



Strasbourg, 24 September 2025

T-PVS(2025)14

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

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

2nd meeting
4 September 2025
Online meeting, 9.30 – 12.30 CET

- Meeting Report –

Document prepared by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention

1. Opening of the meeting & Adoption of the agenda

Mr. Gianluca Silvestrini, Head of the Department of the Reykjavik Process and Environment, opened the meeting by introducing Ms. Grazia-Alessandra Siino, Secretary of the Bern Convention since 1 June, along with other members of the Secretariat. He welcomed the participants (see Annex II) and wished them a productive and constructive meeting.

The Chair, Mr. Simon Mackown, welcomed the participants and provided a brief overview of the outcomes of the previous meeting held in March 2025.

The agenda was adopted without amendments (see Annex I).

2. Contextual review of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) and amendments adopted

The Secretariat recalled the discussions held at the first meeting of the Group on 13 March 2025, where participants reviewed the existing procedures for amending the Appendices of the Bern Convention and identified areas requiring further clarification. In particular, the Group had requested additional analysis on the context of [Recommendation 56 \(1997\)](#) and amendments proposed since 1997.

The Secretariat presented two background documents prepared for this meeting:

- Context of Adoption of [Recommendation 56 \(1997\)](#) (see document [T-PVS/inf\(2025\)23](#));
- Inventory of Amendments to the Appendices to the Bern Convention since 1997 (see document [T-PVS/inf\(2025\)24](#)).

The Secretariat underlined that Recommendation No. 56 was adopted to address concerns regarding the lack of clear criteria and reliable data for amendments to the Appendices, particularly to Appendix I and II. The Recommendation established that amendments should be grounded primarily on scientific evidence, while also acknowledging symbolic or cultural considerations. Since its adoption, the overall number of amendments has declined, reflecting both increased scrutiny and a higher threshold for consensus among Parties. Recent proposals have tended to focus more on changes of status than on the addition of new species.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for preparing these background documents and noted their relevance for guiding the Group's further work.

3. Existing criteria and procedures for amending lists of features in other Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The Secretariat presented the revised version of the document Existing criteria and procedures for amending lists of features in other Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (see document [T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)04rev](#)), which incorporates additional elements requested by the Group at its first meeting in March 2025. The revised paper expands the comparative analysis to cover the mechanisms applied in other conventions, such as the Barcelona Convention, and provides a synthesis of key findings.

The Secretariat highlighted that most multilateral environmental agreements rely on scientific or advisory committees to review proposals for amendments to species lists or annexes. These bodies, while strictly advisory in nature, play a central role in assessing scientific evidence and formulating recommendations for decision-making bodies. Their composition generally balances geographic representation, scientific expertise across disciplines, and broad taxonomic coverage. Meetings are held regularly, and flexible procedures, such as written consultations or ad hoc expert groups, are often used to ensure timely advice.

The Chair underlined the quality and usefulness of the revised paper as a comprehensive summary of existing practices, noting its value in guiding the Group's further reflections.

4. Possible ways forward

The representative of the United Kingdom, Ms. Sarah Scott, introduced document Proposals for improving the listing process to amend Appendices I, II & III (see document [T-PVS/inf\(2025\)25](#)), outlining four options for consideration.

The Chair recalled the purpose of the discussion, stressing the need to carefully examine the mechanisms for amending the Appendices before taking any decisions on criteria or listings. He underlined that the objective was to identify one or two options to be further developed for consideration by the Standing Committee, with a view to elaborating detailed procedural proposals in 2026.

Participants welcomed the presentation and emphasized the importance of establishing a more structured and transparent mechanism to guide future amendments. They underlined that decisions should rest on sound scientific evidence in order to avoid politically motivated outcomes that could undermine the Convention's objectives. It was further noted that the current procedures lack clarity and consistency, and that reforms should balance scientific robustness, procedural efficiency, and the Convention's practical capacities. Participants also highlighted the need for the Standing Committee to address the establishment of a scientifically sound review mechanism in light of the timelines foreseen under the Convention for submission and approval of amendments.

a. Option A: Amend Recommendation No. 56 (1997)

Participants agreed that updating [Recommendation 56 \(1997\)](#) was a critical step to provide clear guidance and criteria for amendments. They highlighted that any procedural improvements should ensure that proposals for changes in species' status are evaluated in a consistent and transparent manner, reflecting the Convention's objectives and obligations.

b. Option B: Extend the remit of Expert Groups

Participants noted that existing expert groups already provide substantial scientific input, and that the main challenge in the past has been less a lack of evidence than the political process influencing the consideration of proposals. While the extension of Expert Groups' remit could in theory provide additional oversight, participants considered this option complex and potentially disruptive, requiring extensive adjustments to group composition, terms of reference, and procedures.

c. Option C: Commission ad hoc expert advice

Participants broadly supported exploring the use of ad hoc expert advice as a flexible mechanism. They noted that this approach allows input from a range of sources, including existing expert groups and independent specialists, ensuring multiple perspectives and comprehensive information. Participants emphasised that such a mechanism should be clearly defined in terms of criteria, roles, timelines, and budgetary implications, and that it should complement rather than replace existing structures. The feasibility of Option C, including potential cooperation with external bodies such as IUCN, was recognised as requiring further study by the Secretariat.

d. Option D: Establish a permanent scientific advisory group

Participants considered the creation of a new, permanent scientific advisory body, but highlighted potential challenges. Concerns included duplication of existing functions, increased administrative and financial burdens, and risks of adding unnecessary layers of decision-making. It was noted that the primary role of any such body should be to coordinate and synthesize expert advice for the Standing Committee, without

replacing existing thematic groups. Participants stressed that NGO participation could be considered in a consultative capacity, enabling input without formal decision-making. While this option could provide broader oversight, participants agreed that it is not necessary for handling ad hoc species proposals and should only be considered if tasked with wider responsibilities in the future.

