant Marine turtles conservation expert
Mr Ivica TRUMBIC Independent consultant Expert on integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT

Bern Convention	<p>Ms Ursula STICKER Secretary</p> <p>Ms Nadia SAPORITO Junior Project Officer</p> <p>Ms Roxane BRADACZEK Trainee</p>
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