5. Next steps

The Group agreed that Options A and C represent the most feasible approaches according to the majority of comments. Option D will remain under consideration as a fallback, while Option B should not be pursued further. The Secretariat was tasked with conducting further feasibility studies for Option C, including discussions with IUCN.

The Chair of the Bureau of the Standing Committee, Mr. Carl Amirgulashvili, informed participants that the upcoming Bureau meeting in September will address this issue in detail. He also highlighted his planned engagement with IUCN leadership during the World Congress in Abu Dhabi in October to discuss potential cooperation and support for the Bern Convention. Mr. Amirgulashvili reaffirmed his continued backing for close collaboration with IUCN and encouraged further discussion.

The Chair closed the discussion, thanking participants for their constructive input and the Secretariat for its support.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

ANNEX I : DRAFT AGENDA

- 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING & ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
- 2. CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATION NO. 56 (1997) AND AMENDMENTS ADOPTED**

*[[T-PVS/inf\(2025\)23](#) - Context of adoption of Recommendation No. 56 (1997)]
[[T-PVS/inf\(2025\)24](#) - Inventory of amendments to the Appendices to the Bern Convention since 1997]*

- 3. EXISTING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR AMENDING LISTS OF FEATURES IN OTHER CONVENTIONS AND MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

[[T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)04rev](#) – Existing criteria and procedures for amending lists of features in other Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements]

- 4. POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD**

[[T-PVS/inf\(2025\)25](#) - Proposals for improving the listing process to amend Appendices I, II & III]

- 5. NEXT STEPS**
- 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Contracting Party	Name
Austria	<p>Mr Martin WILDENBERG Directorate General V – Environment and Circular Economy Department 10 – National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology</p>
Belgium	<p>Mr Floris VERHAEGHE Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos</p> <p>Mr Joachim MERGEAY Research Institute for Nature and Forest</p>
Denmark	<p>Mr Peter LYHNE HØJBERG Head of Section Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment</p>
Estonia	<p>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI Adviser Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of Climate</p>
European Union	<p>Ms Iva OBRETENOVA Policy Officer DG Environment European Commission</p> <p>Ms Telma Branco Wunsch European Commission</p>
France	<p>Mr Charles-Henri DE BARSAC Chargé de mission "accords internationaux et européens faune sauvage" sous-direction de la protection et de la restauration des écosystèmes terrestres Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et Solidaire</p>
Germany	<p>Mr Babak MILLER Policy Advisor Division N I 4 – International Species Conservation, Wildlife Trade Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</p> <p>Mr Goetz ELLWANGER Scientific Advisor Federal Agency for Nature Conservation</p>

	<p>Ms Lena Marie SEIFERT Trainee Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</p>
Georgia	<p>Mr Carl AMIRGULASHVILI Chair of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention Head of Biodiversity and Forestry Department Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p>
Hungary	<p>Ms Éva FEJES Biodiversity expert Biodiversity and Gene Conservation Department Ministry of Agriculture</p>
Monaco	<p>Ms Astrid CLAUDEL-RUSIN Chef de section Direction de l'Environnement Département de l'Équipement, de l'Environnement et de l'Urbanisme</p>
Sweden	<p>Ms Clarisse KEHLER SIEBERT Senior advisor, CBD & Cartagena Protocol, Focal Point to the Bern Convention Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Sustainable Development Department</p>
Türkiye	<p>Mr Burak TATAR Senior Specialist Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Directorate General of Nature Conservation and National Parks Department of Wildlife Management</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Mr Simon MACKOWN Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, DEFRA</p> <p>Ms Sarah SCOTT Senior International Biodiversity Adviser JNCC</p>
Observer	Name
BirdLife Europe and Central Asia	<p>Ms Marion BESSOL Nature Conservation Policy Officer</p>
CEE Bankwatch Network	<p>Mr Andrey RALEV Biodiversity Campaigner</p>
Eurogroup for Animals	<p>Ms Léa BADOZ Programme Officer</p>
European Anglers Alliance	<p>Mr Mark OWEN President</p>

FACE European Federation for Hunting and Conservation	Mr Guillaume AGÈDE Policy Advisor on Large Carnivores
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland	Mr Friedrich WULF Head, International Biodiversity Policy
WWF Central and Eastern Europe	Ms Beate STRIEBEL-GREITER WWF Sturgeon Initiative Leader
Bern Convention Secretariat	Name
	Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI Head of the Department of the Reykjavik Process and Environment Ms Grazia-Alessandra SIINO Secretary of the Bern Convention Mr Michaël NGUYEN Administrative and Project Officer Mr Mark BARLOW Administrative Assistant Ms Lilas HEULLANT Administrative Assistant